

**CHILDREN'S, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION
CABINET COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, 15th July, 2025

2.00 pm

**Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall,
Maidstone**

AGENDA

CHILDREN'S, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION CABINET COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 15 July 2025 at 2.00 pm

Ask for: **Georgia
Humphreys**
Telephone: **03000 412133**

**Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall,
Maidstone**

Membership (13)

Reform UK (9):	Mr O Bradshaw, Mr B Fryer, Ms I Kemp, Mr A Kibble, Mr R Mayall, Ms A Randall, Dr G Sturley, Mr P Thomas and Mrs P Williams
Liberal Democrat (1):	Mrs T Dean, MBE
Green (1):	Mr P Stepto
Conservative (1):	Ms C Russell
Labour (1):	Ms C Nolan

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

- 1 Introduction/Webcast announcement
- 2 Election of Chair
- 3 Election of Vice-Chair
- 4 Apologies and Substitutes
- 5 Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda
- 6 Minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2025 (Pages 1 - 8)
- 7 25/00040 Broomhill Bank School - Removal of Residential Provision from September 2025 (Pages 9 - 32)
- 8 25/00044 Determination of the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement including Post 19 Transport 2025-26 (Pages 33 - 126)

- 9 25/00045 Post 16 Transport Policy Statement including Post 19 for 2026/27
(Pages 127 - 318)
- 10 25/00047 Children's Social Care Prevention Grant 2025/2026 (Families First)
(Pages 319 - 340)
- 11 Work Programme (Pages 341 - 342)

Motion to exclude the press and public

That, under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

EXEMPT ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the press and public)

- 12 Exempt minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2025 (Pages 343 - 344)

Benjamin Watts
General Counsel
03000 416814

Monday, 7 July 2025

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

CHILDREN'S, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION CABINET COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee held at Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 27th February, 2025.

PRESENT: Mr M C Dance (Chairman), Mr M Dendor (Vice-Chairman), Mr P V Barrington-King, Mr D Beaney, Mr P Bartlett (Substitute for Mr A Sandhu, MBE), Sir Paul Carter, CBE (Substitute for Mrs M McArthur), Ms M Dawkins, Ms S Hamilton, Ms J Hawkins, Ms J Meade, Mr C Passmore (Substitute for Mrs T Dean, MBE), Mr P Stepto and Mr Q Roper

ALSO PRESENT: Mr R Love, OBE (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills) and Mrs S Chandler (Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services)

IN ATTENDANCE: Sarah Hammond (Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education), Craig Chapman (Head of Fair Access), Christy Holden (Head of Children's Commissioning), James Clapson (Democratic Services Officer), Katherine Atkinson (Assistant Director, Management Information and Intelligence, Integrated Children's Services), Helen Cook (Senior Commissioner), Alice Gleave (Interim Assistant Director for SEND Operations), Emma Hanson (Senior Commissioning Manager), Georgia Humphreys (Democratic Services Officer), Kevin Kasaven (Director of Children's Countywide Services), Christine McInnes (Director of Education), Mark Scrivener (Head of Risk and Delivery Assurance), Sarah Chapman (Children & Young People's Occupational Therapy service Manager), Robert Veale (Assistant Director Education (East Kent)), Jude Farrell (Head of Service), Michelle Stanley (Education Lead Adviser), Karen Stone (Revenue Finance Manager (0 - 25 services)), David Adams (Assistant Director Education (South Kent)) and Nick Abrahams (Area Education Officer – West Kent)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

20. Apologies and Substitutes (Item 2)

Apologies had been received from Mr Cooke, Mr Reidy, Mrs Game, Mr Manion, Mrs McArthur for whom Sir Paul Carter was present as substitute, Mr Sandhu for whom Mr Bartlett was present as substitute, and Mrs Dean for whom Mr Passmore was present as a substitute.

21. Declarations of Interest (Item 3)

1. Mr Passmore declared that his wife was a full time private educational psychologist working with Kent residents and the full range of private and public educational establishments in Kent.

2. Sir Paul Carter declared that he was a Director of the Lee Academy Trust.

22. Minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2025

(Item 4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2025 were a correct record.

23. Verbal Update by Cabinet Members

(Item 5)

1. Mrs Chandler, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services, gave a verbal update on the following:
 - a. The Kent Practice Framework had been given Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership (KSCMP) executive approval. The multiagency agreement was a key development for the design phase of reforming children's services. The framework offered the opportunity for families to receive consistent practice from across the multi-agency.
 - b. The LADO and Education Safeguarding Advisory Service (LESAS) absorbed the Sector Led Improvement Programme (SLIP). This provided an opportunity for KCC to work closely alongside the Department of Education and other Local Authorities to help design the future of children's services.
 - c. Kent Youth County Council took part in the launch of 'Don't Disrespect', which was a partnership campaign between Kent County Council, Kent Police and the Kent and Medway Violence Reduction Unit to combat street harassment and violence towards women and girls. Mrs Chandler shared that the 'Don't Disrespect' film and campaign including posters and social media campaigns were available at: www.dontdisrespect.uk.
 - d. Virtual School Kent had received further accreditation for the Nurture Programme. Tony Doran, the Headteacher of Virtual School Kent had been asked to be part of an All Party Parliamentary Group on Inclusion and Relational Approaches in Education.
 - e. Mrs Chandler attended the CYPE Conference Day which focused on neurodiversity. The conference provided insight on the latest research from the Children's Commissioner, the work of NELFT, the neuroscience of learning and the biology of stress, and the Dynamic Support Service.
 - f. Safer Internet Day 2025 took place on 11th February 2025, the theme was "Too good to be true? Protecting yourself and others from scams online".
2. Mr Love, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, gave a verbal update on the following:
 - a. This year's SEN Phase Transfer had completed 97.5% of decisions within the published timeline, 91% of families had received a named

preference. Mr Love shared his pride in and expressed congratulations for the teams achievement, whilst recognising that there was more work to be done.

- b. Mr Love had conducted four school visits in February, three of which being special schools. KCC were supporting two of the schools visited to expand, to ensure that sufficient special school places were available for those children with the most complex needs.

RESOLVED that the updates were noted.

24. Performance Monitoring *(Item 6)*

1. Ms Atkinson, introduced the report and highlighted key aspects throughout, explaining that further information had been added to scorecard such as the rates of permanent exclusions and severe/persistent absences.
2. Mr Love highlighted the KPI for the number of EHCP's issued within 20 weeks, emphasising the importance of ensuring improvements within this process were long term and sustainable. Additionally, noting that there has been significant improvements in progress, Mr Love was confident that for February, Kent would be within the top quartile of performers in England.
3. In response to comments and questions it was said:
 - a. Ms Atkinson shared that the backlog of cases had decreased and the timelines of EHCP's was under control. The idea of quarterly targets had been raised to have a continuous improvement approach. Regarding the take-up of early free education places, Ms Atkinson explained that it was seasonal, there were significant changes within the early years sector that was affecting take-up rates. Further indicators for early years were going to be explored to provide more information. Mr Love added in October 2023 the oldest EHCP case was 124 weeks old, compared to updated figures where the oldest case was around 20 weeks old. The service was significantly improving, there was an aim to chase targets but not compromise quality.
 - b. Mr Chapman shared that the volume of available Educational Psychologists was limited, there was an intention to make better use of staff time rather than increasing the numbers, additionally Educational Psychologists were aiming to increase their availability.
 - c. In order to tackle persistent absences in schools a multi-disciplinary approach was required, there had been more challenges in schools since the COVID-19 Pandemic. There was research going into emotional based school avoidance, how to support schools with this and ensure front line staff understanding. There was going to be a session with Assistant Directors about absence, and how to make sure all those involved had a full understanding of the causes, the way to

address it and the support that could be offered. Last year training was developed for front line staff, there was a desire to refresh and expand this. Ms Chandler added that school avoidance was a key issue for early help teams and that there was work being done to tackle this issue. Ms Hammond added that there was an annual meeting with two South East local authority colleagues for peer review, the topic for the upcoming meeting was long term school absences.

- d. A Member noted the importance of clear thresholds and criteria for the balance of mainstream inclusion and special school places, explaining that national Government and the Tribunal System needed to define these. Mr Love agreed that there was a need for further collaboration with the Government to refine and strengthen guidance. Additionally, the Tribunal Service needed to consider the broader responsibilities of Local Authorities in resource allocation. The thresholds for EHCP's used by KCC were those outlined in the SEND Code of Practice. Mr Love was to continue his dialog with Head Teacher's and Principal's around this topic. Ms McInnes added that guidance was needed, Officers had been supporting school leaders in Kent to develop that guidance and descriptors, the document was in its final stages. There was a working group of special school Head Teachers who were developing the criteria for the different types of special needs, to help identify which children were best placed in special schools, the document was to be published in May 2025.
- e. Ms McInnes recognised the issue of Educational Psychologists not receiving required information in a timely manner from schools. To combat this, termly Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) briefings had been established, there were separate briefings for early years, primary and secondary to address individual issues. These briefings had been running for 18 months, the benefits of the SENCO's work was being seen.

RESOLVED that the Committee noted the update.

25. CYPE Contract Register- Overview of Commissioned Contracts *(Item 7)*

- 1. Ms Holden introduced the report and gave an overview of the content.
- 2. In response to comments and questions it was said:
 - a. Ms McInnes shared that there was work being done to reduce the figures associated with the non-maintained and independent special school placements. This was being done through strengthening the commissioning system, there were visits to non-maintained and independent special schools being undertaken in order to check that young people were attending school and receiving the correct services. Additionally, issues were addressed through the special school review. Mrs Chandler explained that the Policy and Resources Cabinet

Committee covered procurement which provided a level of oversight. Mr Love added that the special school review was important to ensure that the right provision was in the right place. There were expansions taking place on schools and new schools were being opened with the aim of being able to have the option to send children and young people to maintained special schools.

- b. Ms Hammond explained that there would always be a need for independent special schools, whilst they could be specialised and targeted, they came at a significant cost.

RESOLVED that the Committee noted the report.

26. Risk Management: Children, Young People and Education
(Item 8)

1. Mr Scrivener, introduced the report and gave an overview of the risks presented within the report.
2. In response to comments and questions it was said:
 - a. Mr Love explained that the safety valve was not the highest risk to KCC rather it was the historic overspending on the high needs spending block. There was a vast amount of work done to bring spending down in line with government allocation. It was believed that the safety valve was a part of the solution not the risk.

RESOLVED that the Committee considered the risks presented.

27. 25/00022 Admission Arrangements and Scheme for 2026-27 Academic Year
(Item 9)

1. Mr Chapman introduced the annual report and gave an overview of its content.
2. In response to comments and questions it was said:
 - a. Mr Chapman shared that proposed developments were considered in areas where reductions were agreed. An advantage of the arrangement of the admissions process was that if there was an unexpected influx of children, schools were able to offer places above their PAN. Mr Love added that future developments were taken into consideration in the Annual Kent Commissioning Plan, which was a five year rolling programme that had a significant amount of background intelligence, with the opportunity to adjust if needed.
 - b. When asked if schools would be provided with additional assistance as school boundaries changed. Mr Chapman explained that this issue would not be directly addressed through the admission process, however it was confirmed that there would be adjustments to funding relative to need.

RESOLVED that the Committee considered and endorsed the decision of the determined admission arrangements.

28. 25/00032 Therapies – Recommissioning of SEN Therapy provision to enable access to the Education Curriculum

(Item 10)

1. Ms Holden, introduced the report and gave an overview of its content.
2. In response to comments and questions it was said:
 - a. Ms Holden explained that according to the SEND Code of Practice the Local Authority had to cover the costs of any failures in NHS commissioning. The contract represented 20% of the total therapy provision across the county, which covered KCC's statutory delivery for therapy for children who needed it in order to access the education curriculum. Additionally, within the new contract, the service delivery model was to be changed to drive efficiency, the NHS invested in the Balance System model in 2020, the providers had been adapting their model which increased the efficiency of the system.
 - b. The NHS invested £13 million into therapeutic services, whilst the Local Authority invested £2.2 million, there was intention to bring a proportion of that funding in-house for physiotherapy and occupational therapy delivery, £1.8 million would be reprocured for speech, language and communication needs.
 - c. Due to the contracts being legacy NHS provider contracts, the Local Authority did not have oversight of the KPI's on the provider contracts, this was to change to ensure the Local Authority had further oversight and decision making powers in the KPI's.
 - d. Ms Holden was to come back to the Committee with specific funding details.

RESOLVED that the Committee considered and endorsed the proposed decision.

29. 25/00020 Community Learning and Skills (CLS) - Sub-contracting Education and Skills Funding Agency provision for 16 to 19 year olds

(Item 11)

1. Ms Holden, introduced the report explaining that the team were waiting for confirmation of funding.
2. In response to comments and questions it was said:
 - a. Ms Farrell confirmed that the providers of delivery for services could be managed as appropriate, there was work done with the Education Directorate to track needs within districts in Kent. This sub-contracting provision would allow the service to offer opportunities as they arose within Kent.

- b. Members noted the importance of young people's awareness of the bursaries available. Ms Farrell was to ensure that offers of these bursaries were clear to young people.

RESOLVED that the Committee considered and endorsed the proposed decision.

30. 25/00021 Community Learning and Skills (CLS) - Sub-contracting Education and Skills Funding Agency provision for 19 to 25 year olds
(Item 12)

1. Ms Holden, introduced the report and gave an overview of its content.

RESOLVED that the Committee considered and endorsed the proposed decision.

31. 25/00023 Raising Ambition. Enabling Curiosity. Building Resilience. A Strategy for the Future of Education in Kent, 2025-2030
(Item 13)

1. Mr Love, introduced the report and gave an overview of its content. Ms Stanley shared that the documents shared with Members were to be revised before publication.
2. Ms McInnes, added that around 50% of schools in Kent were academies, there was a desire for schools to have a shared focus on the best outcomes for children, young people and families within local areas. Additionally, government funding for the Local Authorities duty of school improvement for maintained schools had ceased and was to be funded from core funding.
3. In response to comments and question it was said:
 - a. Mr Love explained that this strategy allowed the opportunity for Kent's opinion on the role of education to be clear. Additionally, it provided the opportunity to produce changes, the strategy was to continue to evolve and refine, it was to be used as a tool for future conversations and strategies.
 - b. It was difficult to measure the resilience of the strategy in terms of local government reorganisation as the exact details had not yet been provided by the Government. Mr Love emphasised the importance of having clarity on the correct strategy for Kent instead of waiting to find out what was going to happen next.
 - c. Mr Love explained that the strategy would support Kent's Grammar Schools.
 - d. Mrs Chandler shared the importance of looking at the early years section of this strategy, emphasising the importance to early intervention.
 - e. Ms Stanley added that there was an action plan that would be evaluated against progress, feedback, qualitative feedback from the sector, children and young people and the established data sets. There were sections on implementation, SEND and the environment within this.

RESOLVED that the Committee considered and endorsed the proposed decision.

32. 25/00010 Proposed Revision of Rates Payable and Charges Levied by Kent County Council for Children's Social Care Services in 2025-26
(Item 14)

1. Ms Stone, introduced the annual report and gave an overview of its content.
2. Ms Hammond requested that the link to initial foster care enquiry website be included in the minutes. Which could be accessed here: [Fostering Enquiry](#)

RESOLVED that the Committee considered and endorsed the proposals.

33. 25/00009 Proposal to change the age range of Blean Primary School, Canterbury, from 4-11 years to 3-11 years
(Item 15)

1. Mr Veale introduced the paper and gave an overview of its content.
2. When asked how issues with parking would be dealt with, Mr Veale shared that parking had been provided by the University of Kent. Additionally, explaining that the school needed to develop its own travel plan. Mr Veale was not able to comment on any proposed developments.

RESOLVED that the Committee considered and endorsed the proposed decision.

34. SACRE Annual Report 2023/24
(Item 17)

1. The Committee were advised that the Chairman of the SACRE Committee endorsed the report.

RESOLVED that the Committee noted the report.

35. Work Programme
(Item 18)

RESOLVED that the work programme was noted.

Motion to Exclude the Press and Public

RESOLVED that the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting for the following business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

CYPE CABINET COMMITTEE REPORT

From: Sarah Hammond, Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education

Beverley Fordham, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

To: Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee –
15 July 2025

Subject: Proposal to remove the Residential Provision at Broomhill Bank
School North (Hextable), Rowhill Road, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7RP

Decision no: 25/00040

Key Decision: It affects more than 2 Electoral Divisions

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: N/A

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: Swanley, served by Dean Truder

Is the decision eligible for call-in? Yes

Summary:

This report outlines the proposal to permanently remove residential provision at Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable), Rowhill Road, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7RP.

Recommendation(s):

The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to **CONSIDER** and **ENDORSE** or make recommendations to the **Cabinet Member for Education and Skills** on the proposed decision as set out in the attached **PROD**.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Kent County Council (KCC) as the Local Authority (LA) has a commitment to provide education, including Special School placements for children and young people within their locality, so that they can remain with their families. This follows national direction outlined in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill and the Families First Partnership Programme.

- 1.2 The proposal to permanently remove residential provision at Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable), is driven by an assessment by KCC of the school's residential provision and need in the local area. This assessment has indicated that there is no longer a requirement for KCC to continue to commission residential placements at Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable).

2. Key Considerations

- 2.1 Up to, and including this academic year, placements in Broomhill Bank North (Hextable) residential provision have been for various reasons and not based on one prescribed set of criteria. Some of these reasons include:
- Distance from home to school
 - Parental requests for placement (not linked to Social Care Assessment)
 - Different placement approaches from other LAs
- 2.2 KCC school placement decisions now focus on meeting a young person's needs in a local provision, and where appropriate, those young people are supported by other services such as Social Care in line with their Education Health and Care Plan.
- 2.3 The approach most commonly employed now when placing children and young people in specialist residential provision is that the young person would have statutory care involvement, and the placement is made to meet care needs where local day specialist provision is not an option. This means that the cost of such placements is shared across Education and Social Care.
- 2.4 Based on the approach described above, the students who have previously been placed in residential provision at Broomhill Bank North (Hextable) would no longer meet the criteria for a residential placement. This would be in line with the national direction outlined in the Families First Partnership Programme.

3. Background

- 3.1 Broomhill Bank School is a co-educational Foundation Special School for students aged 11-19 who have communication and interaction difficulties associated with autism and speech, language and communication needs.
- 3.2 Following an inspection that took place in October 2023, Ofsted deemed Broomhill Bank School to be a 'GOOD' school.
- 3.3 Since September 2015 Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable) has offered residential provision. Following an inspection that took place in November 2024, Ofsted deemed this provision to be 'OUTSTANDING'.
- 3.4 However, as explained above, the students who have previously been placed in residential provision at Broomhill Bank North (Hextable) would no longer meet the criteria for a residential placement.

- 3.5 As such, it has been identified that there is not the requirement, for KCC to continue to commission residential placements at Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable). This has been discussed with the Executive Headteacher of the school and the school Governors at Broomhill Bank School.
- 3.6 For the reasons explained above, it is the intention that the residential provision will close following the departure of the students who are currently using the provision, all of whom are expected to leave the school at the end of this academic year.
- 3.7 Therefore, the Executive Headteacher and Governing Body have been working with KCC Officers to ensure that provision for the remaining residential students would not be adversely affected up to their leaving date.
- 3.8 KCC are proposing that the process for statutory closure of the provision is progressed, with an expected closure date of 31 August 2025.

4. Securing Kent's Future and Framing Kent's Future

- 4.1 The 'Securing Kent's Future' strategy outlines the measures that KCC intend to take to ensure that Kent remains financially stable, now and long into the future. It describes the statutory priorities, one of which being the statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places are available to any child or young person who requires one. This duty applies to Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision, as well as mainstream settings.
- 4.2 This proposal supports KCC in continuing to deliver its statutory duty, in a cost-effective way, whilst ensuring there are still appropriate high-quality placements for children and young people with SEN. The principal of delivering statutory duties in a cost-effective way is in line with the guidelines described in the Securing Kent's Future strategy.

5. Options considered and dismissed, and associated risk

5.1 Option 1: Do Nothing

Retain the residential provision, despite the placements not being made in line with the approach described in 2.1 above. This is not a viable option as this goes against KCC's aspiration to ensure children and young people's needs are met in a local provision with support from other services such as Social Care in line with their Education Health and Care Plan, where appropriate.

5.2 Option 2: Change the Admissions Criteria

Retain the residential provision but change the admissions criteria for the students who would receive placements at Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable) to match the approach described in 2.1 above. Whilst this appears to be reasonable alternative, due to the needs of the young people who are placed at Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable), the number who would meet that criteria would be minimal, and therefore adversely affect the financial viability of the provision.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 Revenue funding for special school places is met from the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant, a specific ring-fenced grant, provided by the Department of Education. The High Needs Block is overspent by c17% and the Council is part of the Safety Valve Programme where central government are providing additional funding to help pay off the accumulated deficit created from this historic overspend (since 2018-19), on the condition the Council puts in place plans to achieve best value for money under the current statutory arrangements with an aim to return to an in-year breakeven position in future years.
- 6.2 Ensuring we meet children's needs more locally where possible, and reducing our dependency on residential special school provision, by only retaining our residential provision for children who are more likely to have a statutory care involvement, is part of our savings strategy to reduce spending on the High Needs Block. There are revenue savings against the Dedicated Schools Grant, associated with the proposal. By permanently removing the residential provision at Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable) it would save the authority approximately £40,000 per place.
- 6.3 A residential weekday place at Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable) costs nearly £62,000 for each student per academic year, and an assessment by KCC has identified that there is no longer a requirement or need for KCC to continue to commission residential placements at Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable). Day placements at Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable) are on average £20,500 for 2025/26.
- 6.4 From 1 September 2025, all students attending the school will be day students and to continue to run the residential offer at Broomhill Bank costs a minimum of £480,000 a year to maintain.
- 6.5 There may be one off redundancy costs associated with this proposal, but work is ongoing with the school to ensure these costs are kept to a minimum through working with the affected staff to identify alternative employment opportunities. In the first instance the schools would ordinarily be expected to fund these costs. However, if this is deemed unaffordable, funding would be made available through the school redundancy fund (paid by the Council but funded from school contributions). Due to the exceptional nature of this proposal, KCC has agreed to meet the one-off redundancy costs. At the time of drafting this report the potential costs are anticipated to be circa £20,000.
- 6.6 The Local Authority is responsible for funding home to school transport for eligible children. By removing the residential offer may increase home to school transport costs to the authority if children are eligible for local authority funded travel to school, as they would then be travelling to and from school on a daily basis. By continuing to pursue our aim to meet children's needs as locally as possible should keep these extra costs to a minimum, by securing more efficient transport. The average cost of transporting an eligible child with SEN to school is £8,500 per year, this cost would be met from the Home to School Transport Budget.

- 6.7 There are no direct capital implications arising from this proposal. The buildings will be repurposed to support the educational delivery for incoming Year 7 students with a wider dimension of need.

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 Under the Children and Families Act 2014 KCC has a duty 'to support the child and his or her parent, or the young person, in order to facilitate the development of the child or young person and to help him or her achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes'. By ensuring we have appropriate provision as locally as possible, we are delivering on our obligation in accordance with this legislation.

- 7.2 Local Authorities need to deliver their statutory duties and be aware of non-statutory guidance and advice, which relate to children and young people with SEN. These are:

- Department for Education-Making significant changes to an academy 2024: non-statutory guidance on collaborative school place planning and making organisational changes to academies.
- The SEND Code of Practice places requirements on Local Authorities to: provide access to advice from a suitably qualified person as part of the EHCP process and subsequent "assess, plan, do, review" cycles, and make appropriate provision for those with an EHC plan in the 0-25 range.
- Sufficiency Duties: KCC is under a statutory duty to contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community by securing that efficient primary education and secondary education are available to meet the needs of the population of their area: section 13 of the Education Act 1996 ("the 1996 Act").
- KCC must ensure that its education functions are exercised by the authority with a view to promoting high standards, ensuring fair access to opportunity for education and training, and promoting the fulfilment of learning potential by every person under the age of 20 and those over the age of 20 and for whom an EHC Plan is maintained: section 13A. By section 14, KCC must secure that sufficient schools for providing primary and secondary education are available for their area, defined as being sufficient in number, character and equipment to provide for all pupils the opportunity of appropriate education.
- Under section 27 of the Children and Families Act 2014 ("the 2014 Act"), KCC is under a duty to keep under review the educational provision, training provision and social care provision made in its area (and outside it) for children and young people who have special educational needs or a disability. KCC must consider the extent to which its provision is sufficient to meet the educational needs, training needs and social care needs of the children and young people concerned.
- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill and the Families First Partnership Programme: a direction nationally aimed to improve children's wellbeing and support families in need. The Bill includes Local Authorities commitment to provide education, including Special School placement, within a child and young person's locality, so that children and young people can remain with their families.

- 7.3 All individual proposals to either establish new, expand current or cease current provision are required to go through the statutory process under the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 and Making Significant Changes to an Academy (non-statutory guidance on collaborative school place planning, October 2024). As part of this process, a public consultation was undertaken ahead of presentation of the proposal to CYPE Cabinet Committee. Should the Cabinet Member agree to the permanent removal of residential provision at Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable), a Public Notice will be issued for a period of 4 weeks.

8. Equalities implications

- 8.1 An impact assessment was completed that indicated that there are no issues. This assessment was re-examined, and no further or new issues have been identified.

9. Data Protection Implications

- 9.1 Any information that would have Data Protection implication was gathered by the school and KCC. A consultation was conducted by the school and KCC. Any protected data will be managed by the school and KCC.

10. Other corporate implications

- 10.1 None.

11. Governance

- 11.1 The Governing Body of Broomhill Bank School agree to the proposal.
- 11.2 The Assistant Director Education-North Kent confirms it has been identified that there is not the requirement for KCC to continue to commission residential placements at Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable). All alternatives have been considered, and the conclusion is to permanently remove residential provision at Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable).

12. Consultation

- 12.1 The KCC Member for Swanley, Dean Truder, has been informed of the proposal.
- 12.2 The school is a Foundation School and ran a public consultation on the proposal with assistance from KCC. The consultation ran from 7 March 2025 to 4 April 2025. The responses to which are detailed in Appendix 1 of this report. In summary, only 13 responses were received, and all were opposed to the closure. However, 11 of those responses were provided by individuals directly associated with the school (10 staff, 1 Governor).
- 12.3 The school and KCC are the data controllers for the consultation. Any protected data will be managed by the school and KCC.

- 12.4 The consultation results were presented to the Governing Body who agreed on 29 April 2025 to proceed with the proposal to remove the residential provision at Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable).
- 12.5 Should the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills agree the recommendation to permanently remove residential provision at Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable), a Public Notice will be issued for a consultation period of 4 weeks.
- 12.6 Should any significant objections, not already considered by the Cabinet Member when agreeing to issue the Public Notice, be received during the notice period, a separate decision may be required dependent on the level of modification required in order to continue the proposal and allow for proper consideration of the points raised.

13. Conclusions

- 13.1 An assessment by KCC of the school's residential provision and need in the local area, has indicated that there is no longer a requirement for KCC to continue to commission residential placements at Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable).
- 13.2 The Governing Body of Broomhill Bank School agree to permanently remove residential provision.

Recommendation(s):

The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to **CONSIDER** and **ENDORSE or make recommendations to the** Cabinet Member for Education and Skill on the proposed decision as set out in the PROD.

14. Background Documents

- Appendix 1 - Responses to the Public Consultation 7 March 2025 to 4 April 2025
- Proposed Record of Decision
- EQIA

15. Contact details

<p>Report Author: Ian Watts</p> <p>Job title: Assistant Director Education-North Kent</p> <p>Telephone number: 03000 414302</p> <p>Email address: ian.watts@kent.gov.uk</p>	<p>Director: Christine McInnes</p> <p>Job title: Director of Education and SEND</p> <p>Telephone number: 03000 418913</p> <p>Email address: Christine.McInnes@kent.gov.uk</p>
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Subject: Proposal to remove the Residential Provision at Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable), Rowhill Road, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7RP

Decision no: 25/00040

Appendix 1

Responses to the Public Consultation 7 March 2025 to 4 April 2025

The consultation was distributed to all current staff, pupils, parents and carers at Broomhill Bank School, all schools in North Kent, Local Members, neighbouring authorities, Diocesan Boards, DfE and other KCC staff and services.

Do you agree with the proposal?	Which of the following best describes you?	Do you have any comments?
No	A member of staff at Broomhill Bank School	Broomhill Bank School residential is a 4 times outstanding provision, which has a proven and sustained track record of securing improved outcomes for young people. Young people who have been supported included those who were prolific non-school attendees who have since moved on to university. Without the dedication of the residential team this would not have happened. Residential is more than just somewhere to stay and attend school, it creates a support system that lasts long beyond the years at Broomhill. A place that will always seek to help when reached out too or just provide a safe space to visit and celebrate achievements. Young people move on having learnt key life skills and experienced care and nurture. Some of these young people and their families will have had significantly worse outcomes and required increased input from social care if it was not for the support of the residential provision. Young people with Autism and their parents have consistently supported and championed the work of this provision. Kent have stated they do not have a way of identifying young people to place, it should not be that due to the lack of procedure by the council that a provision should have to close. There are young people even within the community of Broomhill Bank school that could immensely benefit from residential provision, however Kent are unwilling to support this.
No	Grandparent of child in primary school	

No	A member of staff at Broomhill Bank School	<p>The residential aspect of Broomhill Bank has been an absolute asset for a vast number of students in the past and continues to do so. They play a crucial role in residential students lives, some times where some parents are not able. They assist by taking them to appointments during non school hours, college visits, outside clubs etc. They provide a life that some are not able to access. The loss of this facility will deny some of our future students a school life that they are entitled to. it would be a great loss to close the residential aspect of school.</p>
No	A member of staff at Broomhill Bank School	<p>I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed removal of the residential provision at Broomhill Bank School North. I have had the privilege of working at the school since 1st September 2015, and I can attest to the vital role the residential provision has played in our school community.</p> <p>Over the years, many young people who have attended Broomhill Bank would not have achieved the success they have without the safety, guidance, and stability provided by the residential provision. This facility has not only offered the structure and routines that our students need, but it has also provided them with a much-needed sense of belonging. For many of these students, this has been a new and life-changing experience. Many of them have never known a sense of worth, never had the opportunity to engage in community activities, or never had the chance to sit and eat a meal in a “family” setting. Removing this provision would have a significant and detrimental impact on future students at Broomhill Bank.</p> <p>Over the last three years, we have seen students who would have benefited enormously from the opportunity to become residential students. The impact of this provision on their education is evident. Using CAT scoring, we can clearly see the academic potential of our students. Unfortunately, exposure to life outside of school often impacts their academic abilities. These are the students who don’t meet social services criteria but clearly require additional support, security, and care. The loss of this three-time outstanding provision will undoubtedly harm these young people and ultimately lead to higher costs for the county in the long run. Without the</p>

		<p>skills and support they would gain in the residential setting, these students will likely require adult social care in the future, unable to function in a society they have had little experience with.</p> <p>I strongly urge you to reconsider any decisions to remove this invaluable provision. The benefits it provides to our students are immeasurable and vital for their development, both academically and personally. Removing this provision would not only negatively affect the future of our students but could also place greater financial and societal burdens on the county.</p>
No	A member of staff at Broomhill Bank School	The Residential provision on Broomhill Bank North site has provided an Outstanding service for the Young people that have attended there in recent years. Students have thrived there and have been able to transition into the wider community through the skills that they have learnt at the Residential provision. Removing this would be extremely detrimental to the students, parents, school and Council.
No	A governor at Broomhill Bank School	The provision has been outstanding in its OFSTED for at least the last 4 inspections making it one of the top places for residential students in Kent within an SEN setting. Closing this provision will mean losing the outstanding work of staff to support students in an outstanding way. There is nothing else to replace this in a Kent SEN school, and it seems a great shame to get rid of it after its longstanding success. This is one SEN provision that Kent should be cherishing for years to come based on the above, and should be proudly relishing in its success by means of advertising/promoting and sharing it, not closing it down.
No	A member of staff at Broomhill Bank School	I work in the school as an Outreach Officer supporting students with mental health that can't attend school. I am also a Foster Carer, member of the community of Kent Foster. I have seen how difficult is for kids to live in the wrong environment and the positive impact that has in them when they live in a secure place that allows them to concentrate in their education. Some of our students have very complex needs, and sometimes parents are not able to keep them safe or deal with them. These children have "hidden disabilities" that are not obvious at

		<p>simple sight and people tend to expect normal behavior. There is a study that shows that most Autistic children have PTSD, due to an accumulation of moments in their lives that they were stressed with situations that they don't understand or fit in and they have to mask the real struggle. I am sure if students had physical disabilities and the reasons were obvious why they need to go to a boarding school , we will not be having this questionnaire.</p> <p>We need a place to accommodate students that need to be cared and supported , where they feel safe.</p>
No	A parent of children currently attending Broomhill Bank School	<p>I don't agree to the closure of the residential provision. Broomhill provides amazing support for children and young adults with disabilities. Being a parent of three autistic children, our concerns are teaching our children to be able to cope with every day. The residential provision provides with in a safe environment. There are not enough of these provisions and closing Broomhill Bank will mean you are depriving children of a future of opportunity and independence.</p>
No	A member of staff at Broomhill Bank School	<p>The support this provision offers to enable children to access their education is Outstanding - by judgement and lived experience. Year on year, it has provided stability, warmth, ambition and partnership for the young people who have benefitted from its care and its closure is a robbery to those who would thrive with its support in the future.</p>
No	A member of staff at Broomhill Bank School	<p>The boarding provision at Broomhill Bank school has been rated as outstanding four times in succession, which surely makes it the best KCC maintained residential provision in the County. If the plans to end the residential provision go ahead there will inevitably be a rise in the number of students taking up residential places a much more expensive private provision in the county, meaning less funding available for other students with additional needs.</p> <p>The argument that there is no means to identify potential residential students is flawed, as there has never been such a tool other than the process of annual review of an EHCP. In the past this process which allows a request from parents and professionals for a change of placement from a day to residential placement is</p>

		<p>under the control of the Local Authority. The reasons such a request might be made at Annual review, are many and varied and far more complex than the geographical implication in the consultation document suggests when it references 'Local area' and 'Local day specialist provision'.</p> <p>By potentially closing the Residential provision the Local Authority would be losing an invaluable outstanding resource for the young people of Kent.</p>
No	A member of staff at Broomhill Bank School	<p>Broomhill Bank offers an amazing service to young people who have additional needs. I am a speech and language therapist at the school and have worked with the residential team, witnessing first hand, the amazing work that the team do and realising how the young people benefit from staying in the residential provision.</p> <p>The young people that stay learn vital life skills, gain experiences that they would not otherwise receive and are able to socialise with other young people in a way that is safe and which they most likely would not be able to do outside of this provision.</p> <p>Some students who have stayed on house in the past would not have been able to stay with their own families on a full time basis due to their needs and so I believe that the residential provision at Broomhill Bank will have kept some families together and prevented some young people from having to go into the social care system. The provision is so valuable, it is such a shame to lose it.</p> <p>At the last OFSTED inspection, the residential team received a grading of outstanding. This is because they understand the needs of the young people in their care, and they are able to adapt to the needs that they are faced with. I believe that there is a demand for residential care at Broomhill Bank - especially as the residential provision at nearby Parkwood Hall has also recently been closed down - and for many, residential schools are a safer, cheaper and an all round better option than families simply trying to "manage" their young people's needs and challenges alone, or not managing</p>

		and the young person needing to be looked after by social care.
No	A member of staff at Broomhill Bank School	<p>The residential provision at Broomhill Bank School North has had a profound impact on young peoples' lives by providing a safe and nurturing environment where they can thrive emotionally, mentally, and physically. Providing consistent routines and boundaries helps to create a sense of security, which is vital for emotional and psychological development. This safety allows young people to focus on growth and learning without the anxiety of an unsafe environment. The staff within residential are highly trained in aspects of understanding young peoples' emotional wellbeing and help to guide the young people in learning social skills, appropriate behaviour, and ways to build healthy relationships. Positive adult interaction is critical in helping young people form trust and develop respect for others, which they may not have experienced before.</p> <p>The support and guidance we as a residential provision have been able to provide to multiple families over the years has been immeasurable. The service we provide has given young people and their families opportunities they would not have received anywhere else. Young people's lives have been shaped and saved by the outstanding work we have been able to provide and without this service in place, many more young people will suffer the consequences.</p> <p>Our commitment to residential and its young people has supported non-school attenders to not only reintegrate back into their education but thrive, achieve and leave education with grades and opportunities they would otherwise not have gained. We have also supported young people through extreme trauma inducing events and provided support and care to allow them to build coping strategies, access appropriate services and provided them with a safe environment to feel every feeling unapologetically. Our residential provision has provided young people with the opportunity to interact with others in a group setting. By providing a secure environment our young people have been able to build upon not only their social skills, but to also learn empathy and work through conflict. We as a team have been able to teach our young people</p>

		<p>how to build meaningful friendships and function within a community, which is critical for their social development. Our residential team have supported young people throughout the years to gain access to appropriate medical services and improve and maintain their physical and mental health. We have supported young people into getting essential surgery for stoma removals, sexual health check-ups, extensive dental work following years of neglectful behaviour and access to dermatologists for rare and painful skin conditions due to the parents being unable or unwilling to advocate for their children. Our team have supported multiple young people into gaining access to mental health services to have their voice heard and the help they need. We have attended multiple meetings and advocated for the rights and needs of our young people on the behalf of parents that have been unable. Our work and dedication has helped to heal family relationships and support parents and young people to work together to allow the best possible outcome for everyone. We have supported families in understanding their children on a deeper level, supported them into gaining access to support outside of the family home, and rebuilt futile relationships that otherwise could have ended in destruction. Living in a residential provision with access to education, therapy, and social programs helps children see a brighter future. It instils hope and provides them with the tools to break the cycle of hardship they may have experienced. By giving children opportunities, they might not otherwise have had, residential provisions can change the trajectory of their lives.</p> <p>In conclusion residential services for children create a holistic, supportive environment where children can heal, grow, and develop into well-rounded individuals. By addressing their physical, emotional, social, and educational needs, these services provide a foundation that can positively impact children for the rest of their lives. The work we do within residential is invaluable and the impact the closing of our service will have on social care and the lives of many young people and their families will be everlasting.</p>
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No	A member of staff at Broomhill Bank School	<p>Touching on my experience working within and alongside the residential team I cannot put into words the impeccable difference this service has brought, not only to the young people's development but their lives. Over my years at Broomhill, I have watched countless young peoples' lives be changed and saved by the outstanding work the residential team provide. It is clear to me that should there not have been a system in place with such caring and trained staff, I fear the lives of many young people may have ended too soon due to their high level of need. I have personally supported young people in regaining confidence and feeling able to be fully themselves.</p> <p>The training I received through the residential team has been in depth and crucial for my own personal development. It has allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of how our young people think and feel and has given me the tools to support them to the best of my ability.</p> <p>I have worked hard within and alongside the residential team helping to support young people develop coping strategies and build resilience to not only support their access to their education to gaining further education qualifications and full-time employment. Without the work the residential service provides, the system would have failed these young people, and their lives would have been altered forever.</p> <p>During my time at Broomhill, the residential service unfortunately suffered the loss of a young person in their service. During this time the staff in residential have remained the one safe, consistent place for all young people and staff to feel their grief and feelings without expectations. They provided an environment that kept the young people feeling safe and secure at such concerning and unprecedented times. The residential service has been life saving for young people over the years and I think closing it would be a huge mistake.</p>
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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Beverley Fordham, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

DECISION NUMBER:

25/00040

For publication *[Do not include information which is exempt from publication under schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972]*

Key decision: YES

Affects 2 or more Electoral Divisions

Subject Matter / Title of Decision

Proposal to remove the Residential Provision at Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable), Rowhill Road, Swanley, Kent, BR8 7RP

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, I agree to:

- I. AGREE to issue a Public Notice to permanently remove residential provision at Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable) and following a representation period of four weeks with no substantive objections received, implement the decision
- II. DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education to Issue a Public Notice
- III. DELEGATE authority for the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills to take relevant actions including but not limited to entering into relevant contracts or other legal agreements as required, to implement the decision, subject to no new substantive objections received during the notice period

Reason(s) for decision:

1. Background

Kent County Council (KCC) as the Local Authority (LA), has a commitment to provide education, including Special School placements for children and young people within their locality, so that they can remain with their families. This follows national direction outlined in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill and the Families First Partnership Programme.

The proposal to permanently remove residential provision at Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable), is driven by an assessment by KCC of the school's residential provision and need in the local area. This assessment has indicated that there is no longer a requirement for KCC to continue to commission residential placements at Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable).

Up to, and including this academic year, placements in Broomhill Bank North (Hextable) residential provision have been for various reasons and not based on one prescribed set of criteria. Some of these reasons include:

- Distance from home to school
- Parental requests for placement (not linked to Social Care Assessment)
- Different placement approaches from other LA

KCC school placement decisions now focus on meeting a young person's needs in a local provision, and where appropriate, those young people are supported by other services such as Social Care in line with their Education Health and Care Plan.

The approach most commonly employed now when placing children and young people in specialist residential provision is that the young person would have statutory care involvement, and the placement is made to meet care needs where local day specialist provision is not an option. This means that the cost of such placements is shared across Education and Social Care.

Based on the approach described above, the students who have previously been placed in residential provision at Broomhill Bank North (Hextable) would no longer meet the criteria for a residential placement. This would be in line with the national direction outlined in the Families First Partnership Programme.

2. Securing Kent's Future

The 'Securing Kent's Future' strategy outlines the measures that KCC intend to take to ensure that Kent remains financially stable, now and long into the future. It describes the statutory priorities, one of which being the statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places are available to any child or young person who requires one. This duty applies to Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision, as well as mainstream settings.

This proposal supports KCC in continuing to deliver its statutory duty, in a cost-effective way, whilst ensuring there are still appropriate high-quality placements for children and young people with SEN. The principal of delivering statutory duties in a cost-effective way is in line with the guidelines described in the Securing Kent's Future strategy.

3. Financial Implications

Revenue funding for special school places is met from the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant, a specific ring-fenced grant provided by the Department of Education. The High Needs Block is overspent by c17% and the Council is part of the Safety Valve Programme where central government are providing additional funding to help pay off the accumulated deficit created from this historic overspend (since 2018-19), on the condition the Council puts in place plans to achieve best value for money under the current statutory arrangements with an aim to return to an in-year breakeven position in future years.

Ensuring we meet children's needs more locally where possible, and reducing our dependency on residential special school provision, by only retaining our residential provision for children who are more likely to have a statutory care involvement, is part of our savings strategy to reduce spending on the High Needs Block. By permanently removing the residential provision at Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable) it would save the authority approximately £40,000 per place.

A residential weekday place at Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable) costs nearly £62,000 for each student per academic year, and an assessment by KCC has identified that there is no longer a requirement or need for KCC to continue to commission residential placements at Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable). Day placements at Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable) are on average £20,500 for 2025/26.

From 1 September 2025, all students attending the school will be day students and to continue to run the residential offer at Broomhill Bank costs a minimum of £480,000 a year to maintain.

There may be one off redundancy costs associated with this proposal, but work is ongoing with the school to ensure these costs are kept to a minimum through working with the affected staff to identify alternative employment opportunities. In the first instance the schools would ordinarily be expected to fund these costs. However, if this is deemed unaffordable, funding would be made available through the school redundancy fund (paid by the Council but funded from school contributions). Due to the exceptional nature of this proposal, KCC has agreed to meet the one-off redundancy costs which are anticipated to be circa £20,000.

The Local Authority is responsible for funding home to school transport for eligible children. By removing the residential offer may increase home to school transport costs to the authority if children are eligible for local authority funded travel to school, as they would then be travelling to and from school on a daily basis. By continuing to pursue our aim to meet children's needs as locally as possible should keep these extra costs to a minimum, by securing more efficient transport. The average cost of transporting an eligible child with SEN to school is £8,500 per year, this cost would be met from the Home to School Transport Budget.

There are no direct capital implications arising from this proposal. The buildings will be repurposed to support the educational delivery for incoming Year 7 students with a wider dimension of need.

4. Legal Implications

All individual proposals to either establish new, expand current or cease current provision will be required to go through the statutory process under the School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013 and Making Significant Changes to an Academy (non-statutory guidance on collaborative school place planning, October 2024).

A statutory consultation has been undertaken, comprising of a 4-week public consultation.

5. Consultation

The KCC Member for Swanley, Dean Truder, has been informed of the proposal.

The school is a Foundation School and ran a public consultation on the proposal with assistance from KCC. The consultation ran from 7 March 2025 to 4 April 2025. The responses to which were presented in full to CYPE Cabinet Committee on 15 July 2025.

The school and KCC are the data controllers for the consultation. Any protected data will be managed by the school and KCC.

A Public Notice will be issued for a consultation period of 4 weeks, after which, should no significant objections be received, the decision to close residential provision at Broomhill Bank North (Hextable) will be implemented.

Should any significant objections, not already considered by the Cabinet Member when agreeing to issue the Public Notice, be received during the notice period, a separate decision may be required dependent on the level of modification required in order to continue the proposal and allow for proper consideration of the points raised.

6. Equalities implications

An impact assessment was completed that indicated that there are no issues. This assessment was re-examined, and no further or new issues have been identified.

7. Data Protection Implications

Any information that would have Data Protection implication was gathered by the school and KCC. A

consultation was conducted by the school and KCC. Any protected data will be managed by the school and KCC.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

This decision will be considered at the meeting of the Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on 15th July 2025.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Option 1: Do Nothing

Retain the residential provision, despite the placements not being made in line with the approach described above. This is not a viable option as this goes against KCC's aspiration to ensure children and young people's needs are met in a local provision with support from other services such as Social Care in line with their Education Health and Care Plan, where appropriate.

Option 2: Change the Admissions Criteria

Retain the residential provision but change the admissions criteria for the students who would receive placements at Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable) to match the approach described above. Whilst this appears to be reasonable alternative, due to the needs of the young people who are placed at Broomhill Bank School North (Hextable), the number who would meet that criteria would be minimal, and therefore adversely affect the financial viability of the provision.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

None.

.....
signed

.....
date

EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

Proposal to remove the residential provision from the Broomhill Bank School North site from September 2025

Responsible Officer

David Hart - CY EPA

Approved by (Note: approval of this EqIA must be completed within the EqIA App)

Ian Watts - CY EPA

Type of Activity

Service Change

No

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

No

Commissioning/Procurement

Commissioning/Procurement

Strategy/Policy

No

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Children Young People and Education

Responsible Service

Education, Planning and Access

Responsible Head of Service

Ian Watts - CY EPA

Responsible Director

Christine McInnes - CY EPA

Aims and Objectives

Kent County Council as a Local Authority, may place children and young people with statutory care involvement, where placement is made to meet care needs and where local day specialist provision is not an option into a specialist residential setting.

A review of the school's residential provision and need in the local area, has indicated that there is no longer a requirement for KCC to continue to commission residential placements at Broomhill Bank. This has been discussed with the Executive Headteacher and Governors of the school.

The number of students currently using the provision is now down to only two students, who are both expected to leave the school at the end of this academic year, KCC are proposing that the process for statutory closure of the provision is initiated, with an expected closure date of September 2025.

Section B – Evidence

Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?

No

It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?

Yes
Is there national evidence/data that you can use?
No
Have you consulted with stakeholders?
Not Applicable
Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?
<p>This EQIA is an initiatory document, and is part of the Public Consultation.</p> <p>The consultation will be advertised to parents and students at the school, staff, all schools in the Dartford, Gravesham and Sevenoaks areas, cabinet committee members, local members, the District of Sevenoaks the Boroughs of Dartford and Gravesham and the London Boroughs of Bexley and Bromley, the Diocese of Rochester and of Southwark, KCC colleagues, including Early Years for cascading to settings, and the trades unions.</p>
Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?
Yes
Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?
Yes
Section C – Impact
Who may be impacted by the activity?
Service Users/clients Service users/clients
Staff No
Residents/Communities/Citizens No
Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?
No. Note: If Question 17 is "No", Question 18 should state "none identified" when submission goes for approval
Details of Positive Impacts
none identified
Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions
19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age
Are there negative impacts for age?
No. Note: If Question 19a is "No", Questions 19b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Details of negative impacts for Age
Not Applicable
Mitigating Actions for Age
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age
Not Applicable
20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability
Are there negative impacts for Disability?
No. Note: If Question 20a is "No", Questions 20b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Details of Negative Impacts for Disability
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Disability
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Disability

Not Applicable
21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex
Are there negative impacts for Sex
No. Note: If Question 21a is "No", Questions 21b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Details of negative impacts for Sex
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sex
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Sex
Not Applicable
22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
No. Note: If Question 22a is "No", Questions 22b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race
Are there negative impacts for Race
No. Note: If Question 23a is "No", Questions 23b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Negative impacts for Race
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief
No. Note: If Question 24a is "No", Questions 24b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Negative impacts for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Not Applicable
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
No. Note: If Question 25a is "No", Questions 25b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation

Not Applicable
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
No. Note: If Question 26a is "No", Questions 26b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
No. Note: If Question 27a is "No", Questions 27b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
No. Note: If Question 28a is "No", Questions 28b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Not Applicable

From: **Beverley Fordham, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills**

Sarah Hammond, Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education

To: Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee

Subject: **Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2025/26**

Decision: **25/00044**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Future Pathway of Paper: Cabinet Member Decision

Summary: Each year KCC has a legal duty to consult on its policy for Post 16 Transport including Post 19 and publish a Post 16 Transport Policy Statement.

Recommendation(s): The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to **CONSIDER and ENDORSE, or MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS** to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills on the proposed decision as set out in the PROD.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The report is designed to update Members in regard to decisions to be taken relating to the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement including Post 19 Transport 2025/26. A companion paper discusses proposed provision for 2026/27, which includes potential changes in how support will be delivered for that academic year. It has been necessary to consult on both transport policies concurrently to fulfil Kent's legal duties, while providing parents and learners with sufficient early warning of potential changes for future academic years.
- 1.2 Local authorities do not have a general obligation to provide free or subsidised post 16 travel support but do have a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport or other support that the authority considers it necessary to make to facilitate the attendance of all *learners of sixth form age* receiving education or training. This includes support for 19+ learners with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) who started their course before their 19th birthday.
- 1.3 Councils also have a duty to make such arrangements as they consider necessary for the provision of transport and otherwise in respect of:

- *Adult learners* (i.e. those aged 19 or over, whose course started after their 19th birthday) for the purpose of facilitating their attendance at local authority maintained or assisted Further or Higher Education institutions or institutions within the Further Education sector; and
 - *Adult learners with an EHCP* (which can be maintained up until the age of 25) for the purpose of facilitating their attendance at institutions where they are receiving education and training outside the Further and Higher Education sectors, where the council has secured the provision of education or training at the institution and the provision of boarding accommodation in connection with that education or training.
- 1.4 The requirements placed on a local authority are defined in the Education Act 1996 (as amended), Education and Skills Act 2008, Education and Inspections Act 2006, Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 and the Equality Act 2010.
- 1.5 All young people carrying on their education post 16 must reapply for travel support annually.
- 1.6 The attached policy statement (Appendix A) makes it clear that in the first instance there is an expectation that all learners of sixth form age, including those with SEND (Special Educational Need and Disabilities) and/or an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) will make use of the Kent 16+ Travel Saver. This is a discretionary scheme which aids access to both education and employment with training. This provides up to a 50% reduction in travel costs for the average user. Learning providers, at their discretion, can further subsidise this using bursary funding and we would expect bursary to be provided for up to 50% of the cost for low-income families. Because schools and colleges use bursary funding at their discretion, some choose to subsidise other localised bus travel cards as opposed to the KCC scheme which offers a broader transport offer.
- 1.7 In addition to this provision, the Policy Statement outlines the following additional options available to learners of sixth form age:
- Direction to provider led 16 to 19 Bursary Fund
 - Subsidised travel cards for Young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)
 - Active Travel Strategy
 - Vacant Seat Payment Scheme
 - Care to Learn
 - Alternative Support for those learners requiring additional assistance
- 1.8 Local authorities also have a duty to encourage, enable and assist young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) to participate in education and training, up to the age of 25. The following options are available for adult learners:

- 16 to 19 Bursary Fund – learners 19 and over could also get a bursary if they either:
 - are continuing a course they started aged 16 to 18 (known as being a '19+ continuer'), or
 - have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- Active Travel Strategy
- Care to Learn, for young parents under 20.
- Alternative Support for those learners requiring additional assistance

1.9 KCC currently provides a Kent 16+ Travel Saver to 6,625 pupils. 1,334 Post 16 pupils receive support via a KCC provided vehicle. 148 Post 16 pupils are provided a Personal Transport Budget. The number of young people using KCC arranged transport to FE colleges has nearly doubled in the past 5 years, in line with the extension of duties for SEN up to 25, with the average cost of transport increasing by around 40% over the same period.

2. The Report

- 2.1 KCC has a duty to consult on and publish its Post 16 Transport Policy Statement every year. Whilst there is no statutory duty to provide transport for Post 16 Learners, there is a duty to consider applications for assistance with transport and to enable access to education and training to age 18. The transport policy sets out how KCC will meet this duty and what learners can expect by way of support.
- 2.2 KCC consulted with current and future service users between 27 January and 23 March 2025 on a Post 16 Transport Policy Statement for 2025/26, stating that no changes were proposed for this year. The policy does clarify some wording relating to how contributions and refunds are made, to better explain these processes. It also included some limited new wording to explain KCC's current approach more clearly. However, it was necessary to consider the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement for 2025/26 fulfil our statutory responsibilities for annual review.
- 2.3 The policy is attached as Appendix A.
- 2.4 A copy of the consultation documentation including Equality Impact Assessments can be found at [Post 16 School Transport for Mainstream and SEND Students | Let's talk Kent](#)

3. Consultation outcomes

- 3.1 To raise awareness of the consultation and encourage participation, the following activity was undertaken:
- Emails to stakeholders including head teachers, FE providers, bus operators and other school transport providers, such as taxis.
 - Email/letter to all parents of year 10, 11 and post 16 students with an EHCP.

- Invite on the launch of the consultation to 8,957 Let's talk Kent registered users who have expressed an interest in being kept informed of consultation regarding transport, education, young people and children and families and a reminder email to 9,480 users on 13 March.
- Media release - <https://news.kent.gov.uk/articles/consultation-opens-on-kccs-home-to-school-transport-policy>
- Promoted through KCC's resident e-newsletter, SEND newsletter and Kelsi e-bulletin and intranet.
- Posters displayed in libraries and Gateways and feature on home screen of public computers in libraries.
- Promotional banners added to Kent.gov homepage and relevant service pages.
- Social media via KCC's corporate Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and Nextdoor accounts and paid targeted Facebook adverts.
- Promotion through KCC's intranet.
- All consultation material included details of how people could contact KCC to ask a question, request hard copies or alternative format.
- A Word version of the questionnaire was provided on the consultation webpage for people who did not wish to complete the online version.
- Large print, easy read and audio versions of the consultation material were available from the consultation webpage and on request.

3.2 Engagement with the consultation webpage, material and social media:

- 3,213 visits to the consultation webpage by 2,879 visitors during the consultation period.
- 691 document downloads, including 329 downloads of the Consultation Document
- 158 downloads of the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2025/26
- Organic posts had a reach of 62,04 on Facebook and Instagram. There were 76,793 impressions on X (Twitter), LinkedIn, Nextdoor and Instagram. Reach refers to the number of people who saw a post at least once and impressions are the number of times the post is displayed on someone's screen. The posts generated approximately 2,266 clicks through to the consultation webpage. (Not all social media platforms report the same statistics.)
- 111 responses to 2025-26 Post 16 Transport Policy Statement sections of the consultation.

3.3 As outlined above, while no changes are being proposed for the 2025-26 Post 16 Transport Policy Statement, KCC is legally required to conduct an annual consultation. Many responses appear to have been influenced by proposals in the consultation for the 2026-27 Post 16 Transport Policy Statement, which are discussed and analysed separately in a corresponding paper.

3.4 However, some comments are relevant to this consultation. Among those who commented on the 2025-26 policy, 22% stated that the policy is unfair or discriminatory to families and those with SEND. While KCC's transport policy statement expects a universal contribution from learners for the transport support they receive, it gives due regard to learner's SEN and provides a higher level of support to those with a higher level of need. Consideration is

also given to a family's financial circumstances, with reductions in expected contributions where appropriate. As such, KCC is content that its policy statement is not discriminatory to learners with SEND or their families.

- 3.5 Some 18% of respondents believe that all education transport should be provided or funded by KCC. Additionally, 12% noted that children and young people are legally obligated to be in education until the age of 19. While national legislation requires learners of sixth form age to remain in education or training, statutory entitlement to council tax funded school transport is not extended to these same learners. Councils are not provided dedicated funds by Government to support transport for these learners. This means that national legislation and funding does not support an expectation that all learners should be provided fully funded transport support.
- 3.6 A Further 8% raised concerns about the payments, basis, or criteria for charging. While KCC has historically provided a high, above average level of transport support for some learners of sixth form age and adult learners, (particularly those with SEND and or EHCPS) there is no default legal entitlement to council tax funded school transport. It should be noted that even with the current parental contribution, KCC are providing an average subsidy for each child of over 94%.
- 3.7 On a positive note, 5% of respondents agreed with the proposals and praised KCC, while another 5% expressed satisfaction with the status quo and the lack of changes for the next year
- 3.8 A full consultation report providing an independent analysis of demographic profile and corresponding feedback received is available in Appendix B.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The Home to School Transport net budget is £97.7m for 2025-26. There are no specific grants for home to school transport and the Council are expected to fund their responsibilities through the General Fund (Council Tax and other wider council funding) or where applicable, parental contributions. This budget covers mainstream, post 16 and SEN transport for eligible children aged up to 25.
- 4.2 The costs will vary depending on take up levels and journeys undertaken by cardholders. The Council currently spends approximately £10m per annum on Post 16 transport to schools and further education providers. There are no substantive changes proposed to the 2025-26 policy and savings resulting from changes made to this policy in 2024-25, including the introduction of charging, ceasing lunchtime pick-ups and changes in eligibility for Post 19 learners have been achieved and are expected to continue, as detailed in the previous key decision (decision number [23/00069](#)).

5. Equality Impact Assessment

- 5.1 The consultation included a detailed Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) which can be found in Appendix C.
- 5.2 As the policy remains unchanged from the previous annual iteration, the EqIA did not identify any new or unmitigated risks that required further consideration
- 5.3 Similarly, respondents did not provide any new suggestions to those that were already considered. This suggests that Kent's EqIA sufficiently identified how the proposed policy impacts local residents.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 The requirements placed on a local authority are defined in the Education Act 1996 (as amended), Education and Skills Act 2008, Education and Inspections Act 2006, Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 and the Equality Act 2010.
- 6.2 Local authorities do not have a general obligation to provide council tax funded or subsidised post 16 travel support but do have a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport or other support that the authority considers it necessary to make to facilitate the attendance of all persons of sixth form age receiving education or training.
- 6.3 The policy statement also sets out the duties on the LA to consider requests for transport support. KCC is required to enable access to education and will consider applications for support where a Kent 16+ Travel Saver pass is not suitable. Where support is agreed, the policy makes clear that learners will initially be assessed for Travel Training and alternative transport arrangements will only be provided where this training is not appropriate. Where additional support is refused, learners can appeal to the Transport Regulation Committee Appeal Panel.
- 6.4 Local authorities also have a duty to encourage, enable and assist young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) to participate in education and training, up to the age of 25.
- 6.5 Section 1 of this report highlights how this policy fulfils KCC's statutory duties in this area.

7. Data Protection Impact Assessment

- 7.1 The Kent 16+ Transport privacy statement can be found here ([Kent Travel Saver and Kent 16+ Travel Saver privacy notice - Kent County Council](#)) and advised parents that they are consenting to the usage of their submitted data, how the data will be used, who it will be shared with and how long it will be held, in line with KCC's duties.

7.2 The policy associated with this consultation do not affect the data that is collected or how it is used, so previous DPIAs remain valid and do not require revision.

8. Recommendation(s)

Given the stable nature of Kent's Post 16 transport offer for 2025/26 academic year, which exceeds its statutory duties in a number of areas:

The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to CONSIDER and ENDORSE, or MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills on the proposed decision as set out in the PROD.

9. Background Documents

- Post 16 Transport Policy – Appendix A
- Consultation Report – Appendix B
- Proposed Record of Decision – Appendix C

[Post 16 School Transport for Mainstream and SEND Students | Let's talk Kent](#)

10. Contact details

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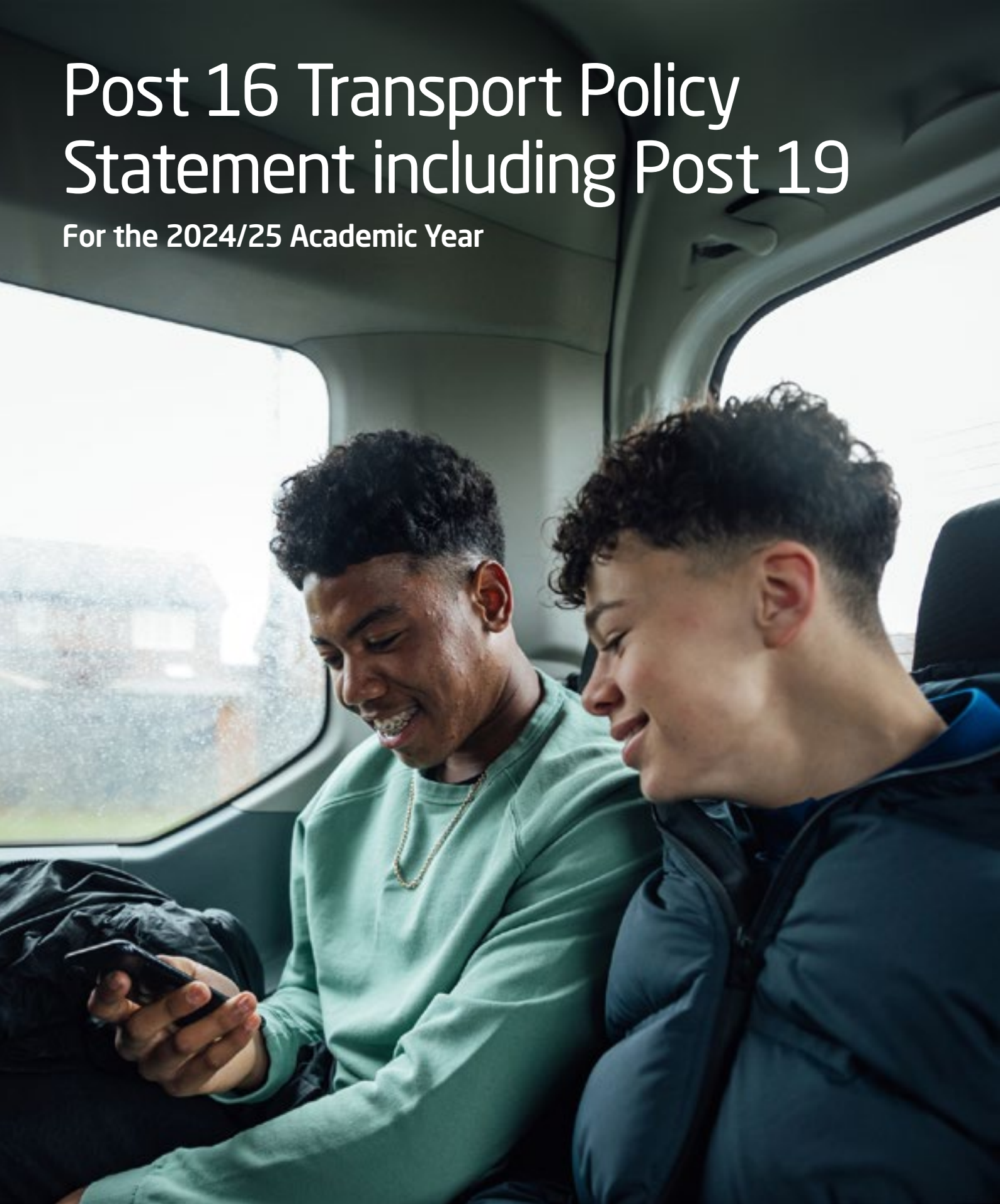
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Post 16 Transport Policy Statement including Post 19

For the 2024/25 Academic Year



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Introduction

Local authorities do not have a general obligation to provide free or subsidised post 16 travel support but do have a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport or other support that the authority considers it necessary to make to facilitate the attendance of all persons of sixth form age receiving education or training.

The requirements placed on a local authority are defined in the Education Act 1996 (as amended), Education and Skills Act 2008, Education and Inspections Act 2006, Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 and the Equality Act 2010.

All young people carrying on their education post 16 must reapply for travel support annually.

‘Sixth form age’ refers to those young people who are over 16 years of age but under 19 or continuing learners who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday (years 12,13,14).

Local authorities also have a duty to encourage, enable and assist young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) to participate in education and training, up to the age of 25.

This policy document specifies the support that Kent County Council (KCC) considers necessary to facilitate the attendance of Post 16 learners receiving education or training.

The statement also provides information about the travel provision put in place for young adult learners aged 19 – 25 with an Education, Health and Care (EHCP).

Education or training refers to learning or training at a school, further education institution, a council maintained or assisted institution providing higher or further education, an establishment funded directly by the Education Skills Funding Agency, learning providers delivering accredited programmes of learning which lead to positive outcomes and are funded by the council, for example, colleges, charities and private learning providers.

Where the policy refers to parents, it should be understood to equally apply to guardians and carers. Where a young person applies on their own behalf, the equivalent responsibilities that apply to their parent will transfer.

Where situations arise that are not directly addressed within this policy, Transport Officers will work in conjunction with the Head of Fair Access to apply the principles contained below to identify a suitable resolution.

This policy supersedes all previous policies and applies from the academic year 2024/25.

Transport and travel support

Kent 16+ Travel Saver

KCC considers that in most circumstances the provision of a subsidised KCC 16+ Travel Saver card is sufficient to facilitate the attendance of Young People (YP) of sixth form age at their chosen education or training provider. This may be at schools, academies, colleges or in the workplace through an apprenticeship or other work-based training provision.

The KCC 16+ Travel Saver card is available to purchase from KCC, with details of pricing and application processes available [here](#). The KCC 16+ Travel Saver card offers free at point of travel access, to the entire public bus network operating in Kent including single destination journeys out of Kent and back into the County. It is available for use 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Learning providers can choose to further subsidise this charge to their students or trainees if they meet Bursary conditions.

The KCC 16+ Travel Saver card may be available at an even lower rate for young people with parents on a low income. Applications for cards at this lower rate should begin with the YP's education provider.

Alternatively, YP who are not otherwise eligible for help with transport can apply for a seat on vehicles hired by KCC under the Vacant Seat Payment Scheme (VSPS).

Vacant seats on hired vehicles that meet suitability requirements are only made available after the start of term, once all statutorily entitled YPs have been accommodated onto transport and vehicle spaces are known. Consequently, parents seeking to purchase a vacant seat may need to make other arrangements for their child to access school during the period when vacant seats are being collated for allocation. This will not be refunded by KCC. VSPS awards seats on a first come first serve basis.

It will also be necessary for applications for VSPS to consider Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000, which potentially limit a number of larger vehicles from being considered for use in the scheme if they are not suitably accessible to all potential passengers. The Department for Transport have applied a number of exemptions which have delayed the implementation of these regulations, however, KCC will be required to apply them in the event that no further extensions are granted.

Where a VSPS seat is granted, it may have to be withdrawn at a later date for a YP who is entitled to free transport, if KCC decide to stop running the vehicle or if it is decided to run a smaller vehicle.

If the seat is taken away, parents will be given until the end of the academic year when they will then have to make their own arrangements.

VSPS is not available on public transport.

Young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)

To support the provision of suitable education or training for young people who are 16 and 17 years old and not in education, employment or training (NEET), KCC may offer fixed term (up to one month) travel cards at subsidised rates to facilitate travel to interviews, work experience and other activities necessary to secure appropriate provision. To be eligible, young people must be registered and receiving support through Early Help and Preventative Services.

Active Travel

Our Active Travel Strategy aims to make active travel an attractive and realistic choice for short journeys in Kent. Active travel means walking or cycling as a means of transport, in order to get to a particular destination such as school, the shops or to visit friends. Active travel can be for complete journeys or parts of a journey, and more people in the community making more active travel journeys can lead to a range of positive individual and shared outcomes. These include improved health, reduced traffic congestion, reduced pollution and financial savings to the individual and businesses. More information is available at www.kentconnected.org.

The 16-19 Bursary Fund

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help young people overcome specific barriers to participation so they can remain in education.

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- 1) A vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 a year for young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups below:
 - In care.
 - Care leavers.

- In receipt of Income Support, or Universal Credit in place of Income Support, in their own right.
- In receipt of Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit and Disability Living or Personal Independence Payments in their own right.
- Discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment.

2) Discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment

To be eligible for the discretionary bursary young people must:

- Be aged 16 or over but under 19.
- Be aged 19 or over and have an EHCP.
- Be aged 19 or over and continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers').
- Be studying a programme that is subject to inspection by a public body which assures quality (such as Ofsted), the provision must also be funded by either a Government funding agency or KCC.

Schools and colleges are responsible for managing both types of bursary. Young people who want to apply for support from the bursary fund should contact their chosen school or college to make an application.

Young parents / Care to Learn

If you are a young parent under 20, Care to Learn can help pay for your childcare and related travel costs, up to £160 per child per week, while you're learning.

Care to Learn can help with the cost of:

- Childcare, including deposit and registration fees.
- A childcare 'taster' session (up to 5 days).
- Keeping your childcare place over the summer holidays.
- Taking your child to the childcare provider.

Types of child care

The childcare provider must be Ofsted registered and can be a:

- Childminder.
- Pre-school playgroup.
- Day nursery.
- Out of school club.

If your child needs specialist childcare, the provider must also be on the Care Quality Commission's register for specialist provision.

If you want a relative to get Care to Learn for looking after your child they need to be both:

- Providing registered childcare for children they're not related to.
- Living apart from you and your child.

Payments

Childcare payments go directly to your childcare provider. Before your childcare provider can be paid:

- Your childcare provider needs to confirm your child's attendance.
- Your school or college needs to confirm that you're attending your course.

Payments for travel costs go to your school or college - they'll either pay you or arrange travel for you.

Attendance

Payments will stop if:

- You stop attending your course.
- You finish your course.
- Your child stops attending childcare.

Eligibility

You can get Care to Learn if:

- You're a parent under 20 at the start of your course.
- You're the main carer for your child.
- You live in England.
- You're either a British citizen or have a legal right to live and study in England.
- Your course is publicly funded (check with your school or college).
- Your childcare provider is registered with Ofsted or the Care Quality Commission.

Type of course

Care to Learn is only available for courses in England that have some public funding.

This includes courses that take place in:

- Schools.
- School sixth forms.
- Sixth form colleges.
- Other colleges and learning providers, including Foundation Learning.
- Your community at Children's Centres.

For more information please visit <https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn/how-to-claim>

Transport for sixth form aged young people for whom the KCC 16+ Travel Saver card, VSPS, Active Travel Strategy, 16-19 Bursary Fund and Care to Learn are not viable options

If, however, you have special circumstances which you believe should make you eligible to receive help of an alternative nature than those set out above you should apply for additional support at www.kent.gov.uk/applyforpost16transport. You may rely upon any circumstances which are relevant to your application. You will need to demonstrate why it is necessary for KCC to provide travel support to facilitate your attendance to receive education or training.

In looking at the suitability of establishments, KCC will look at the availability of preferred or specialist courses at nearby establishments, including those outside of KCC's

local authority area. If parents choose to send their YP to a school or college (or the YP chooses this themselves), which is not the nearest suitable setting, as described earlier, assistance with travel arrangements may not be provided by KCC.

Considerations which KCC will take into account

The following considerations will be given greater weight by us when we consider your application, but do not guarantee you will be eligible to receive additional assistance from KCC:

- (i) That you have special educational needs and/or a disability and/or mobility problems, which mean that it is not/would not be reasonably practicable for you to attend the educational establishment or training provider at which you are registered or at which you would like to register to receive education or training using a KCC 16+ Travel Saver card on the terms described earlier. KCC recognises that in some circumstances public transport may not be appropriate as a result of special educational needs, a disability or a mobility problem and again in these exceptional circumstances other means of support will be considered.

Learners aged 16 – 19 years for whom KCC maintains an EHCP are also expected to seek a KCC 16+ Travel Saver card. It is expected that where students have not accessed public transport previously, they will engage with KCC's Independent Travel Training Team to be trained to use public transport. Refusal to embark on such training where this is considered appropriate, may affect any future decisions where additional support for transport is being requested. Where the learners are unable, even with appropriate independent travel training, to access public bus travel as a result of their levels of need, consideration will be given to other means of support.

- (ii) That you have special educational needs and/or a disability and/or mobility problems, which mean that it may mean you are more likely to remain in education or training longer than your peers, which would in turn mean that your contribution to the cost of transport will go on over a longer period.
- (iii) That it is not/would not be reasonably practicable for you to attend the educational establishment or training provider at which you are registered or at which you would like to register to receive education or training using a KCC 16+ Travel Saver card on the terms described earlier.

(iv) That the distances and/or journey times, between your home and the educational establishment or training provider at which you are registered or would like to register makes the use of a KCC 16+ Travel Saver card, on the terms described earlier impractical or not practical without additional assistance.

(v) That you and your family cannot afford the KCC 16+ Travel Saver card on the terms described earlier and have been unable to secure support from your learning provider.

This will normally require proof of receipt of certain benefits i.e.

- Income support.
- Income based jobseekers allowance.
- Child Tax Credit (TC602 for the current tax year with a yearly income of no more than £16,385 pa).
- Guaranteed element of state pension credit.
- Income related employment and support allowance.
- Maximum Level of Working Tax Credit.
- Universal Credit (provided you have an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400, as assessed by earnings from up to three of your most recent assessment periods).

Assistance on this ground will normally only be given where the educational establishment or training provider is not more than 6 miles from your home. Any additional provision or assistance would be reviewed on an annual basis and your parents would be required to provide the Transport Eligibility Team with up to date proof of the family's income at that time. KCC will usually only provide one form of support for Low Income Families.

(vi) That the nature of the route, or alternative routes, which you can reasonably be expected to take with a KCC 16+ Travel Saver card makes the use of the Card impractical or not practical without additional assistance.

(vii) That reasons relating to your religion or belief (or that of your parents) mean that the use of the KCC 16+ Travel Saver card is not practical or is not practical without additional assistance.

Where a YP is attending or wants to attend an educational establishment of the same denomination as themselves

(or religion in cases where the religion does not have denominations) in order to be considered for transport arrangements, they must also have the application form signed by a vicar/priest or religious leader of the same denomination (or religion where there are no denominations) as the educational establishment stating that the YP is a regular and practising member of a church or other place of worship of the same denomination (or religion where there are no denominations) as the educational establishment concerned.

Where a YP is attending a church school of a different denomination or religion to that of the parent, in order to be considered for transport arrangements, they must also have the application form signed by a vicar/priest or other religious leader stating that the YP is a regular and practising member of that religion or denomination. The YP will also need to explain why their religion or belief makes it desirable for the YP to attend that particular educational establishment rather than another educational establishment nearer to the YP's home, given that the chosen educational establishment is not of the same religion or denomination as that practised by the YP.

Where a YP is attending or wants to attend an educational establishment for reasons connected with his or her non-religious belief, in order to be considered for transport assistance the YP will need to explain what that belief is and why the belief makes it desirable for the YP to attend that particular educational establishment rather than another nearer educational establishment. The YP will also need to provide evidence to prove that they do indeed hold the belief in question. This could be confirmation from a person of good standing in the community who knows the YP, for example a councillor, a doctor, a social worker or a lawyer or alternatively proof of the YP or his parent's medium or long term membership of a society or other institution relating to that belief.

Free transport or other transport arrangements will only be awarded under any of the categories above where KCC is persuaded that the religion or belief is genuinely held and that the placement of the YP at the institution in question will be of significant benefit to the YP because of the relationship between the religion or belief of the YP and the nature of the educational institution in question.

KCC will normally only agree to such requests for a maximum period of one year. Arrangements would then be reviewed. The Local Authority can then agree such requests for the duration of the course up until the end of the year in which the young person reaches the age of 19.

Other information you should provide with your application

You should also state what additional or alternative provision you would like KCC to make to assist you in attending the educational establishment or training provider at which you are registered/would like to register.

You should also provide evidence to support any case that you may present, for example and where relevant:

- (i) Proof that you have applied to or are registered at a particular educational establishment or training provider such as a copy of your acceptance/offer letter from the college.
- (ii) Proof of your and/or your family's income and savings e.g. TC602 from HM Inland Revenue.
- (iii) Proof of any special educational needs, disability or mobility problems that you have; (for example, a copy report from consultant or from your local authority's Special Educational Needs Department or a health or educational professional providing confirmation that you are unable to access a suitable educational establishment or training provider nearer to your home and/or are unable to access public transport). KCC is not able seek this information on an applicant's behalf.
- (iv) Proof that you have applied to colleges or other educational establishment or training provider closer to your home (for the same course or for a similar course), which if accepted would have meant that you would not have required additional assistance from us and proof that that those applications were turned down. (Copies of refusal letters would be required).
- (v) Details of the unsuitable route that you say you would need to travel and detailed reasons why you consider the same to be unsuitable.
- (vi) Proof that you are a member of a particular religion or religious denomination or (where possible) that you have a particular belief where that is relevant to your argument. Ordinarily, where you are making an application on faith grounds, you will be required to attend an establishment with the same religious denomination as your place of worship.

Please note that we cannot return documents that you supply to us, and so you are requested to only provide copies of documents that you may wish to send accompanying or supporting your application.

The types of provision which KCC might make

The provision of financial or practical support is entirely at the discretion of KCC. The type of support which may be provided in appropriate circumstances is set out below. Of course, the outcome of your application may also be that KCC decides to offer no additional support.

Young adult learners, aged 19 – 25 with an EHCP

Please note that this section only applies to young adults aged 19-25 who are in education or training and who have an EHC plan. The considerations to be taken into account in relation to sixth form age individuals with an EHCP are set out in the earlier section.

Transport arrangements will be made to a young adult learner (not being a person of sixth form age), where KCC has secured and named a setting in an EHCP which provides both the provision of education or training and the provision of boarding accommodation. This applies to an adult learner aged under 25, subject to an EHCP and where it is considered necessary to facilitate that person's attendance at the place of education or training.

Transport arrangements may also be made where an adult learner is receiving education or training at an establishment maintained or assisted by KCC and providing further or higher education or within the further education sector, and KCC considered that it was necessary for KCC to provide transport to facilitate that person's attendance at the place of education or training.

In deciding whether it is necessary for KCC to make transport arrangements for an adult learner, KCC would amongst other things, have regard to:

- The learner's age, ability and aptitude.
- Any SEND the person may have.
- The locations and times at which the education or training is provided.
- The nature of the route, or alternative routes, which the learner could reasonably be expected to take.

For the purposes of deciding whether to make transport arrangements, KCC would not consider it necessary, other than in exceptional circumstances, for a young adult learner to attend an additional Further Education course at the same level or equivalent where the learner had previously attended and completed a course at an establishment within the Further Education sector. KCC expects to see evidence of the learner making progression, but each case will be considered on its own merits.

Where transport is provided (as opposed to transport assistance), it will be provided for free.

Appeals

In the event that transport assistance is refused in any of the categories above, details of the appeals procedure can be found in Annex 2.

Transport Assistance for Young People that KCC have identified as requiring additional support

Reassessment

The transport needs of YP with SEND will be reassessed by KCC (following receipt of an application) when the YP moves from compulsory schooling to Post-16 education so that the appropriate support can be put into place.

Arrangements for accessing education

KCC recognises that it is the parent and/or the YP's responsibility for ensuring attendance at a school, other educational establishment or training provider.

Where YPs have been identified as requiring additional transport assistance, KCC is required to identify the most cost-effective way for YPs to access their education or training taking account of their needs and circumstances.

KCC may initially provide support to allow pupils to make use of public transport.

Where there is no access to public transport, bespoke transport arrangements may be put in place from designated collection points to enable access to a hired vehicle. KCC may finally commission private hire vehicles through local taxi operators where no other arrangements are suitable, subject to an initial contribution in line with the total cost of the Kent 16+ Travel Saver pass (with similar adjustments to the rates for low income applicants) for the academic year that the application is being made.

In exceptional circumstances and as a last resort, the Head of Fair Access may approve alternative, cost-effective arrangements to provide free school transport for YP who otherwise could not be transported to their place of learning, subject to a contribution as outlined above.

Transport other than at the beginning and end of the academic day

Home to school transport is only provided at the beginning and end of the normal academic day. The beginning and end of the academic day is determined by the times of the first programmed educational lesson delivered during normal establishment hours and the end of the last programmed lesson during normal establishment hours for that educational establishment or learning provider. Any transport arrangements in order for the YP to attend extended lessons outside of the normal establishment hours, will be the responsibility of the parent or establishment/provider to arrange. Vehicles transporting more than one YP will not be delayed to accommodate an individual YP's return from an alternative site of education. Similarly, for YPs accessing a bespoke timetable, it may be necessary to wait at school to access the dedicated vehicle that is made available to others at the same establishment. KCC may be flexible in this regard where it does not impact other supported YPs or result in additional expenditure, but all decisions are subject to revision following any change in circumstance.

Alternative Transport Assistance

Travel Training

Travel training may be available to YPs with an EHCP and who meet the criteria to receive transport support.

Travel training helps YP with special educational needs to travel independently to their learning provider. Being able to access public transport provides important life skills for YP.

YP will be trained to travel safely from home to their place of learning and back again, promoting their independence. Training will focus on providing the skills and knowledge that is needed to be able to complete journeys safely, confidently and successfully. The training and support will be delivered on a 1:1 basis and tailored and delivered at the pace suitable for the YP.

Travel training will be provided until the YP is confident and competent on the journey from home to the learning

provider and return. Following training, a travel trainer will carry out an assessment to ensure competency.

On 'sign off' the young person will be issued a bus pass (or train pass if this is the appropriate route) for the remainder of the academic year. If the young person continues in education the following academic year they will be required to purchase a Kent 16+ Travel Saver and/or train pass – if age appropriate.

Mileage Payment

Applicants can request to have a mileage payment in order to drive the YP to and from school. The Post 16 Transport Eligibility Team will assess whether this is a cost-effective option for KCC and may award payments if no existing contracts are operating that could accommodate the YPs. Payments will be made at 45p per mile, paid in arrears, following confirmation of attendance and submission of appropriate fuel receipts. Initial payments will be withheld until an initial contribution is recouped in line with the total cost of the Kent 16+ Travel Saver pass (with appropriate adjustments to the rates for low income applicants who are unable to secure direct bursary support from their provider) for the academic year that the application is being made

Where applicants request a voluntary mileage payment, it is calculated for one journey to school and one return journey home. It is unlikely that a voluntary mileage payment will be granted where this exceeds the cost of a Personal Transport Budget and consequently payments are usually capped at £2000 per annum.

Where KCC agrees that a mileage payment is the only acceptable form of transport based on a YP's need, consideration will be given to the number of daily journeys that are covered, dependent on the family's individual circumstances and daily responsibilities to ensure transport arrangements are provided at no cost to the family.

Where there are two or more YPs from the same family attending the educational establishment or training provider, only one claim for mileage payment is allowed.

A mileage payment is provided solely to offset costs incurred where a YP is transported to school in a parent's own vehicle. A mileage payment will be withdrawn where a YP has access to the use of an alternative subsidised KCC transport scheme.

Personal Transport Budgets

A Personal Transport Budget (PTB) is a payment designed to help parents make their own arrangements to facilitate the YP accessing school. Parents are not limited in how they make use of the PTB to support school transport arrangements, with the exception that funds cannot be used to purchase an alternative subsidised KCC pass or scheme for the YP.

A PTB is primarily available to YPs with an EHCP. They must also be identified to receive home to school transport support when assessed in accordance with KCC's Transport policy. In exceptional circumstances and where it is financially beneficial to KCC, mainstream YPs may be offered a PTB on the same basis as YPs with EHCPs – this is entirely at the discretion of the Council and will only be available where it can be demonstrated to be the most cost-effective use of resources. Applicants who have previously been withdrawn from the PTB scheme by KCC will be ineligible for consideration for future requests.

PTB payments are made on the basis of the straight-line distance between the YP's home and their main educational establishment or training provider in the following Bands (minus an initial contribution in line with the total cost of the Kent 16+ Travel Saver pass, including with appropriate adjustment to the rates for low income applicants who are unable to secure direct bursary support from their provider, for the academic year that the application is being made):

Band 1 – Less than 5 miles - £2000 Annual Budget

Band 2 – Between 5 and 10 miles - £3000 Annual Budget

Band 3 – Over 10 miles - £5000 Annual Budget

Where a YP receives a PTB partway through an academic year, the total payment will be offered on a pro rata basis to account for the reduced timescale that the parent will be responsible for transport arrangements.

Where a YP is accessing education or training on a part-time basis, or they are making use of boarding facilities, their PTB payments will be offered on a pro rata basis to account for the reduction in journey frequency (in most cases for learners who board, mileage payments offer more benefit than the PTB).

The PTB is reviewed on a regular basis taking into account the YP's attendance at the educational establishment or training provider and the transport arrangements that may be provided by KCC that are in place at the current

time. The YP's attendance will be monitored and where attendance falls below 85% within a period, payments for any days that they are absent will be deducted from a later PTB payment. There is no guarantee that a PTB will continue to be paid where the YP's attendance is seen to be low or where there is more cost-effective transport which can be accessed. Parents will be required to enter into a contract with KCC in which they agree to ensure the YP can access their educational establishment or training provider in a safe and legal way and arrive in a fit state to learn in return for the PTB payment.

PTB payments are made in 11 monthly instalments. No payment will be made in July to allow KCC sufficient time to confirm that a reduction is not required in the final

monthly instalment to account for low attendance. The final payment will be made in August to account for transport that parents have provided in July of that academic year.

Payments are paid directly into a bank account nominated on the Parental Agreement Form on the 15th of each month or the previous working day where the 15th falls on a weekend or public holiday.

Payments will be calculated from the date that the Parental Agreement Form is returned.

Payments are not back dated and no refunds are provided if the application for a PTB is processed within six weeks of receipt of the application.

A PTB can be offered to up to two YPs within a family, however, the additional YP will normally only be granted 50% of the entitlement. Any subsequent YP would not normally qualify for PTB.

School Led Transport

The Head of Fair Access will work in conjunction with schools with a willingness and sufficient capacity, to develop bespoke arrangements to provide transport to eligible YPs on their roll. Such arrangements will be agreed in line with principles outlined in this policy, but will be managed via separate formal agreements with the school.

Annexes

Annex 1 - General Processes, Explanations and Definitions

How to Apply

Information about how to apply for Post 16 transport support can be found at www.kent.gov.uk/post16transport

Application timescales

KCC seek to administer the assessment process and provision of identified transport arrangements inside of six weeks wherever possible. Several factors will determine KCC's ability to deliver on this commitment. In some instances, the assessment may be delayed where further information is required about a YP's individual needs, or at peak times of the year. Once an applicant has been assessed as requiring additional arrangements, details are passed to colleagues in Public Transport who determine the most suitable and cost-effective means to enable the YP to access their education provider. For some YP with more complex requirements, more time may be needed for a transport procurement processes to be conducted. Where these more complex transport arrangements need to be put in place, parents might expect a delay in transport arrangements being confirmed as a fair and legal process must be followed to identify the named operator through a competitive process.

For YP with SEN, when Post 16 Transport applications are made to coincide with a new academic year, it is advisable to apply as soon as the Post 16 learning provider has been named in the YP's EHCP.

Applications should be made at www.kent.gov.uk/applyforpost16transport

Refunds

KCC is not responsible for any costs incurred by YP or parents during the normal application timescale. Where assessment for transport support takes longer than six weeks and a YP is subsequently found to require additional transport support, YP or parents may request a refund. Refunds will usually be in the form of a mileage payment for each additional academic day YP or parents were required to provide transport.

If a YP was initially assessed as not requiring additional transport support, but following a Transport Eligibility Officer review (See Annex 3) is reassessed as requiring support, a refund can be requested from the initial assessment decision date or the date six weeks after the initial application was received, whichever is earlier. If the review overturns the decision as a result of additional information that the YP or parent did not make available when first applying, a refund will only be made available where the review is completed after the 20 working day limit. In this event, refunds will be calculated from 20 working days after any new information was received by the Post 16 Transport Eligibility Team.

Where additional transport support is provided following a Stage 2 transport appeal, no refund will be provided for transport that a YP or parent has been required to organise until their appeal hearing date, as panel members have additional discretionary authority to consider wider personal circumstances which could not be considered during the normal assessment process. A full or partial refund will only provided where panel members have concluded that this is appropriate during the appeal.

Mode of transport

KCC will determine the most appropriate way to provide transport assistance necessary to support the needs of the YP. Where the YP or parents wish to make their own arrangements and be reimbursed, this may be considered at the discretion of KCC and payment may be awarded where it is not financially disadvantageous to KCC.

Where transport is commissioned by KCC, suitable arrangements will be made for the YP to get on or off the vehicle allocated to them at a point as near to the home and school as possible. There is no fixed distance, although a distance of up to a mile would generally be considered a reasonable walk for a YP in order to reach a drop off and collection point. Consideration of the individual circumstances, including the YP's age, health, wider needs and the nature of the journey, would be taken into account.

Due to tendering process that is required to finalise arrangements, KCC cannot guarantee that a YP will be offered transport by a particular provider, driver or in a specific vehicle. Similarly, arrangements are subject to change throughout the academic year, although KCC will endeavour to keep changes to a minimum wherever possible.

Journey times

A reasonable journey time for a YP of Secondary age is normally regarded as 75 mins. This would therefore form a sensible basis for a reasonable journey time for a Post 16 YP. For YP with SEN and/or disabilities, journeys may be more complex and a shorter journey time, although desirable, may not always be possible. This could vary according to the individual needs of the YP and it may not always be possible to keep within these timeframes. The times detailed above are indicative of an average journey and would not account for unexpected increases as a result of temporary road works or other such delays.

Transport assistance should be such that YPs could expect to reach their place of learning without undue stress, strain and difficulty as would prevent them from benefiting from their education.

Change of address or place of learning

If a YP moves or changes their place of learning, their suitability to receive transport assistance would be reassessed in accordance with the policy. There is no guarantee that because they may have received transport assistance previously, that they will continue to do so. During the time it will take for KCC to reassess the YP's application, it will be the parents' responsibility to make their own arrangements to transport the YP to and from school.

If a YP moves on a temporary basis, transport would not normally be provided.

Additional alternative addresses

Transport assistance is normally only provided from the YP's home to the main learning provider at which they are on roll. The YP's home will normally be the address where they reside for the greatest number of school nights (eg Sunday evening to Thursday evening). Where a YP spends an equal number of school nights at more than one residence, transport support will be provided to the address which is closest to their place of learning via the shortest available route.

In exceptional circumstances, transport may also be provided to an additional alternative address where there is no additional expenditure to KCC. Transport will only be approved for permanent arrangements and will not be implemented for temporary changes in transport requirements. Where transport is provided in these

circumstances, arrangements will only remain in place until such a time as they are no longer cost neutral. At that point, transport to the alternative address will be removed and the YP or parents will be offered an opportunity to appeal.

Off-site provision

If educational establishments or training providers arrange any off-site provision for a YP who is on their roll, they will be responsible for making any transport arrangements and meeting the costs.

Work experience

KCC will not provide transport assistance for YPs on work experience. Any costs that arise as a result of work experience, including transport costs, are the responsibility of the educational establishment or training provider or parent.

Apprenticeships/Supported Internships

Where a YP considers that they may require travel assistance and they wish this to apply to either an apprenticeship or to a traineeship, they should submit an on-line application as for all other learners. The principles outlined throughout this policy will be used to assess whether transport support should be provided.

Examinations

Public examinations are usually taken during the normal school day. Transport will not be provided at alternative times for YPs who take public examinations.

Out of county residents

A YP that resides outside of the administrative boundary of KCC but attends a Kent school must apply for transport assistance from their home Local Authority where this is required.

Independent schools

Where a YP attends an independent fee-paying school, transport support from KCC will not be provided unless it is named in an EHCP as a YP's nearest suitable learning provider.

Transport provided in error

If following an internal review it is identified that a YP has been incorrectly assessed as suitable for transport

assistance and whose personal circumstances do not actually meet the required criteria, transport assistance will be withdrawn. YPs and parents will be given at least one term's notice before transport is withdrawn to allow sufficient time to organise alternative arrangements.

YP behaviour

Inappropriate behaviour on a vehicle is a safety hazard and can put all passengers, the driver and other road users at risk. Drivers and passenger assistants will normally notify the head teacher or nominated person at the learning provider of any problems with the YP's behaviour once the journey is concluded. The learning provider will ensure that Public Transport and where necessary the SEN Caseworker are kept informed.

Where appropriate, parents will be informed of any problems and are expected to assist in preventing their recurrence. If it is considered that a YP's behaviour is likely to endanger them and others, then it may be necessary to withdraw transport either temporarily or permanently. The length of any temporary withdrawal is at the discretion of Transport Eligibility Team, following consultation with the learning provider and other relevant parties.

Where a YP's behaviour is unacceptable during the journey the route will be completed and they will not be put off the vehicle anywhere other than at the agreed destination. However, if a driver feels that a YP's behaviour on any journey is such that they cannot guarantee the safety of the other YPs and adults on the vehicle or other road users, they should take immediate advice from their employer, the learning provider or Public Transport.

Where a YP's behaviour persistently endangers themselves or others KCC reserves the right to withdraw the transport.

Further details can be found in the Code of Conduct found in Annex 4.

Assessment and trial periods

Where it has been recommended by KCC that a YP attend an educational establishment or training provider for a period of assessment or trial, transport will be provided as long as the YP meets the criteria for travel support.

Passenger assistants (for individuals with an EHCP)

There is no automatic entitlement to provision of a passenger assistant on a vehicle if a YP travels by minibus or taxi. The need for a passenger assistant will be considered on a case by case basis, taking in to account the YP's age, the nature of their special educational needs and whether a passenger assistant is already present within the vehicle.

Passenger assistants may also be provided where there are five or more YPs with EHCPs travelling in one vehicle who would otherwise not require individual support, although this may not be necessary where the collective level of need is low.

All passenger assistants are employed by the transport provider. Before they can commence their duties, they must undertake an Enhanced DBS check, which is repeated annually, and attend a KCC induction course. All PAs are issued with photo ID which they must wear at all times. Any further training is provided by their employer.

Passenger assistants' duties are to supervise YPs on a vehicle and to assist with boarding and leaving the vehicle where the YP has physical, sensory and/or medical difficulties. They are not able to collect YPs from home. It is the YP's or parents' responsibility to make arrangements, where necessary, to ensure the YP gets to and from the vehicle.

No passenger assistant will be permitted to administer treatment or medication without the consent of the parent, which must be obtained in advance in writing together with clear details of when and how the treatment/medication is to be administered.

A passenger assistant may administer treatment or medication only if they have been trained to do so. If the condition needs treatment which is complicated to deliver it may be necessary to provide a trained nurse or individual who has received the necessary specialist training.

On some occasions the passenger assistant who has been authorised and trained to administer treatment or medication, may not be available. Ideally in such circumstances, the contractor will have an alternative passenger assistant available, also trained and authorised. Where this is not possible, the parents may be able to travel during the school run or asked to make alternative arrangements. On no account may a YP travel without a passenger assistant who is authorised and trained to administer the necessary treatment or medication.

Where KCC has exhausted all possible avenues and remains unable to secure a suitably trained passenger assistant, it may be necessary for alternative transport support to be offered. The Head of Fair Access may approve alternative, cost-effective arrangements to provide free school transport for eligible CYP who otherwise could not be transported to their place of learning.

Passenger assistants' duties also include the delivery of notes, medication or money between home and school where the YP is not capable of doing so or cannot be relied upon to do so. Guidelines and training are provided for all passenger assistants and each one carries an identity card which is subject to renewal annually.

Passenger assistant arrangements will be reviewed annually to ensure they remain appropriate.

Boarders

Transport for boarders will be provided at the beginning and end of each agreed scheduled boarding period. Outside of these times, the YP or parent, assisted as necessary by the learning provider, will be required to facilitate and fund any exceptional transport arrangements that may be required in the event of extraordinary occurrences such as school closures, medical appointments etc.

Specialist equipment

Where special equipment is necessary for the safe transport of YPs, the contractor will be expected to provide this if it is commonly available, and this will be stipulated in the contract.

For some YPs, individual specialist equipment is necessary which it would be unreasonable to expect a transport provider to provide. This may be purchased by KCC and loaned to the contractor for the duration of the contract.

Transportation of equipment and luggage

YPs travelling to school on a daily basis are expected to travel with one item of hand luggage and YPs attending residential schools are expected to travel with one suitcase (or equivalent). Additional equipment will be transported only by prior arrangement and details of any additional equipment needing to be transported must be provided when transport is being requested, at least ten working days before it is needed. Any one-off arrangements where there is a need to transport an item of equipment must

be notified to Public Transport and, if it requires additional expense to transport, the SEN Area Manager will take a decision on whether this should be approved. Should special arrangements need to be made, Public Transport will require at least ten working days' notice.

In cases where large pieces of equipment are needed by a YP at all times and so requires transporting on a daily basis, the SEN Area Manager will investigate the possibility of purchasing a second piece of equipment for use whilst the YP is in school. Equipment purchased in this way is not for use at home and must be returned to KCC when the YP no longer requires it in school. In considering the purchase of an additional piece of equipment, the SEN Area Manager will consider the difference between the cost of transporting the equipment and the cost of buying and maintaining it and will normally fund the cheaper option.

Additional Support

Information about additional support provided through Adult's Social Care can be found here: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/adult-social-care/care-and-support/how-to-get-adult-social-care-support>

Annex 2 - Post 16 Transport Appeals

Parents and YP are entitled to appeal against decisions by KCC to refuse their application for transport support. This appeal process has two stages and appellants should complete the first stage before moving on to the next.

Stage 1 – Procedure for Appeals to the Post 16 Transport Eligibility Team – Officer Review

Applications for transport arrangements are only refused where a YP is not eligible under KCC's transport criteria. Where applicants receive a refusal to their application, the first step is to carefully read the outcome letter that has been sent to you by KCC's Post 16 Transport Eligibility team. It will explain to you why transport cannot be offered to your child.

While applicants may feel strongly that they should be given transport support, Officers are obliged to follow the assessment criteria outlined in the main policy. There is no discretion for Officers to deviate from strictly applying the transport assessment procedures when considering spending from the public purse. This stage is designed to ensure that there have been no mistakes in the processing and to check that the information supplied was correct at the time of assessment.

Applicants should carefully consider before submitting an Officer Review whether they are likely to have their decision overturned, in light of the information above. If applicants feel that they can submit sufficient additional evidence to show that their application was assessed incorrectly, they should contact the Post 16 Transport Eligibility team with the YP's full name, learning provider, date of birth and an explanation as to why they feel that their application should be reassessed within 20 working days from receipt of KCC's home to school transport decision. Requests for Officer Review that are received after this date cannot be considered. Transport Officers cannot discuss an applicant's reasons for requesting a reassessment over the telephone. It is important that Officers maintain a written audit trail of their assessment decisions. Applicants will be responsible for any alternative transport arrangements while their application is being reassessed. Officers will endeavour to respond within 20 working days.

Applicants wishing to complain about the service provided by the local authority should use the local authority's complaints procedure.

If the Officer Review relates to the provision of a mileage payment or Personal Transport Budget and highlights that applicants received an incorrect initial assessment, a payment will be provided and backdated to the initial assessment decision date or the date six weeks after the initial application was received, whichever is earlier. If the review overturns the decision as a result of additional information that the applicant did not make available when first applying, a payment will be provided and will start from the date the parental agreement is returned.

Stage 2 – Procedure for Appeals to Members of the Transport Regulation Committee Appeals Panel

Where an applicant's Officer Review is not upheld, if they wish, they are then able to appeal to Members of the County Council's Transport Regulation Committee Appeal Panel.

You can attend the hearing to put your case to the panel, or have your case considered on your written submission only. You will be given an opportunity to select which option best suits your need.

The hearing panel consists of between 3 and 5 elected Members. The panel will consider whether our policy on free home to school transport has been applied properly and, if so, whether the strength of your case outweighs the most cost effective and appropriate mode of

transport. The panel cannot change the policy itself or the designation of the nearest appropriate school for the area.

You will be offered the following options for your appeal hearing:

- A face to face meeting.
- A virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams (a secure system that is similar to Zoom).
- A paper-based process, where you submit information for the panel to take into account when considering your appeal.

An appellant has 20 working days from receipt of KCC's stage one written decision notification to make a written request to escalate the matter to stage two. Stage 2 requests that are received after this date cannot be considered.

Grounds for Appealing

Applicants can appeal for any reason or combinations of reasons that they wish.

Applicant cannot appeal for the YP to be transported by a particular driver or transport provider, as KCC is obliged to secure transport through a fair and open tendering process.

The Members of the County Council's Regulation Committee Appeal Panel ("the Members") will consider any arguments that are put to them.

Procedure

An online appeals form is available to complete here: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/school-transport/free-school-transport/school-transport-appeals>

It is important that you submit any evidence that supports your appeal (for example letters from your school, GP or social worker or financial evidence such as benefit receipts). You can appeal for any reason or combination of reasons, but you should carefully consider if you have sufficient additional evidence to support your case.

No charge is made for the appeal but appellants must meet any costs they incur for preparing their appeal or attending the hearing, such as photocopying or transport costs.

The Transport Appeals Team in Democratic Services will acknowledge appellant's appeal and offer a date and time to hear the appeal. All paperwork will be issued electronically unless an alternative format is requested.

If appellants wish to, they can, for a good reason, reject the first hearing date. If the second hearing date is also rejected or if appellants fail to attend a hearing on a date that has been accepted they will not, other than in exceptional circumstances, be offered a further hearing. The Members will, however, consider the appeal in their absence, based upon the information that has been provided in writing. Please note that it is not possible to hold appeals in the evenings or at the weekend.

At least five days before the hearing date, the Appeals Team will electronically send appellant and the Officer presenting the Council's case a copy of each other's written case and supporting documentation.

Witnesses

Appellants are welcome to bring a witness, including their locally elected Kent County Councillor, but they must advise the Transport Appeals team at least one day in advance who this will be. Appellants may wish to provide a written summary of the witnesses' evidence on the day of the hearing as this may be helpful to the Members considering the case.

Please note that the Members hearing the appeal have the right to refuse to listen to witnesses produced by appellants or by the Officer presenting the Council's case if they believe that the evidence given is irrelevant to the appeal.

No fees, expenses or allowances will be paid to the witnesses by the Council under any circumstances.

Appellants can have a friend to accompany them or represent them at the appeal and must ensure the Appeals Team know his or her identity at least one day prior to the hearing date. If the friend is a lawyer, they cannot act as one as part of a lawyer/client relationship.

Legal presentation is not allowed and the Officer presenting the case on behalf of the County Council will also not be allowed to have legal representation. The Members deciding the appeal do have the right to have a legal adviser if they so wish.

There will be an official note taker at the hearing provided by the Council and any video or attempt by appellants to record the hearing will lead to its immediate termination and the dismissal of the appeal.

As far as possible appellants should send all evidence with their appeal letter. Any additional evidence should be sent to the Transport Appeals Team at least two days before the appeal hearing. Written evidence produced on the day of the appeal hearing will be considered at the absolute discretion of the Members hearing the appeal and may lead to the hearing being adjourned to a later date.

The Appeal Hearing

There will normally be a panel of between three to five Members considering the appeal. There will also be a clerk to advise Members and take notes of the appeal hearing. If you opt to have your appeal heard under a face to face or virtual setting, at the beginning of the appeal hearing the Chairman elected by the Members will introduce everyone present at the hearing and explain the procedure. The procedure is as follows:

1. A Presenting Officer will explain the reasons that have prevented the County Council meeting parents wishes up to this stage.
2. Appellants and the Members may then ask the Officer questions.
3. Appellants and/or their representative (who can be a Member of the County Council) will explain the grounds of the appeal and its desired outcome.
4. The Presenting Officer and the Members will ask parents and/or their representative questions.
5. Appellants and the Presenting Officer will be asked to leave the room and the Members will make a decision.

For paper based appeals, Members and the Clerk will meet and make their decision based on the written submission only and neither appellants or a Presenting Officer will be in attendance.

The Members may ask anyone questions at any time or may alter the order of steps 3 and 4 above at any time. Members may agree to consider only written evidence for either or both parties.

The Decision

In reaching their decision the Members must have regard to Kent's Post 16 Transport policy. They need to satisfy themselves that the policy has been applied correctly. They will then look at the specific circumstances to determine whether they are sufficiently strong to enable them to use their discretion to make an exception. The Members have a responsibility to consider the most cost effective and appropriate mode of transport support taking into account the family circumstances at the time of the appeal.

The Members may decide to:

- Uphold the appeal in all respects; or
- Not uphold the appeal; or
- They may decide to partially uphold the appeal.

This can include meeting appellant's wishes in part or for a time limited period. At the end of the time limited period the Members can review the circumstances again and may ask that additional information such as up to date medical records or learning provider attendance records be made available at the time of the review.

In the event members agree to the provision of a mileage payment or Personal Transport Budget, they will decide the date at which calculation of payments will begin, how long this provision will remain available and whether there is a need for regular review of circumstances.

Appellants will receive a decision in writing within five working days of the appeal hearing. Decisions cannot be given over the telephone.

There is no further appeal within the Council's procedures. If appellants believe that they have suffered injustice as a result of maladministration by the Panel then they do have the right to pursue a complaint with the Local Government Ombudsman.

This is not a right of appeal and relates only to issues such as failure to follow correct procedures, or failure to act independently and fairly. If the person making the complaint simply disagrees with the decision there is no

recourse. If appellants have a complaint of a procedural nature, they can refer it direct to the Local Government Ombudsman

Appellants will not be able to make any further applications for free or subsidised transport in relation to the same YP at the same learning provider unless:

- They can demonstrate a significant and material change in circumstances since the previous appeal was decided; or
- The County Council changes the criteria for offering free or subsidised transport under the Council's published Post 16 Transport Policy and that change is relevant to the case; or
- There is a relevant change to the law.

If any of the above grounds apply parents will need to write a fresh appeal to the Transport Appeals Team, setting out the reasons in detail. Appellants will then be informed whether the Council will be prepared to consider the new application.

Annex 3 - Health, Safety and YP Protection

Life threatening conditions

If a YP, who is entitled to travel arrangements, suffers from a life-threatening condition, which may require immediate medication or treatment, arrangements may be made for the parent or another individual to take the YP to their learning provider themselves or to travel with them in the vehicle provided. This will only be possible if the YP is traveling in a sole occupancy vehicle. A mileage payment is payable in those cases where a parent takes the YP to their place of education or training.

Disclosure and Barring Service

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is responsible for confirming whether it is appropriate for an adult to interact with YPs. Drivers and passenger assistants must be DBS checked and cleared and the passenger assistant provided with an identity card following vetting and training.

All operators must be in possession of a DBS before contracts are granted.

Mobile phones/Radios

All transport contracted specifically for YPs with special educational needs will be equipped with a radio or mobile phone. This will not necessarily apply when YPs with special needs travel on mainstream school transport or local bus services.

Annex 4 - Transport Related Responsibilities and Expectations

A copy of KCC's Transport Code of Conduct, which applies equally to YP in Post 16 education, can be found [here](#)

Annex 5 - Home to School and Post-16 Transport Retendering Procedure for Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and/or Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Introduction

Councils are required by law to adhere to the government's Public Contract Regulations 2015, which provides rules to the public sector for the procurement of goods or services. Procurement is how the public sector purchases services to ensure they provide value for money, are effective and deliver quality services.

The regulations govern how councils engage with commercial suppliers when buying their services, making sure there is a fair and transparent process. This process is applied in the purchasing of services for Home to School and Post 16 Transport.

Commissioning Cycle

Kent County Council (KCC) adopts a commissioning cycle when purchasing services. The commissioning cycle and how we apply it to Home to School Transport is summarised below:



Analyse:

For Home to School Transport there is a statutory (legal) obligation to provide transport to entitled pupils. For Post 16 Transport, KCC has a duty to consider what additional support a learner may need to access education, which may result in the provision of a vehicle organised by KCC. To identify what the service needs to deliver we review each pupil's application and any additional supporting information and consider it in line with responsibilities detailed in the Education Act and statutory guidance.

Plan:

Using the information gathered during the analysis phase we plan how to provide transport for identified pupils. We review the existing transport arrangements for pupils to determine whether we can manage the demand for services more efficiently. We consider; statutory guidance, pupil need and the efficient use of resources to deliver these services. This process may conclude that pupils may be able to share transport with others on existing services or determine that new services are required.

Do:

Where there is a need to purchase services to provide transport, we will undertake a procurement process. The procurement process invites suppliers who have registered with the Kent Business Portal and agreed to our terms and conditions to submit a proposal for an advertised school contract. We award the contract to the supplier who submits the lowest cost proposal. This ensures we make efficient use of public money.

The contract with the successful supplier sets out the roles and responsibilities of both, the council, and the supplier, to deliver the services which include but not limited to:

- Licensing regulations for drivers and vehicles, for example, DBS checks are undertaken to find out whether someone has a criminal record and insurances are in place.
- Arriving on time.
- Paying for services.
- Upholding contract management standards should something go wrong, for example by ensuring the service is running as we expect in accordance with our terms and conditions of contracts and taking action to address any concerns promptly. This ensures pupils travel in a safe and appropriate manner.

A contract may only be for a fixed period. A contract for our services shall not exceed a maximum of five years due to the level of change from pupils starting and leaving the service. This means we cannot guarantee the same supplier will deliver our services throughout the academic life of a pupil.

Review:

We regularly review the transport arrangements for pupils by gathering feedback from families, learning providers and suppliers to ensure the services are performing as expected, are fit for purpose for pupils and the contracts represent value for money. KCC is reliant on parents and third parties to keep them updated with this information. Legislation and guidance are also kept under review. The information gathered will help inform the next commissioning cycle.

By adopting the commissioning cycle it allows us to prepare for “planned changes”. These are when we expect services to change when a contract has reached its natural end date. It may also occur as a result of pupils leaving the service meaning the contract may become financially unviable for the supplier or council. When planned changes are due to occur, we notify parents and carers in good time to allow them to prepare their child for a potential change. Parents will be contacted again when the outcome of the retendering process is known and an appropriate provider has been identified.

How we will communicate and engage with key stakeholders

We will:

1. Provide parents and carers with notice two months prior to planned changes occurring
2. Explain why the change is occurring
3. Engage with schools and/or learning provisions to inform them of any planned change and where possible seek their views on new travel arrangements prior to commissioning services
4. Listen and consider the views of parents and carers regarding their child’s travel needs
5. Inform parents and carers via letter or email upon determining a child’s transport arrangement and securing those arrangements.

Unexpected changes in transport

On occasion transport may need to change more suddenly – this would be considered a “not planned” change. This may be due to the supplier/transport operators serving notice on their contract, or they may be unavailable with immediate effect due to factors outside of the council’s control. Where these cases occur, we will endeavour to inform parents and carers as soon as reasonably practicable.

However, by their nature it will not be possible to provide as much warning as a planned change. As the council is reliant on the supplier to be informed of these changes, it is possible that parents may hear from their child’s driver before KCC is able to make contact. In any event, KCC will immediately begin the process of sourcing new services via the process outlined above.

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Kent County Council Post 16 Transport for Mainstream and SEND students Consultation report



Prepared by Lake Market Research



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Executive Summary

- 228 responses were received to this consultation via the consultation questionnaire.
- 71% of consultees completed as parents / carers of children / young people in education. 76% of this consultee group indicated any of their children use KCC organised transport and 92% indicated any of their children / young people have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities and an Education, Health and Care Plan.
- 6% completed as students aged 16-19, or up to 25 if they have Special Educational Needs and / or Disabilities.
- 23% completed in another capacity. 62% of this consultee group responded as a Kent education professional. 34% identified as 'other' with the majority noting they are Kent residents or grandparents. 4% completed as a transport professional.
- Consultees were first asked to provide any comments on the draft Post 16 Transport Policy Statement for 2025-26 in their own words. Whilst this question asked for comments on the 2025-26 statement, feedback received spans both the 2025-26 and 2026-27 statements. The most common themes reported are:
 - Children / young people not being able to access public transport / travel independently
 - The statement's contents making education inaccessible for some children / young people
 - The statement being unfair / discriminatory
 - Concern families cannot afford to pay for transport.
- Concerning the draft Post 16 Transport Policy Statement for 2026-27, consultees were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the two proposals put forward:
 - 34% agree with providing a Personal Transport Budget to most learners who qualify for additional support from KCC, to facilitate their travel to their place of education; 56% disagree.
 - 24% agree with the expectation that students aged 19+ apply for a discretionary bursary from their learning provider to facilitate their travel to and from their school or college, 63% disagree.
- Consultees were asked to provide any comments on the proposals in their own words. Common themes reported under proposals are consistent with those reported under the 2025-26 statement are:
 - Children / young people not being able to access public transport / travel independently
 - The statement's contents making education inaccessible for some children / young people
 - The statement being unfair / discriminatory
 - Concern families cannot afford to pay for transport
- 26% of consultees providing a comment about the first proposal (PTB) commented that parents / carers would be affected / they would need to change their working hours / give up work. 21% commented that families cannot afford to pay for transport / Personal Transport Budget will not cover costs

- 23% of consultees providing a comment about the second proposal (discretionary bursary) commented they believe the process would be complicated / time consuming / the application process raises some concerns. 15% raised concerns that establishments do not have the funds / already have a tight budget.

Background and Methodology

Background

Kent County Council (KCC) consulted on their Post 16 Transport Policy statements for the 2025-26 and 2026-27 academic years. There are no significant changes proposed for the 2025-26 statement, however, KCC are legally required to consult each year. Whilst there are no changes to the level of support being offered for 2025-26, KCC have clarified some wording in the policy relating to how contributions and refunds are made, to better explain these processes, and included some limited additional wording to clarify KCC's current approach.

There are two main changes proposed for the 2026-27 Post 16 Transport Policy statement:

1. A Personal Transport Budget (PTB) to be provided to most learners of sixth-form age who qualify for funded travel support from KCC.

PTBs give families the flexibility and control in making their own travel arrangements. They may help towards covering the costs of running a family car or be used to make other arrangements to enable students to get to their place of learning.

Eligible families would receive between £1,400 and £4,700 to help with the cost of travel, depending on how far away home is from school, college or training. Parents would no longer have to directly pay the contribution (the equivalent of the Kent 16+ Travel Saver pass which is currently up to £600) as this would be calculated into the total amount they are eligible to receive.

2. Initially require adult learners (those aged 19 or over, whose course started after their 19th birthday) to apply for a discretionary bursary from their education or training provider for help with travel costs first before applying to KCC for additional support. These providers receive direct funding for these bursaries, whereas KCC does not receive dedicated monies for any travel support they provide adult learners.

Consideration may be given to providing mileage payments to students whose bursary is not sufficient to enable them to get to or from their place of education or training.

Consultation process

On the 27 January 2025, an 8-week consultation was launched and ran until the 23 March 2025. The consultation invited residents, library users and other interested parties to provide views on the proposed options or suggest potential alternatives.

Feedback was captured via a consultation questionnaire which was available on the KCC engagement website (www.kent.gov.uk/post16consultation). Hard copies of the consultation material were also available on request. Large print format was available from the consultation webpage and consultation material and the webpage included details of how people could contact KCC to ask a question, request hard copies or an alternative format. A Word version of the questionnaire was provided on the webpage for people who did not wish to complete the online version.

A consultation stage Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was carried out to assess the impact the proposals could have on those with protected characteristics. The EqIA was available as one of the consultation documents and the questionnaire invited consultees to comment on the

assessment that had been carried out. An analysis of responses to this question can be found with the overall findings' sections of this report.

Activities to raise awareness of the consultation and encourage participation, included the following:

- Email sent to stakeholder database and those registered with Let's talk Kent who had expressed an interest in being kept informed of consultations about 'children and families' and 'schools and education' (13,912 people). A reminder email was also sent towards the end of the consultation period.
- Email / letter to stakeholders including: existing Kent 16+ Travel Saver pass holders, potential users (sent to current Year 10 and 11 users of the Kent Travel saver or those Year 10 and 11 students in receipt of free school transport), head teachers, Further Education providers, bus operators and other school transport providers, such as taxis and relevant organisations from equality groups distribution list.
- Media release.
- Posters in Kent Libraries and Gateways and on some Kent buses.
- Promoted in newsletters and bulletins including: KCC residents' e-newsletter, KCC staff channels; KELSI bulletin, KCC SEND e-newsletter.

A summary of interaction and supply of consultation material can be found below:

- 3,213 visits to the consultation webpage by 2,879 visitors during the consultation period.
- Organic posts via KCC's corporate channels had a reach of 62,048 on Facebook and Instagram. There were 76,793 impressions on X (Twitter), LinkedIn, Nextdoor and Instagram. Reach refers to the number of people who saw a post at least once and impressions are the number of times the post is displayed on someone's screen. The posts generated 2,266 clicks through to the consultation webpage. (Not all social media platforms report the same statistics).
- The number of document downloads are show in the table below:

Document name	Downloads / views
Consultation document	329
Policy Statement for 2025/26	158
Policy Statement for 2026/27	120
Equality Impact Assessment	34
Equality Impact Assessment - Appendix	5
Word version of the questionnaire	28
Consultation Document – large print	4
Policy Statement 2025/26 – large print	1
Policy Statement 2026/27 – large print	2
Equality Impact Assessment – large print	0
Consultation Questionnaire – large print	4
Consultation Document – easy read	6

Consultation response

There were 228 responses to this consultation and all were received via the online consultation questionnaire.

Points to note

- Consultees were given the choice of which questions to answer / provide a comment for. The number of consultees providing an answer to each question is shown on each chart / data table featured in this report.
- Consultees were asked to detail the reasons for their views in their own words. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed the comments made for each of these questions and grouped common responses together into themes. These themes are reported where relevant in this report. Please note the percentages in these data tables will exceed the sum of 100% and comments often cover more than one theme.
- Please note the sum of individual percentages in any single choice question in this report may not sum to 100% due to rounding.
- Please note that participation in consultations is self-selecting and this needs to be considered when interpreting responses. Inclination to take part in the consultation is subject to individual personal topic interest and service usage.
- KCC were responsible for the design, promotion and collection of the consultation responses. Lake Market Research were appointed to conduct an independent analysis of feedback.

Consultation profile

Response profile

The majority of consultees responding to the consultation questionnaire are parents / carers of children / young people in education (71%). 6% of consultees are students aged 16-19, or up to 25 if they have Special Educational Needs and / or Disabilities. 23% of consultees completed the questionnaire in another capacity.

CONSULTEE TYPE	Count	Percentage
As a parent / carer of children / young people in education (attending nursery, school, college or other further learning)	162	71%
As a student aged 16 to 19, or up to 25 if you have Special Educational Needs and / or Disabilities (SEND)	14	6%
In another capacity	52	23%
Total	228	

Profile of parents / carers answering

The majority of parents / carers answering indicated their child(ren) are of secondary age / in years 7-11 (50%) or are in years 12-13 (44%). 26% of parents / carers indicated any of their children / young people are older than year 13 up to 25 years old.

Two thirds of parents / carers of children in years 7-11 indicated any of them attend a Kent special school (66%) and 39% attend a Kent mainstream school. Just under six in ten parents / carers of child(ren) in years 12-13 indicated any of them attend a Kent special school (56%), 13% attend a Kent mainstream school and 21% attend a Kent college.

20% of parents / carers of children in years 7-11 indicated any of them use the KCC Travel Saver and 24% of parents / carers of children/young people in years 12-13 indicated any of them use the KCC Travel Saver.

76% of all parents / carers answering indicated any of their children / young people use KCC organised transport. The majority of parents / carers indicated any of their children / young people have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities and an Education, Health and Care Plan (92%).

PARENTS / CARERS OF YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 19-25	Count	Percentage
Early Years (0-4 years)	1	1%
Reception (4-5 years)	1	1%
Years 1-6 (Primary aged 5-11)	16	10%
Years 7-11 (Secondary aged 11-16)	80	50%
Years 12-13 (Post-16 aged 16-18)	71	44%
Later than Year 13, but started current course / qualification before 19 th birthday	16	10%
Aged 19-25 (started current course / qualification after 19 th birthday)	25	16%
Blank	1	1%

If your children/young people attend a school or further education establishment, please select which type from the list below

PARENTS / CARERS OF YEARS 7-11 CHILDREN	Count	Percentage
Special school in Kent	53	66%
Special school outside of Kent	2	3%
Mainstream school in Kent	31	39%
Mainstream school outside of Kent	0	0%
Grammar school in Kent	15	19%
Grammar school outside of Kent	0	0%
College in Kent	7	9%
College outside of Kent	0	0%
Kent Independent education provider	0	0%
Other	3	4%

PARENTS / CARERS OF YEARS 12-13 CHILDREN	Count	Percentage
Special school in Kent	40	56%
Special school outside of Kent	4	6%
Mainstream school in Kent	9	13%
Mainstream school outside of Kent	0	0%
PARENTS / CARERS OF YEARS 12-13 CHILDREN	Count	Percentage
Grammar school in Kent	6	8%

Grammar school outside of Kent	0	0%
College in Kent	15	21%
College outside of Kent	0	0%
Kent Independent education provider	3	4%
Other	2	3%

PARENTS / CARERS OF LATER THAN YEAR 13 CHILDREN BUT STARTED COURSE BEFORE 19TH BIRTHDAY	Count	Percentage
Special school in Kent	7	44%
Special school outside of Kent	0	0%
Mainstream school in Kent	1	6%
Mainstream school outside of Kent	0	0%
Grammar school in Kent	1	6%
Grammar school outside of Kent	0	0%
College in Kent	6	38%
College outside of Kent	0	0%
Kent Independent education provider	0	0%
Other	1	6%

PARENTS / CARERS OF YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 19-25	Count	Percentage
Special school in Kent	9	36%
Special school outside of Kent	0	0%
Mainstream school in Kent	0	0%
Mainstream school outside of Kent	0	0%
Grammar school in Kent	0	0%
Grammar school outside of Kent	0	0%
College in Kent	16	64%
College outside of Kent	0	0%
Kent Independent education provider	1	4%
Other	2	8%

Do your children/young people currently use a KCC Travel Saver pass?

PARENTS / CARERS OF YEARS 7-11 CHILDREN	Count	Percentage
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Yes use KCC Travel Saver (years 7-11)	16	20%
Yes use KCC 16+ Travel Saver (years 12-14)	0	0%
No	65	81%

PARENTS / CARERS OF YEARS 12-13 CHILDREN	Count	Percentage
Yes use KCC Travel Saver (years 7-11)	0	0%
Yes use KCC 16+ Travel Saver (years 12-14)	17	24%
No	53	76%

PARENTS / CARERS OF LATER THAN YEAR 13 CHILDREN BUT STARTED COURSE BEFORE 19TH BIRTHDAY	Count	Percentage
Yes use KCC Travel Saver (years 7-11)	0	0%
Yes use KCC 16+ Travel Saver (years 12-14)	5	31%
No	12	75%

Do any of your children/young people receive KCC organised transport?

ALL PARENTS / CARERS ANSWERING	Count	Percentage
No	38	24%
Yes, 1 child	101	63%
Yes, 2 children	17	11%
Yes, 3 or more children	4	3%

Do any of your children/young people have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities?

ALL PARENTS / CARERS ANSWERING	Count	Percentage
Yes, with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	148	92%
Yes, without an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	8	5%
No	9	6%

ALL PARENTS / CARERS ANSWERING	Count	Percentage
Yes, with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	148	92%

Yes, without an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	8	5%
No	9	6%

Profile of students answering

The fourteen students answering are of mix of ages and therefore also attend a mix of education establishments. Nine of the students answering use KCC organised transport and two use a KCC Travel Saver. Twelve indicated they have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities and have an Education, Health and Care Plan. One indicated they have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities but do not have an Education, Health and Care Plan.

Are you a student aged 16 to 19, or up to 25 if you have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)?

ALL STUDENTS ANSWERING	Count	Percentage
Early Years (0-4 years)	0	0%
Reception (4-5 years)	0	0%
Years 1-6 (Primary aged 5-11)	0	0%
Years 7-11 (Secondary aged 11-16)	0	0%
Years 12-13 (Post-16 aged 16-18)	4	29%
Later than Year 13, but started current course / qualification before 19 th birthday	4	29%
Aged 19-25 (started current course / qualification after 19 th birthday)	6	43%
Blank	0	0%

If you attend a school or further education establishment, please select which type from the list below.

ALL STUDENTS ANSWERING	Count	Percentage
Special school in Kent	5	36%
Special school outside of Kent	0	0%
Mainstream school in Kent	1	7%
Mainstream school outside of Kent	0	0%
Grammar school in Kent	0	0%
Grammar school outside of Kent	0	0%
College in Kent	4	29%
College outside of Kent	0	0%
Kent Independent education provider	3	21%
Other	2	14%

Do you use KCC organised transport?

ALL STUDENTS ANSWERING	Count	Percentage
No	3	20%
Yes	9	60%
Not sure	3	20%

Do you currently use the Kent 16+ Travel Saver pass?

ALL STUDENTS ANSWERING	Count	Percentage
Yes	2	14%
Yes use KCC 16+ Travel Saver (years 12-14)	0	0
No	12	86%

Do you have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities?

ALL STUDENTS ANSWERING	Count	Percentage
Yes, with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	12	86%
Yes, without an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	1	7%
No	1	7%

Profile of consultees answering in another capacity

The profile of consultees answering in another capacity is mixed. 62% indicated they are responding as a Kent education professional (31 consultees); 35% representing special schools, 10% representing mainstream schools, 57% representing colleges and 10% representing Kent Independent education providers. 34% (17 consultees) identified as 'other' with the majority noting that they are Kent residents or grandparents.

	Count	Percentage
Transport professional	2	4%
- Minibus operator	1	2%
- Other	1	2%
Education professional in Kent	31	62%
- Special school Head / teacher or another representative	11	35%
- Mainstream school Head / teacher or another representative	3	10%
- Grammar school Head / teacher or another representative	0	0%
- College Head / teacher or another representative	8	57%
- Kent Independent education provider	3	10%
- Other	6	19%
Education professional outside in Kent	0	0%
Other (including Kent residents, grandparents, other interested professionals)	17	34%

Demographic profile

The tables below show the demographic profile of consultees who completed the consultation questionnaire. The proportion who left these questions blank or indicated they did not want to disclose this information has been included as applicable.

Gender	Number of responses	Percentage
Male	111	49%
Female	34	15%
Prefer not to say / blank	83	36%

Gender same as birth	Number of responses	Percentage
Yes	143	63%
No	1	0.4%
Prefer not to say / blank	84	37%

Age	Number of responses	Percentage
16-17	3	1%
18-20	2	1%
21-25	2	1%
26-30	3	1%
31-35	2	1%
36-40	7	3%
41-45	22	10%
46-50	31	14%
51-55	34	15%
56-60	16	7%
61-65	7	3%
66-70	5	2%
71-75	4	2%
76-80	7	3%
Prefer not to say / blank	83	36%

Disability	Number of responses	Percentage
Yes	27	12%
- Physical	12	5%
- Sensory (hearing, sight or both)	1	0.4%
- Longstanding illness or health condition	8	4%
- Mental health condition	8	4%
- Learning disability	6	3%
- Neurodivergent	8	4%
- Other	5	2%
No	111	49%
Prefer not to say / blank	90	39%

Ethnicity	Number of responses	Percentage
White English, Scottish, Welsh, Northern Irish or British	136	60%
Irish	1	0.4%
Any other White background	3	1%
Prefer not to say / blank	88	39%

Religion	Number of responses	Percentage
Atheist	4	2%
Christian	63	28%
Buddhist	1	0.4%
A different religion or belief (Agnostic / Pagan)	2	1%
No religion or belief	69	30%
Prefer not to say / blank	89	39%

Sexuality	Number of responses	Percentage
Heterosexual / Straight	136	60%
Bisexual	0	0.4%
Gay or Lesbian	0	0.4%
Prefer to define my own sexuality	1	1%
Prefer not to say / blank	91	40%

Response to consultation proposals

Consultees' comments on the draft Post 16 Transport Policy Statement for 2025-26

Consultees were given the opportunity to provide any comments on the draft Post 16 Transport Policy Statement for 2025-26 in their own words. The comments have been reviewed and grouped into themes consistent with the process reported in the 'Points to Note' section. Half of consultees answering (50%) provided a comment to this question. Whilst this question asked for comments on the 2025-26 statement, feedback received spans the 2025-26 and 2026-27 statements.

The most common themes reported are children / young people not being able to access public transport / travel independently (26% of consultees answering), the statement's contents making education inaccessible for some children / young people (23%), the statement being unfair / discriminatory (22%) and concern families cannot afford to pay for transport (22%).

18% of consultees commented that all education transport should be provided / funded by KCC.

If you have any comments on the draft Post 16 Transport Policy Statement for 2025-26, please provide them in the box below. Base: all consultees providing a response (111)

	Number of responses	Percentage
Cannot access public transport / travel independently	29	26%
Making education inaccessible / young people will miss out / changes will affect attendance	26	23%
Unfair / discriminatory to families / those with SEND	24	22%
Families cannot afford to pay for transport	24	22%
All education transport should be provided / funded by KCC	20	18%
Children / young people are legally obligated to be in education until 19	13	12%
Parents / carers affected / change working hours / give up work	13	12%
Establishments are not on public transport routes / not accessible by public transport	13	12%
Special schools are often further away / are few and far between / little choice where to send young people	11	10%
Should continue to be able to use same transport as used before the age of 16	11	10%
Public transport is poor / poor availability / timings / long journey times / expensive	10	9%
Concerns about payments / basis / criteria for charging	9	8%
Young person suffers with anxiety / mental health / disability / changes could exacerbate issues	8	7%
Complicated process / time consuming / concerns about application process	7	6%
Safety issues / safeguarding / vulnerable at risk when travelling	6	5%
Agree with Personal Transport Budget	6	5%

	Number of responses	Percentage
Agree with proposals / praise for KCC	5	5%
Any changes will be disruptive for young people / KCC letting them down	5	5%
Happy with status quo / happy no changes for next year	4	5%
Personal Transport Budget is not appropriate / would not work / would be insufficient	4	4%
Cannot apply a one-size fits all approach / all young people are different / have different needs	4	4%
Live rurally so journeys are even more complicated	4	4%
Young people are entitled to an education	4	4%
Young person or family should contribute financially to transport	4	4%

Example verbatim, in consultees' own words, about children / young people not being able to access public transport / travel independently and making education inaccessible can be found below:

“My son is in a special school with severe and complex needs and when he reaches 16 he will still require transport to school. He cannot travel along on public transport as has no awareness of danger and I cannot afford to pay for his transport. If changes are made and his transport stops he would be unable to attend school and this would be damaging to his health and social wellbeing and I regard it as discrimination as he has an EHCP which is covered to age 25 so should be able to get to his education without costs to parent who can't afford. A local school cannot accommodate his needs or I would have walked him to his local school but as this is not the case and has never been I have always had to rely on school transport. Taking this away at age 16 when education continues as a compulsory service until 18/19 is unacceptable and I object to this fiercely.” (Parent / carer)

“The proposals being mooted would affect my son's ability to attend college, he isn't able to travel alone or on public transport , I also cannot afford to pay for him to get to colleges unless he receives a taxi , he would have to leave education which at the moment is his life, he doesn't meet people outside of college so it would have a detrimental effect on his life .” (Parent / carer)

“Our 16 year old son would not be able to make his own way via public transport to his school, he doesn't go anywhere alone due to his disability, also the school is difficult to get to by public transport. While KCC provides transport I know that the drivers have all been vetted and approved by the Local Authority (they have checked DBS etc), they have assessed best value as they have that expertise and can compare tenders and the young people have consistent transport.” (Parent / carer)

“As a student in a SEN college most SEN students will not be able to handle a journey on public transport independently.” (Student)

“The change in policy was introduced rapidly last year without clear information being sent to parents so many of our pupils did not have transport at the beginning of the academic year. How do you reach out to parents with their own learning difficulties? I think the

policy discriminates against pupils in Special Schools as often those pupils have to travel to attend their District Special School and are unable to use public transport. It is then ludicrous that post 19 transport is provided again free of charge. Surely transport should be allocated as to whether those pupils have the capacity to travel independently on public transport and not on age.” (Education professional)

“I agree that all learners with an EHCP should not automatically be awarded home school transport - however, those that cannot travel independently and meet the criteria of not attending an additional placement should receive this support. I also think it’s wrong that a post 19 learner cannot financially contribute to their travel. I am aware that this rule is set in state law.” (Education professional)

Example verbatim, in consultees’ own words, about families who cannot afford to pay for transport can be found below:

“I think that moving everyone (with limited exceptions) is unfair. as the cost of transport will far exceed the amount of PTB. If my child continues on to the sixth form of his current school is will cost £15,600 per annum for the same transport he has now. This is unsustainable even with the PTB, and no guarantee that they will qualify for a KCC organised vehicle.” (Parent / carer)

“Charging for transport puts many families, already at financial hardship due to supporting a child or young person with special needs, at greater levels of difficulty. Education is compulsory up to the age of 18. A young person with SEND does not have the luxury of being able to choose where they can attend. My child cannot attend the closest sixth form provision as it is not suitable. We do not have a choice where our child attends - we cannot choose somewhere within walking distances at a) this would not be suitable b) this would not be possible.” (Parent / carer)

“Your proposals will have a negative impact on many of our students’ abilities to access our sites and therefore their education with us as a provider. Not all of our students even get a bursary so this will mean that we will become inaccessible to them altogether because of the cost of transport.” (Education professional)

Example verbatim, in consultees’ own words, about being unfair / discriminatory to families / those with SEND can be found below:

“The change in policy was introduced rapidly last year without clear information being sent to parents so many of our pupils did not have transport at the beginning of the academic year. How do you reach out to parents with their own learning difficulties? I think the policy discriminates against pupils in Special Schools as often those pupils have to travel to attend their District Special School and are unable to use public transport. It is then ludicrous that post 19 transport is provided again free of charge. Surely transport should be allocated as to whether those pupils have the capacity to travel independently on public transport and not on age.” (Parent / carer)

“Very concerned about current proposals as feel there are yet more barriers for SEND YP and particularly Young Adults attending education. There are a limited number of specialist college places for example and these will only be accessible for the majority by arranged

transport- admittedly this will not be the case for everyone but does feel that ultimately there could be an increase in SEND individuals with poor outcomes if this is poorly handled and rushed through.” (Parent / carer)

“Our 16 year old son would not be able to make his own way via public transport to his school, he doesn't go anywhere alone due to his disability, also the school is difficult to get to by public transport. While KCC provides transport I know that the drivers have all been vetted and approved by the Local Authority (they have checked DBS etc), they have assessed best value as they have that expertise and can compare tenders and the young people have consistent transport.” (Parent / carer)

“The lack of PTB for Post 16 pupils with SEN will create a further year of financial crisis for families and pupils continuing to miss education.” (Education professional)

“How is the system going to maintain and keep consistent the opportunity to access education for students who have learning or mental health disabilities by making these changes? How is the system going to protect vulnerable students from being financially abused from parents / carers? How are students going to be able to access more remote locations to access the courses that suits their career paths?” (Education professional)

Example verbatim, in consultees' own words, about children / young people being legally obligated to be in education until 19 can be found below:

“Still find it appalling that SEN children that are unable to access public transport have to pay to go to school when it's a legal requirement.” (Parent / carer)

“As all children are required to attend education until 19 years the transport should be funded until the legal obligation expires and then be looked at in a case by case needs requirement. Sometimes disabilities become more affecting at an older age especially in areas of anxiety and mental health alongside their everyday challenges and this should continue to be widely supported until any form of education ceases.” (Parent / carer)

“Why are post 16 students living in rural areas with very limited public transport still not allowed to get the KCC provided school bus to 6 form! Applying for a spare seat is nonsense as they never get one and they are then expected to pay for it. 16 to 18 year olds are now legally required to be in education or approved training so surely they should be able to use the school bus they have always got to get to the same school to do A levels. The first public bus leaving our village is at 9.20am too late for school.” (Parent / carer)

Example verbatim, in consultees' own words, about how parents / carers will be affected / need to change working hours / give up work can be found below:

“While I understand the financial pressures Kent are facing as a Head Teacher myself I am concerned about how my child with epilepsy, social and communication difficulties and learning difficulties will be able to continue to access school from 16 if transport will not be provided. Even if he could get to Ashford on the train, which he could not as he cannot walk to the shop in the village on his own, he would then not be able to get to Wyvern school as it is too far to walk and he could not manage a bus on his own. I work full time and my husband is away a lot with work. One of us would have to give up work to be able to

transport him if these changes go ahead. This would mean a complete change to our lives and out ourselves in a very difficult, financial situation. Our lines of work do not give us flexibility to provide transport at the right times.” (Parent / carer)

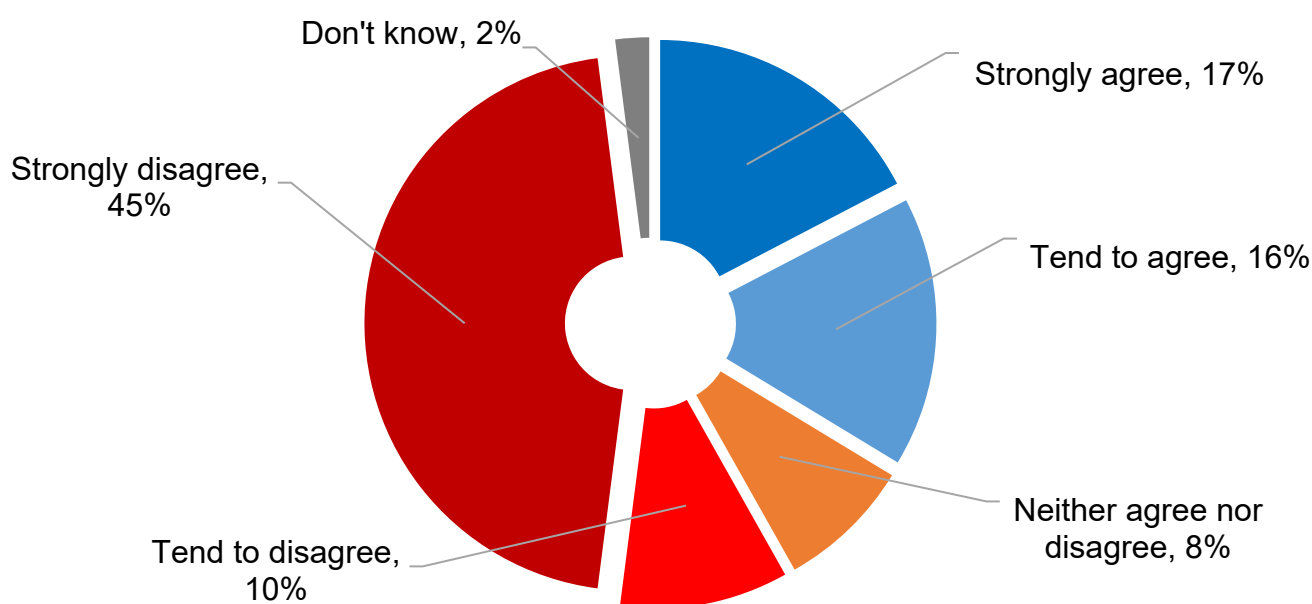
“My son, and all 3 of my children are far too vulnerable to get a train or a bus to school, for when the time comes post 16. They are not street wise at all. I am going to have to drive my son (he's the eldest) to his current school he's at the moment, because he is happy there. So, wants to stay there. This is going to be detrimental to my working life, as I will have to drive him from Sittingbourne to the Malling school everyday. Twice a day.” (Parent / carer)

“This proposal will not work for most parents as they can't be in two places at once and also you will be adding more stress to parents and children with SEN having to arrange their own transport.” (Parent / carer)

2026-27 statement proposals - Provision of a Personal Transport Budget to most learners who qualify for additional support

Just over a third of consultees (34%) agree with the first proposal for the 2026-27 statement to provide a Personal Transport Budget to most learners who qualify for additional support from KCC, to facilitate their travel to their place of education. 56% disagree with this proposal; 45% strongly disagree. 8% indicated they neither agree nor disagree and 2% are unsure.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to provide a Personal Transport Budget to most learners who qualify for additional support from KCC, to facilitate their travel to their place of education? Base: all providing a response (225)



Supporting data table	Number of responses	Percentage
Net – Agree	76	34%
Net – Disagree	125	56%
Strongly agree	39	17%
Tend to agree	37	16%
Neither agree nor disagree	19	8%
Tend to disagree	23	10%
Strongly disagree	102	45%
Don't know	5	2%

Agreement proportions are broadly consistent by parents / carers of children / young people of different ages and attendance at different types of school. However, a lower proportion of consultees who receive KCC organised transport agree compared to consultees who do not receive KCC organised transport.

% agree (subgroups shown where base sizes permit)	Number of responses	Percentage
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Years 7-11 (Secondary aged 11-16)	21	27%
Years 12-13 (Post-16 aged 16-18)	22	31%
Attend a special school	23	26%
Attend a mainstream school	9	25%
Receive KCC organised transport	24	19%
Do not receive KCC organised transport	24	60%
Consultee with a disability	10	42%
Consultee with a caring responsibility	10	42%
Education professional	11	35%

Consultee comments on proposal to provide a Personal Transport Budget

Consultees were asked to add any comments in their own words on the proposal to provide a Personal Transport Budget to most learners who qualify for additional support from KCC, to facilitate their travel to their place of education. The comments have been reviewed and grouped into themes consistent with the process reported in the 'Points to Note' section. 69% of consultees provided a comment to this question. 48% of those who indicated they agree with the proposal provided a comment; 86% of those who indicated they disagree with the proposal provided a comment.

26% of consultees answering commented that parents / carers would be affected / they would need to change their working hours / give up work. Consistent with themes reported previously, consultees also commented that children / young people not being able to access public transport / travel independently (24%), the statement's contents making education inaccessible for some children / young people (22%) and concern families cannot afford to pay for transport / Personal Transport budget will not cover costs (21%).

13% made reference to special schools often being further away / few / there was little choice on where to send young people. 11% expressed concerns with assessment / monitoring criteria and how this affects who is entitled and the definition of exceptional circumstances.

Please add any comments you have on this proposal in the box below.

Base: all consultees providing a response (154)

	Number of responses	Percentage
Parents / carers would be affected / change working hours / give up work / can't be in two places at once	40	26%
Children / young people cannot access public transport / travel independently	37	24%
Makes education inaccessible / young people will miss out / changes will affect attendance	34	22%
	Number of responses	Percentage
Families cannot afford to pay for transport / Personal Transport Budget will not cover costs	33	21%

All education transport should be provided / funded by KCC	31	20%
Special schools are often further away / are few and far between / little choice where to send young people	20	13%
Concerns with assessment / monitoring criteria / what are exceptional circumstances?	17	11%
Young person suffers with anxiety / mental health / changes could exacerbate issues / need a routine	16	10%
Unfair / discriminatory for families / those with SEND	16	10%
Young people are entitled to an education	15	10%
Safety issues / safeguarding / vulnerable at risk when travelling	14	9%
Difficulty in arranging alternative transport	14	9%
KCC has more resources / better at co-ordinating / optimising vehicle capacity / routes	14	9%
Public transport is poor / poor availability / timings / long journey times / expensive	13	8%
Cannot apply a one-size fits all approach / all young people are different / have different needs	10	6%
Receiving a Personal Transport Budget should be a choice rather than a mandate	10	6%
No access to own transport / cannot drive	10	6%
Agree with Personal Transport Budget / good idea	10	6%
Legally obligated to be in education until 19	9	6%
PTB is not appropriate / would not work / would be insufficient	8	5%
Lead to an increase in traffic on the roads	8	5%
Young people qualifying for Personal Independence Payment / have an EHCP should continue to receive funded transport	8	5%
Those with physical disabilities face further challenges / add complications	7	5%
Potential difficulty in budgeting if in receipt of Personal Transport Budget	7	5%
Parents / families should contribute to cost of transport	7	5%
Establishments are not on public transport routes / not accessible by public transport	6	4%
Concerned that money will not be used for its intended use	5	3%
Live rurally so journeys are even more complicated	5	3%
Agree with Personal Transport Budget if it covers costs / can be used by family members / carers	5	3%
KCC should not be funding transport	5	3%
	Number of responses	Percentage
Complicated process / time consuming / concerns about application process	4	3%
Travel training would not work	4	3%

Understand it's expensive for KCC / there are budget restrictions	4	3%
Would welcome a train pass	4	3%

Example verbatim, in consultees' own words, about how parents / carers would be affected / would need to change their working hours / give up work can be found below:

"It's not the cost that concerns me, but rather the time and effort to accompany children to school during a working day. I would not expect help for my younger child, who also has SEN but is able to get to and from school independently. However, my older child, who has SEN and an EHCP cannot independently go anywhere unaccompanied and is vulnerable. Her needs are such that there are extra pressures on the family and we need the extra support eg home-to-school transport to continue post 16. I am concerned about moving over to a PTB system, but that is based on our individual circumstances. Other families might prefer it." (Parent / carer)

"It is a good idea for families that are able to drive their children to school themselves, however for those who can't get their children to school themselves because maybe they work or don't even drive it is not particularly helpful. Some children are not able to get public transport on their own either so the Bus pass may not be helpful to them as well." (Parent / carer)

"This is just another way for you to reduce the travel spaces on the buses as it's still costing you more than we are paying for now! I'm a parent of 4 SEN children with ECHP's at 2 schools how on earth am I meant to be in 2 places at once? And before you use the free school breakfast/ after school clubs our child can't access those due to their needs and no trained staff!" (Parent / carer)

"While I agree that PTBs should be offered, they will not be a practical or cost effective solution for many families. For working parents, using the PTB to take young people to school is unlikely to be an option and parents are very unlikely to have the ability/skills or local contacts to be able to make arrangements with other transport providers in the way that the KCC team is able to do, which would be more resource effective than individual transport arrangements for each young person." (Parent / carer)

Example verbatim, in consultees' own words, about children / young people not being able to access public transport / travel independently and making education inaccessible can be found below:

"I think this would make applying for transport for those aged 16 and above who have SEND, and cannot travel independently due to their needs, so much more complicated than the current system. It will be so much harder for young people and their parents/carers to navigate this system - of jumping through extra hoops before transport is arranged. I think it will put post 16 learners off applying for help with transport and therefore will affect their attendance at their education setting. With the previous changes, the cohort of youngsters accessing education shrank, and I am worried that these proposals will decrease the numbers of young people who can access education still further. In your own EqIA you indicate that this is a concern. The more you deny young people access to education, the more likely it is that they will become economically inactive as adults." (Parent / carer)

“My daughter's school is not close to any public transport route. There is a station at Thanet Parkway however she would need to take a 20-25 minute walk including crossing a dual carriageway where there is no crossing provided. She is not streetwise as she does not go out independently. The risk of her crossing this road is too dangerous and is a safeguarding issue. She also would not be willing to do this. She would also need to walk down an isolated lane with no buildings nor lighting. Again, this is too risky and would affect her attendance at school as she would not be willing to undertake this. (Parent / carer)

“This would be extremely detrimental to my son and would mean he can no longer attend the special school he has thrived in for many years. Another KCC cost cutting venture, our poor kids suffer as usual with no regard to their needs. Transport should be provided whilst children with an EHCP are in education. The whole of their education. It is discriminatory to change things the way you propose and will no doubt go ahead as our voices usually mean very little.” (Parent / carer)

“There are many students with EHCPs for whom independent travel is an aspiration not a reality at the present time. Travel provision from KCC facilitated these learners continuing their education and teaching their potential. This is crucial for these individuals to go on and be able to access the workplace rather than having to rely on a lifetime of benefits.” (Parent / carer)

“Many learners with SEND could not be supported to effectively manage this budget with their parents. They are more at risk of financial abuse and some parents have SEND or severe mental health issues themselves. This will stop so many students attending college and accessing their right to education.” (Education professional)

“Most of our sites are not accessible by public transport so these budgets would be insufficient OR leave young people in dangerous situations whereby they have to walk the last length of their journeys along country lanes in isolation, often in the dark in the winter months.” (Education professional)

“This works well for students who have parents available to drive them to a destination but it will be very difficult for students who live in a remote location & do not have a mobile parent. They are even more likely to drop out of education which put them at an even greater disadvantage.” (Education professional)

“I work in a SEN college where students rely on taxis to attend college. we are a remote college where public transport is not available. We have a number of students with severe needs that would not be able to access public transport as this would be too triggering for them. In general, the majority of students in my college would struggle to attend college which would then effect their entitlement to an EHCP and an education. Our students would stop attending college if travel was disrupted.” (Education professional)

Example verbatim, in consultees' own words, about families not being able to afford to pay for transport / Personal Transport Budget will not cover costs can be found below:

“We live some distance from the special needs school - my child is severely disabled and cannot attend any other setting. I work full time and do not have the time to spend 2 hours plus a day taking her to school. I cannot see that £4000 will cover her journeys when 1 taxi journey from Ashford to Tenterden costs £80. In addition to this, she requires an escort in

the car as she is severely epileptic.. Not only is this proposal already causing me some stress (as the parent of a severely disabled child I am already under considerable stress) but potentially puts at risk her ability to attend school.” (Parent / carer)

“I have doubts as to whether the amount allocated will be enough to provide taxis for our students. Many parents also have learning needs or difficulties with form-filling and may lose out if required to complete application forms. Any shortfall will not be able to be covered by bursaries or other college funds. If students cannot come to college by taxi due to lack of funds, their entire education will be affected. This could also affect taxi drivers who often rely on regular school trips as the main part of their income.” (Education professional)

“The journey time to college is 45mins to an hour ; that would mean approx. 2 hours there and back twice a day; Its simply not possible to drive for that long 5 days a week and £5000 would not cover the cost ; My daughter is really learning and improving at college but it is the nearest one to us so for her to keep on improving she has to go there.” (Parent / carer)

Example verbatim, in consultees’ own words, about concerns with assessment / monitoring criteria / the definition of exceptional circumstances can be found below:

“I think there should be some clarity on the phrase 'exceptional circumstances'- what are the circumstances where a learner would have an organised vehicle rather than a PTB?” (Parent / carer)

“Only offering transport in exceptional circumstances will mean many young adults will not be able to access educational settings. Your staff do not have the knowledge or training necessary to determine an individual’s needs or ability. Providing a young adult with funding will not magically give them the skills necessary to native public transport, manage or afford daily taxis or have the ability to learn to drive.” (Parent / carer)

“Exceptional circumstances needs to refer to those with severe and complex disabilities. Those who have received their own or 2:1 KCC provided transport and assistant in the past. Age is not substantially going to change a person's level of need related to their disability, perhaps as compared to others who need less support as they age. Level of need is not linear with age progression. In some cases, the level of need can increase with age. (Parent / carer)

Example verbatim, in consultees’ own words, about special schools often being further away / few and far between / there is little choice where to send young people can be found below:

“Most adult learners have to travel long distances to the most suitable special college for their needs. This proposed policy would make it very difficult in most cases for them to access their college, in most cases, colleges where they are settled and are progressing in their chosen course to enable them to be able to be more independent and employable. The KCC are potentially taking this away.” (Parent / carer)

“I think there is unrealistic expectations around how KCC is going to meet this growing demand for specialised transport. 16-18 year olds are still 'children' and parents would still be expected to help them access education. I think that helping parents with car transport costs makes lots of sense. Relentless increases in taxi transport is just not sustainable. However this policy change is likely to spotlight a bigger issue around why young people are having to travel long distances in the first place (lack of appropriate local SEN provisions). That is a better focus to work on than taxi provision. My only proviso is that

there are always cases where 'normal' is not going to work. For example if a parent has to be at three different settings simultaneously. So there will always need to be a safety net. In the policy for where families are realistically not going to be able to meet the need.” (Parent / carer)

“We live some distance from the special needs school - my child is severely disabled and cannot attend any other setting. I work full time and do not have the time to spend 2 hours plus a day taking her to school. I cannot see that £4000 will cover her journeys when 1 taxi journey from Ashford to Tenterden costs £80. In addition to this, she requires an escort in the car as she is severely epileptic.. Not only is this proposal already causing me some stress (as the parent of a severely disabled child I am already under considerable stress), but potentially puts at risk her ability to attend school.” (Parent / carer)

Example verbatim, in consultees' own words, about being unfair / discriminatory to families / those with SEND can be found below:

“Not viable for SEN children where independent travel is not possible. Will prohibit my child attending full time education. Under PTB will also lose economies of scale as taxi is shared and at full capacity with other pupils at same educational establishment.” (Parent / carer)

“This would be extremely detrimental to my son and would mean he can no longer attend the special school he has thrived in for many years. Another KCC cost cutting venture, our poor kids suffer as usual with no regard to their needs. Transport should be provided whilst children with an EHCP are in education. The whole of their education. It is discriminatory to change things the way you propose and will no doubt go ahead as our voices usually mean very little.” (Parent / carer)

“In the case of my son and family I'm a single parent, I work and do not have the ability to take my son to school and pick him up. He is not able to get public transport on his own and I would not be able to continue with my employment if I had to take him to school and pick him up five days a week. I feel I'd be discriminated against for having a child with a disability, who can't travel on public transport but has to legally be in education until at least 18.” (Parent / carer)

“As with all the consultations, It is clear and obvious that there is a real need to cut over spending where it can be cut and to slim down on areas that can be slimmed down. There will always be a cohort that wins and others that loose as a direct result of any change. My/our personal concern is around the overwhelming need for travel for the extremely vulnerable SEND students that rely on Special schools, like ourselves. Where parental involvement/ability is an issue, we would like to maintain the need for exceptional circumstances to always be able to be discussed and a bespoke plan put into place. Working closely with KCC for sometime, I am sure this will be the case, but needed to highlight the need for some will not to fit into the box not matter what you plan. We would hate to have such a barrier to learning, making our bespoke teaching ineffective as they would be unable to attend placement.” (Education professional)

“Many learners with SEND could not be supported to effectively manage this budget with their parents. They are more at risk of financial abuse and some parents have SEND or

severe mental health issues themselves. This will stop so many students attending college and accessing their right to education.” (Education professional)

Example verbatim, in consultees own words, from those agreeing with the proposal can be found below:

“SEN children need additional support. Personal transport budget is a massive help.”

(Parent / carer)

“I think this is sensible as the bus network is now very limited so having a budget would enable each family to make arrangements for whatever form of transport makes the most sense for their young person - in my situation this would be train-fare. Also, there are some families who can afford to pay for the transport themselves.” (Parent / carer)

“There are many reasons why students are unable to use public transport or why parents would be unable to transport them personally so as long as parents are not overly questioned as to why their child requires KCC provided transport I agree with the PTB.”

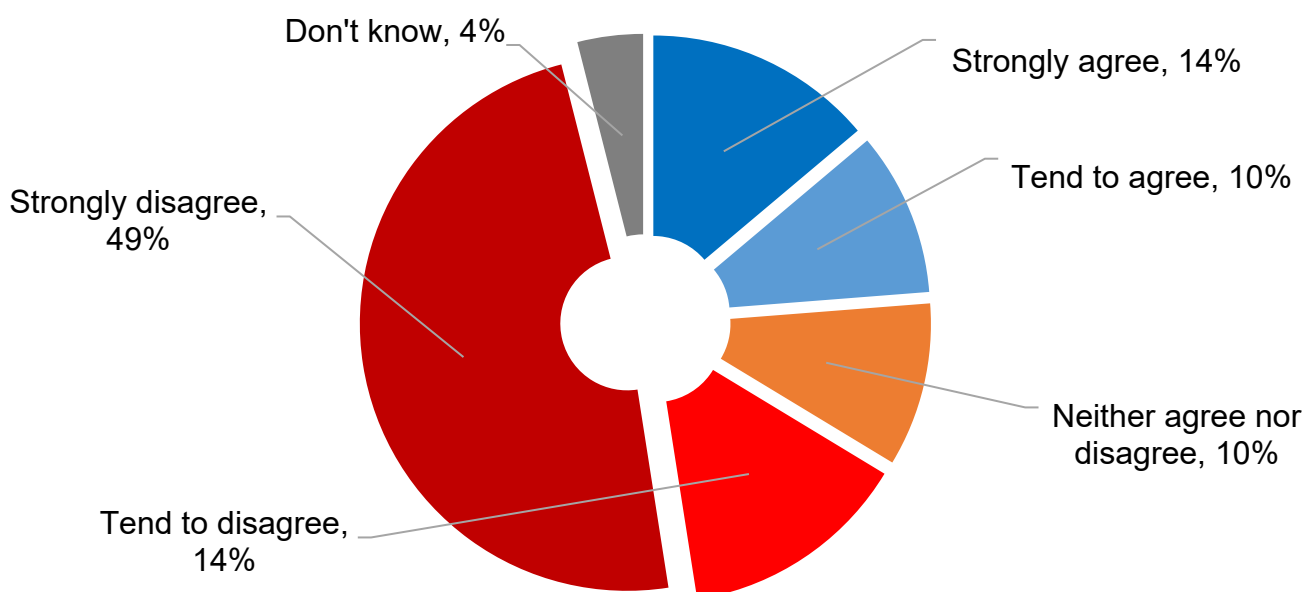
(Responded in another capacity)

“Times are hard for all of us, but for KCC to continue funding where it is not legally required needs to be addressed.” (Responded in another capacity)

2026-27 statement proposals - Expectation students aged 19+ apply for a discretionary bursary to facilitate travel

Just under a quarter of consultees (24%) agree with the expectation for the 2026-27 statement that students aged 19+ apply for a discretionary bursary from their learning provider to facilitate their travel to and from their school or college. 63% disagree with this proposal; 49% strongly disagree. 10% indicated they neither agree nor disagree and 4% are unsure.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the expectation that students aged 19+ apply for a discretionary bursary from their learning provider to facilitate their travel to and from their school or college? Base: all providing a response (225)



Supporting data table	Number of responses	Percentage
Net – Agree	53	24%
Net – Disagree	142	63%
Strongly agree	31	14%
Tend to agree	22	10%
Neither agree nor disagree	22	10%
Tend to disagree	32	14%
Strongly disagree	110	49%
Don't know	8	4%

Agreement proportions are broadly consistent by parents / carers of children / young people of different ages and attendance at different types of school. However, a lower proportion of

consultees who receive KCC organised transport agree compared to consultees who do not receive KCC organised transport.

% agree (subgroups shown where base sizes permit)	Number of responses	Percentage
Years 7-11 (Secondary aged 11-16)	12	15%
Years 12-13 (Post-16 aged 16-18)	12	17%
Attend a special school	12	14%
Attend a mainstream school	7	19%
Receive KCC organised transport	14	11%
Do not receive KCC organised transport	13	33%
Consultee with a disability	6	25%
Consultee with a caring responsibility	14	16%
Education professional	9	29%

Consultee comments on expectation students aged 19+ apply for a discretionary bursary to facilitate travel

Consultees were asked to add any comments in their own words on the proposal that students aged 19+ would apply for a discretionary bursary to facilitate travel to their place of education. The comments have been reviewed and grouped into themes consistent with the process reported in the 'Points to Note' section. 56% of consultees provided a comment to this question. 32% of those who indicated they agree with the proposal provided a comment; 70% of those who indicated they disagree with the proposal provided a comment.

Consultees reiterated earlier comments namely the statement being unfair / discriminatory (20%) and the statement's contents making education inaccessible for some children / young people (15%). In addition to the most common themes expressed so far, consultees commented they believe the process would be complicated / time consuming / the application process raises some concerns (23% of consultees answering) and establishments do not have the funds / already have a tight budget (15%).

22% of consultees commented that all education transport should be provided / funded by KCC.

Please add any comments you have on this proposal in the box below.

Base: all consultees providing a response (124)

	Number of responses	Percentage
Appears a complicated process / time consuming / concerns about application process	28	23%
All education transport should be provided / funded by KCC / it's their responsibility	27	22%
Unfair / discriminatory for families / those with SEND	25	20%
Making education inaccessible / young people will miss out / changes will affect attendance	19	15%
Establishments do not have the funds for this / already have a tight budget	19	15%
Young people cannot access public transport / travel independently	16	13%
Young people are entitled to an education	16	13%
Concerns with assessment / monitoring criteria / what are exceptional circumstances?	14	11%
Parents / carers affected / change working hours / give up work / can't be in two places at once	12	10%
A bursary is discretionary / not guaranteed / establishments choose to fund or not	12	10%
Schools attended by those with SEN are often further away / are few & far between / little choice where to send young people	11	9%
Difficulty in arranging alternative transport	10	8%
Agree with bursary / good idea	8	6%
Personal Transport Budget / bursary is not appropriate / would not work / would be insufficient	7	6%
	Number of responses	Percentage

Establishments are not on public transport routes / not accessible by public transport	7	6%
Bursary would be insufficient / not cover costs	7	6%
Families cannot afford to pay for transport / bursary will not cover costs	6	5%
If claiming retrospectively, cannot afford to fund it in the first place	6	5%
Affect young people in the long term / future / detrimental in the long term	6	5%
KCC should not be funding transport	6	5%
Cannot apply a one-size fits all approach / all young people are different / have different needs	5	4%
Safety issues / safeguarding / vulnerable at risk when travelling	4	3%
KCC abandoning / neglecting young people	4	3%
No access to own transport / cannot drive	4	3%
Happy to contribute to cost of transport	4	3%
Personal Transport Budget would be preferable	3	2%

Example verbatim, in consultees' own words, about it being a complicated process / time consuming / concerns about application process can be found below:

“Overly bureaucratic hurdles just to delay, deny and dismiss applications. Please don’t introduce more difficulties for our most vulnerable children. They cannot access much if anything in life please don’t take their right to attend school from them.” (Parent / carer)

“These are all unnecessary, taxing and discriminatory hoops for an individual with learning disabilities to go through. It is degrading and insulting for parents and students to have to continually, Year in Year, prove their need. Many of these students have lifelong conditions that unfortunately will not change for the better when assessed this year or next.” (Parent / carer)

“This is further administrative burden on families with young people who have additional needs, as well as on those learning providers. I can foresee this additional layer of bureaucracy could slow down the process of ensuring young people with SEND have the appropriate means of support to get to their place of learning.” (Parent / carer)

“Why add another layer for parents to have to go through? Why should learning providers have to be involved? This is unfair and time consuming. Who funds the bursary? Why should there be even more paperwork to fill out? These students have needs that are currently being met so there is no need to change the system. Perhaps savings should be made elsewhere in KCC and money allocated where the need is.” (Parent / carer)

“This could work for those who can understand the long term benefits, but many of our SEND students will not be able to grasp the idea that they get a Discretionary budget that needs to last for a term.” (Education professional)

Example verbatim, in consultees' own words, about children / young people not being able to access public transport / travel independently and making education inaccessible can be found below:

“I believe SEN students should be supported until they finish their schooling. My daughter would not be able to access public transport independently with confidence and would need to change school as there is no public transport available. This is not an option for her.” (Parent / carer)

“If the learner has no bus route or is unable to use the bus then this would just damage their chance of getting the education they need some learners require a longer time to achieve the goals but can't get to the college because KCC has dumped them in the trash pile. With out vital transport i.e. taxi and travel training 19+ are basically left to rot and therefore can't reach their potential and have no choice but to claim benefits. Taking this away isn't helping anyone other than KCC pockets.” (Parent / carer)

“I do not believe this is morally right or fair to students with disabilities, they often have to travel a further distance to access a suitable provision. This means that in the cases where their provisions are further it could be over £20 per journey, meaning that their bursary would diminish within weeks. This would also hinder access to the other things provided using the vulnerable bursary. Then then having to apply for PTB would mean further time out of education waiting on transport.” (Education professional)

Example verbatim, in consultees' own words, about being unfair / discriminatory to families / those with SEND can be found below:

“It puts young adults with SEN at a severe disadvantage. Many children with SEN qualify for enhanced mobility within PIP. For whatever reasons, they are unable to travel alone and, unlike their peers, unable to access public transport alone. This means a parent would need to choose between their young person attending further education or working, since SEN provision is rarely local. Many young people with SEN require more education to reach the same level as their peers. This policy denies them that and forces them to finish their education at 19. Those young people with SEN, who are in receipt of the enhanced mobility of PIP, deserve the same opportunities as everyone else. This policy says KCC believes otherwise.” (Parent / carer)

“This is very much a conciliatory device and as we all know EHCP's are now very hard fought & difficult to come by. So my concern is that this will put young people with special needs at a huge disadvantage, particularly as funding from KCC is so tight. I fear those who need it most, won't be "considered" for support.” (Education professional)

“I do not believe this is morally right or fair to students with disabilities, they often have to travel a further distance to access a suitable provision. This means that in the cases where their provisions are further it could be over £20 per journey, meaning that their bursary would diminish within weeks. This would also hinder access to the other things provided using the vulnerable bursary. Then then having to apply for PTB would mean further time out of education waiting on transport.” (Education professional)

Example verbatim, in consultees' own words, about establishments not having the funds for this / already have a tight budget can be found below:

“Colleges do not the means to pay for this transport from their budgets. Paying for this transport will remove funding from other students within the organisation.” (Parent / carer)

“How are schools going to come up with a bursary? They are underfunded as it is, and this will further disincentivise them to take on students with additional needs. Families with SEN children are statistically less well-off and less able to arrange and provide transport.”
(Parent / carer)

“This assumes that learning providers have surplus bursaries available - they do not. In 25/26 the DFE have awarded the same cash figure for bursaries as 24/25 - therefore a real terms cut when factoring in inflation. It is disingenuous to promote that learning providers will be able to assist without any discussion with learning providers as to whether that is the case. In assisting certain learners then others will go without. It is a completely flawed strategy directing potential learners to a Bursary System that currently has demand that significantly exceeds 100% of the funding available.” (Education professional)

“My organisation is not able to provide sufficient funding through bursaries, which means some students will not be able to continue with their education. If these students have EHCPs and we are named, this could lead to changes of placement being requested.”
(Education professional)

Whilst not explicitly referenced within the question for feedback, example verbatim, in consultees' own words, about replacing transport provision with bursaries can be found below:

“We are trying to ensure that skills are achieved to enable our child to enter the workforce rather than requiring a lifetime of care. It seems short-sighted to limit the ability to get to/from the educational establishments which will enable future work (thus saving KCC long term care costs). PTB are not a viable alternative and leaves each parent trying to negotiate with a taxi company without any economies of scale. This will lead to increased road traffic and seems a backward step.” (Parent / carer)

“The difficulty of finding and providing transport cannot just be offset by a monetary allowance.” (Parent / carer)

“This is complicating a system that currently works , as my son only receives personal independence payment and isn't on benefits , he probably wouldn't be accepted for a bursary as most bursaries require benefits to judge availability, I as his parent am on benefits but we wouldn't be able to get the bursary and without it he'd not be able to get to college . I wouldn't know how to arrange transport for him even with the money , so the fact the education dept sorts this out is much better for us and means my son can attend college where he is happiest and thriving, take that away and it would have a detrimental effect on his life.” (Parent / carer)

“I completely disagree to removing transport for post 19 provision, except in exceptional circumstances. The financial amounts suggested would not be sufficient to pay for transport - this means a parent/carers would be responsible. This is often not possible, meaning you are discriminating against the learner that is legally entitled to stay in education until the age of 25 if appropriate. Removing transport would make this impossible for many learners, which is wholly unacceptable. It is well documented in SEND law that SEND learners require more time to learn and this policy would effectively take this opportunity away for many learners. The policy also states when deciding on travel support, a qualification at the same level would not usually be considered and it would need to see strong progress towards a clearly defined qualification or potential career. I

believe this is unlawful and is not a requirement to stay in education - there is clear case law refuting this statement: Buckinghamshire CC v SJ [2016] UKUT 0254 (AAC) "I reject any suggestion that the attainment of qualifications is an essential element of education. For many of those to whom the 2014 Act and Regulations apply, attaining any qualifications at all is not an option. That does not mean that they do not require, or would not benefit from, special educational provision" and 15ZA(8) of the Education Act 1996 states training including "vocational, social, physical and recreational training", which may not have a qualification attached and is measurable progress being subjective. I feel your policy is going to have a detrimental impact on many young people, forcing them to stop education when they have the ability and capacity to make progress in education and training. I believe this to be discriminatory and potentially unlawful." (Parent / carer)

"With regard to adult learners, why do they need to apply for bursaries first? Only offering mileage payments is unfair and possibly unlawful considering that Contact charity confirm that parents cannot be required to transport an adult child. Section 508F of the Education Act 1996, referenced in the DfE guidance on page 19 states that adult learners should have transport provided by the local authority and that this should be provided free of charge. Mileage payments, like PTBs, may be unacceptable options, especially as young people of this age want to be independent from parents and parents will be out of pocket making long, most of the day round trips, where they need to stop and buy a drink as it isn't recommended that they drive for hours without a break." (Parent / carer)

"The proposal to replace direct transport provision with a mileage payment assumes that all students have access to a vehicle or a family member who can transport them. This is not always the case, particularly for learners with disabilities who may require specialist transport arrangements. Public transport is often inaccessible or impractical for these students due to mobility issues, the need for supervision, or the location of their education provider. Shifting the responsibility to individual learning providers and families introduces unnecessary complexity and uncertainty, making it harder for vulnerable learners to access their education. Instead of reducing support, KCC should ensure that all students with SEND and EHCPs have reliable, guaranteed transport options that do not depend on the discretionary decisions of different institutions. I urge KCC to reconsider this proposal and maintain a direct, structured approach to transport support for adult learners who need it." (Parent / carer)

Example verbatim, in consultees' own words, from those agreeing with the proposal can be found below:

"If it is all organised promptly it could work however people may not have the money up front to fund their travel and keep their receipts to claim money back at a later date." (Parent / carer)

"This is a better option. Many young people do not apply for the bursary or start it and then do not provide the required evidence. This would help to push them to access the bursary funding that is potentially allocated for them." (Responded in another capacity)

"For most families I believe this will work well. My only concern is as before that my son has high support needs." (Parent / carer)

“All forms of funding need to be explored. KCC will end up going bankrupt if not. If this happens there will be even less services and support for young people who need it.”

(Responded in another capacity)

Any other comments or alternative suggestions on proposed Post 16 Transport Policy statement

Consultees were given the opportunity to provide any other comments or alternative suggestions in their own words on the proposed Post 16 Transport Policy Statement for 2026-27. The comments have been reviewed and grouped into themes consistent with the process reported in the 'Points to Note' section. Just under four in ten of consultees (38%) provided a comment to this question.

30% of consultees answering referenced that all education transport should be provided / funded by KCC. Other comments highlighted that the statement's contents being unfair / discriminatory to those with SEND (15% of consultees answering), young people are entitled to an education / right to maximise opportunities (14%) and proposals will affect the most vulnerable / remove support from those who need it (13%).

If you have any other comments or alternative suggestions on the proposed Post 16 Transport Policy Statement for 2026-27, please provide them in the box below.

Base: all consultees providing a response (84)

	Number of responses	Percentage
All education transport should be provided / funded by KCC	25	30%
Unfair / discriminatory to those with SEND / all have different needs	13	15%
Young people are entitled to an education / right to maximise opportunities in life	12	14%
Most vulnerable will be affected by this / removing support from those who need it	11	13%
Making education inaccessible	11	13%
KCC just want to save money / stop cutting funding	10	12%
Parents / carers affected / change working hours / give up work / can't be in two places at once	10	12%
Cannot access public transport / travel independently / travel training would not work	10	12%
Other suggestion about process / funding (use of minibuses / taxis, individual assessments)	10	12%
KCC should save money elsewhere / not waste money	9	11%
Criticism of consultation / further clarification needed	9	11%
Detrimental in the long term / affect their future	8	10%
Bursary would be insufficient / not cover costs	8	10%
Safety issues / safeguarding / vulnerable at risk when travelling	7	8%
KCC's responsibility / should not all be the family/carers / KCC have better resources	6	7%
Provide minibuses to establishments to collect young people en route	5	6%
What are exceptional circumstances? Definition required	5	6%
Personal Transport Budget / bursary are insufficient to cover travel costs / £600 contribution is too much	5	6%

	Number of responses	Percentage
Young people qualifying for Personal Independence Payment / have an EHCP should continue to receive funded transport	5	6%
Should be on a case by case basis	4	5%
Happy to contribute to cost of transport if KCC organise it	4	5%
Special schools are few and far between / little choice where to send young people / lack of public transport to them	3	4%
Legally obligated to be in education until 19	3	4%

Example verbatim, in consultees' own words, about the statement's contents being unfair / discriminatory to those with SEND, young people being entitled to an education / right to maximise opportunities and affecting the most vulnerable can be found below:

“Whilst I appreciate KCC is having to look at budget cuts it seems very easy to pick on disabled people ; they are an easy target. Most parents with disabled children have already been through so much with budget cuts closing play groups respite etc ; you only have to look in the news to see some people are at breaking point with even some suicides ; stopping these young adults from accessing education by cutting transport is a disgrace and KCC should look elsewhere to make cuts.” (Parent / carer)

“It is hard enough for our children to cope with a day of college without adding in additional stress before they even get there. The taxi is not ideal, still causes stress when drivers change or drivers' text while driving, or aggressive to other road users but at least it means she is in education. I have no idea how many children with EHCPs and their families would be happy with a PTB or how many colleges would fund transport for post 19. I can only speak for my child and without a taxi she would struggle.” (Parent / carer)

“Bear in mind the number of parents who will have to give up work just to get their children to their education providers. If these children can't get to college, they also won't be able to work in future, meaning they will not be earning and will have to rely on benefits. They will be unfairly disadvantaged again, because of their disability, not given the chance to thrive and be self-supporting. It is absolutely not a well thought plan to stop access to education for older learners with SEND as it reduces their life chances and means parents also won't get a break and will need to be full time carers if their adult children can't get to school/college.” (Parent / carer)

“Giving access to those students of Sixth form age to the buses they were able to use from Y7 to 11 in rural areas is vital. We have had students unable to get to use because they no longer have transport, making them a greater risk of being NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).” (Education professional)

“This is clearly a cost cutting exercise but you MUST put safety first and the higher education of our young people first. Most of these SEND students are only in higher education because they have the transport to get here. If it is left to our parents and carers to organise, many of whom are SEND and vulnerable themselves, these young people will drop out of college and lose all of the many benefits that higher education offers. This must not be allowed to happen but it will if you push forward with this idea. Please don't.”
(Education professional)

Response to Equality Impact Assessment

Consultees were asked to provide their views on KCC's equality analysis in their own words. The comments have been reviewed and grouped into themes consistent with the process reported in the 'Points to Note' section.

Only 28% of consultees provided a response to this question and 40% of the comments provided did not specifically relate to the EqlA.

Amongst those answering, there is some concern that the statement is discriminatory towards:

- Families of young people (19% of consultees answering)
- All protected characteristics / vulnerable (18%)
- Those with SEND (13%)
- Physical disabled / wheelchair users (11%)

3% of consultees answering made reference to the EqlA being adequate.

We welcome your views on our EqlA for the draft 2026-27 Post 16 Transport Policy Statement and if you think there is anything else we could do to lessen the impacts on learners and their families. Please write your comments/suggestions in the box below

Base: all consultees providing a response (62)

	Number of responses	Percentage
Discriminatory towards families of young people	12	19%
Discriminatory towards all protected characteristics / vulnerable	11	18%
Discriminatory to young people / those aged 16+	8	13%
Discriminatory to those with SEND	8	13%
Discriminatory to those physically disabled / wheelchair users	7	11%
Other comments related to EqlA	7	11%
Discriminatory based on income levels	4	6%
EqlA seems inadequate	3	5%
EqlA seems adequate	2	3%
No comment / nothing to add	2	3%
Comments unrelated to EqlA	25	40%

Example verbatim, in consultees' own words, about potential discrimination can be found below:

“As always on paper you look like you're being inclusive but you really really aren't!!! This is going to affect all of the family not just said child! What about the mental toll on the parent or the parent losing their job or having to put off going back to work due to all the changes proposed!!.” (Parent / carer)

“Since KCC have neglected to detail what constitutes 'exceptional circumstances' it is impossible to say what the full impact would be on those young people with SEN. As it

stands it fails them in every way possible. There is no way to lessen this impact other than to rethink the entire proposal.” (Parent / carer)

“Young people who qualify for the enhanced mobility element of Personal Independence Payment (unable to plan or undertake journeys safely alone) should qualify for provision of transport without the threat or fear of having to jump through hoops to receive it. To take this away by saying it will be considered in “exceptional circumstances” fails SEND children and their families. We all appreciate KCC needs to save money but this cut is not the way to do it.” (Parent / carer)

“You recognise the PTB would not enable transport to school, you can see the difficulties for families already struggling and the fact it is likely to impact many learners remaining in education - the only way the impact can be lessened is to provide transport. Yet again the most vulnerable in society are being targeted, with their outcomes being limited.” (Parent / carer)

“As identified it is going to negatively impact on the education of many learners due to families potentially being unable to transport their child. This will either mean them remaining at home or potentially going into adult social care (a massively under resourced and inappropriate place for young people).” (Education professional)

“As it says in your own document, those with protected characteristics will be effected. This is not morally just. The right thing to do would be to provide funding for minibuses so that the cost of taxis is reduced and those with SEND can still access their education.” (Education profession)

Section 1 – About You

Before you tell us your views on the draft Post 16 Transport Policy Statements for 2025-26 and 2026-27, we would like to ask you some questions about you. This information will help us to understand your views in more depth.

Q1. Are you a parent/carer of children/young people in education (by education we mean attending nursery, school, college or other further learning)?

Select **one** option.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No (**go to Q2**)

Q1a. Please tell us the first 5 characters of your postcode:

Please do not reveal your whole postcode. We use this to help us to analyse our data. It will not be used to identify who you are.

Q1b. Please select the age groups that apply to your children/young people:

Select **all** that apply.

- ☐ Early Years (0-4 years) – **go to Q1e**
- ☐ Reception (4-5 years) – **go to Q1e**
- ☐ Years 1-6 (Primary aged 5-11) – **go to Q1e**
- ☐ Years 7-11 (Secondary aged 11-16) – **go to Q1c**
- ☐ Years 12-13 (Post-16 aged 16-18) - **go to Q1c**
- ☐ Later than Year 13, but started current course/qualification before 19th birthday – **go to Q1c**
- ☐ Age 19-25 (started current course/qualification after 19th birthday) - **go to Q1c**

Q1c. If your children/young people attend a school or further education establishment, please select which type from the list below. Otherwise, please go to Q1d.

*Select **all** that apply.*

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Special school in Kent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Special school outside of Kent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mainstream school in Kent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mainstream school outside of Kent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Grammar school in Kent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Grammar school outside of Kent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | College in Kent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | College outside of Kent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Kent Independent education provider |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other, please say which one: |

--

Q1d. Do your children/young people currently use a KCC Travel Saver pass?

This is the travel card subsidised by KCC that gives access to the public bus network.

*Select **all** that apply.*

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes, KCC Travel Saver (years 7-11) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes, KCC 16+ Travel Saver (years 12-14) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | No |

Q1e. Do any of your children/young people receive KCC organised transport?

*Select **one** option.*

<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, 1 child
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, 2 children
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, 3 or more children

Q1f. Do any of your children/young people have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities?

*Select **all that apply**.*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, without an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

Please now go to Section 2.

Q2. Are you a student aged 16 to 19, or up to 25 if you have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)?

Select **one** option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No (go to Q3)

Q2a. If you attend a school or further education establishment, please select which type from the list below. Otherwise, please go to Q2b.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Special school in Kent
<input type="checkbox"/>	Special school outside of Kent
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mainstream school in Kent
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mainstream school outside of Kent
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grammar school in Kent
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grammar school outside of Kent
<input type="checkbox"/>	College in Kent
<input type="checkbox"/>	College outside of Kent
<input type="checkbox"/>	Kent Independent education provider
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please say which one:

--

Q2b. Please tell us the first 5 characters of your postcode:

--

Please do not reveal your whole postcode. If you're not sure or don't want to tell us, you can leave the box blank. We use this to help us to analyse our data. It will not be used to identify who you are.

Q2c. Please select the age group you are in:

Select **one** option.

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Years 12-13 (Post-16 aged 16-18)

Later than Year 13, but started current course/qualification before 19th birthday

Age 19-25 (started current course/qualification after 19th birthday)

Q2d. Do you have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities? Select *one* option.

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Yes, with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

Yes, without an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

No

I'm not sure

Q2e. Do you currently use the Kent 16+ Travel Saver pass? Select *one* option.

This is the travel card subsidised by KCC that gives access to the public bus network.

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Yes

No

Q2f. Do you use KCC organised transport?

Select *one* option.

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Yes

No

I'm not sure

Please now go to Section 2.

Q3. If you are not a parent/carers or student, please select from the following options:

<input type="checkbox"/>

Transport professional. Please select from the following:

- ☐ Taxi operator
- ☐ Minibus operator
- ☐ Bus operator
- ☐ Other, please tell us more:

☐ Education professional in Kent. Please select from the following:

- ☐ Special school Head / teacher or another representative
- ☐ Mainstream school Head / teacher or another representative
- ☐ Grammar school Head / teacher or another representative
- ☐ College Head / teacher or another representative
- ☐ Kent Independent education provider
- ☐ Other, please tell us more:

☐ Education professional outside of Kent. Please select from the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Special school Head / teacher or another representative
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mainstream school Head / teacher or another representative
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grammar school Head / teacher or another representative
<input type="checkbox"/>	College Head / teacher or another representative
<input type="checkbox"/>	Independent education provider
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please tell us more:

☐

Responding in another capacity. Please let us know in the box below:

Q3a. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please tell us the name of your organisation in the box below:

Q3b. Please tell us the first 5 characters of your postcode:

Please do not reveal your whole postcode. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please provide your organisations postcode. We use this to help us to analyse our data. It will not be used to identify who you are.

Section 2 – Post 16 Transport Policy Statements

The draft 2025-26 Post 16 Transport Policy Statement

No changes are being proposed for the 2025-26 Post 16 Transport Policy Statement, however, KCC is legally required to consult every year. Page 10 of the consultation document provides a summary of the draft Statement. The consultation document and full draft Statement are available from the consultation webpage www.kent.gov.uk/post16consultation.

There will be the opportunity to provide your feedback on the Statement for 2026-27 in the next question.

Q4. If you have any comments on the draft Post 16 Transport Policy Statement for 2025-26, please provide them in the box below.

If you don't have any comments, please move on to the next question. Please do not include any personal information within your response.

The draft 2026-27 Post 16 Transport Policy Statement

Proposal 1: We are proposing to provide a Personal Transport Budget (PTB) to learners who qualify for additional support from KCC, to facilitate their travel to their place of education, rather than the forms of support we currently offer. We are proposing that a PTB will be KCC's standard offer of additional support. A KCC organised vehicle will only be provided in exceptional circumstances.

What is a Personal Transport Budget (PTB)?

A PTB is a payment designed to support parents and young people in making their own personal arrangements to get to and from school, college or a training provider. Applicants are not limited in how they make use of the PTB to support travel, with the exception that funds cannot be used to purchase an alternative KCC pass or scheme for the young person, as these are already subsidised by KCC. While most learners currently receive no direct support from KCC to access their place of learning, this PTB payment acknowledges the additional challenges that some learners face in maintaining their educational or vocational responsibilities. This means that KCC will still be providing them with a greater level of support.

PTB payments are made on the basis of the straight-line distance between the applicants home and their main educational establishment or training provider in the following Bands (minus an initial contribution in line with the full cost of the K16+TS pass, including with appropriate adjustment to the rates for low income applicants who are unable to secure direct bursary support from their provider, for the academic year that the application is being made):

	Annual Fund	Total Annual Fund minus contribution (e.g. £600). This is the amount the applicant would receive.	Total Annual Fund minus low income contribution (e.g. £300). This is the amount the applicant would receive if they meet the low income criteria.
Band 1	£2,000	£1,400	£1,700
Band 2	£3,000	£2,400	£2,700
Band 3	£5,000	£4,400	£4,700

The nature of any exceptional arrangements for the provision of transport (rather than a PTB) will be highly dependent on individual circumstances. The proposed 2026/27

Transport Policy Statement therefore omits previous general guidance relating to KCC-organised transport. The policy outlines how requests for exceptional consideration will be managed.

Current arrangements for those aged 16-18, and 19 (if the course started before the learner's 19th birthday):

Where a learner of sixth-form age can demonstrate that a Kent 16+ Travel Saver, 16-19 Bursary, Care to Learn, Active Travel, Independent Travel Training or Vacant Seat Payment Scheme is not sufficient to facilitate their access to their place of education, KCC will consider making alternative arrangements. These include a Personal Transport Budget, a mileage payment or provision of a vehicle organised and paid for by KCC, all subject to a contribution of up to the total cost of a Kent 16+ Travel Saver (currently £600).

Proposed changes:

Where a learner of sixth-form age can demonstrate that a Kent 16+ Travel Saver, 16-19 Bursary, Care to Learn, Active Travel, Independent Travel Training or Vacant Seat Payment Scheme is not sufficient to facilitate their access to their place of education, KCC will consider making alternative arrangements. In most instances this will be a Personal Transport Budget. In exceptional circumstances, KCC may consider provision of a vehicle organised and paid for by KCC. Both offers are subject to a contribution of up to the total cost of a Kent 16+Travel Saver (currently £600).

Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to provide a Personal Transport Budget to most learners who qualify for additional support from KCC, to facilitate their travel to their place of education? (A Personal Transport Budget would be offered instead of the provision of transport, unless there are exceptional circumstances.)

Please select **one** option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

Q5a. Please add any comments you have on this proposal in the box below. Please do not include any personal information within your response.

Proposal 2: To expect students aged 19+ to initially apply for a discretionary bursary from their learning provider to facilitate their travel requirements to and from their school or college, before approaching KCC for any additional support, which would be provided as a mileage payment for most pupils.

Where KCC assesses that support provided to students via the government's 16 to 19 Bursary Fund (which has discretionary support for learners older than 19) is insufficient to facilitate a student's attendance at school, college or training, consideration will be given to a potential further mileage payment in the form of a Cash Allowance. Payments would be made at 45p per mile, paid in arrears, following confirmation of attendance and submission of appropriate fuel receipts.

Payments will be subject to recoupment of an initial contribution in line with the total cost of the Kent 16+ Travel Saver pass (with appropriate adjustments to the rates for low income applicants) for the academic year that the application is being made. The Kent 16+ Travel Saver cost is subject to change annually and can be found on our [website](#)¹.

In exceptional circumstances, KCC will continue to consider providing transport support by way of a KCC provided vehicle. The policy outlines how these requests will be managed.

Current arrangements for adult learners (those aged 19+ who started their course after their 19th birthday:

Where adult learners with SEND (including those with an EHCP) can demonstrate that they continue to require support to access their place of education, KCC will consider making alternative arrangements. These include a Personal Transport Budget, a mileage payment, or provision of a vehicle organised and paid for by KCC.

For the purposes of deciding whether to make transport arrangements, KCC would not consider it necessary, other than in exceptional circumstances, for a young adult learner to attend an additional Further Education course at the same level or equivalent where the learner had previously attended and completed a course at an establishment within the Further Education sector.

Proposed change:

Where adult learners with SEND (including those with an EHCP) can demonstrate that they continue to require support to access their place of education following a formal request to their provider for a 16-19 Bursary, KCC will consider making alternative arrangements. In most instances this will be a mileage payment paid termly, subject to a contribution of up to the total cost of a Kent 16+ Travel Saver (currently £600). In exceptional circumstances, KCC may consider provision of a vehicle organised and paid for by KCC.

For the purposes of deciding whether to provide transport support, KCC would not consider it necessary, other than in exceptional circumstances, for a young adult learner to attend an additional Further Education course at the same level or equivalent where the learner had previously attended and completed a course at an establishment within the Further Education sector.

Q6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the expectation that students aged 19+ apply for a discretionary bursary from their learning provider to facilitate their travel to and from their school or college? (This would be instead of the provision of transport, unless there are exceptional circumstances.)

*Please select **one** option.*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

Q6a. Please add any comments you have on this proposal in the box below. Please do not include any personal information within your response.

Q7. If you have any other comments or alternative suggestions on the proposed Post 16 Transport Policy Statement for 2026-27, please provide them in the box below.

Please do not include any personal information within your response.

Equality Analysis

We have prepared an initial Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for the draft 2026-27 Post 16 Transport Policy Statement.

An EqIA is a tool to assess the potential impact any proposals could have on the protected characteristics: age, disability, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and carer's responsibilities.

On page 22 of the consultation document, we have summarised the potential impacts and mitigations. The consultation document and full EqlA is available at www.kent.gov.uk/post16consultation or on request.

Q8. We welcome your views on our EqlA for the draft 2026-27 Post 16 Transport Policy Statement and if you think there is anything else we could do to lessen the impacts on learners and their families. Please write your comments/suggestions in the box below. Please do not include any personal information within your response.

Section 3 – More About You

We want to make sure that everyone is treated fairly and equally, and that no one gets left out. That's why we are asking you these equality monitoring questions. This information really helps us to understand how different people could be affected by our proposals, but if you would rather not answer any of these questions, you don't have to.

It is not necessary to answer these questions if you are responding on behalf of an organisation. If you are responding on behalf of someone else, please answer using their details.

Q9. What is your sex?

A question about gender identity will follow. Please select one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Female
<input type="checkbox"/>	Male
<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say

Q10. Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

Please select one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	
<input type="checkbox"/>	No, please tell us your gender identity:	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say	

Q11. Which of these age groups applies to you?

Please select one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Under 16	<input type="checkbox"/>	16-17	<input type="checkbox"/>	18-20	<input type="checkbox"/>	21-25	<input type="checkbox"/>	26-30
<input type="checkbox"/>	31-35	<input type="checkbox"/>	36-40	<input type="checkbox"/>	41-45	<input type="checkbox"/>	46-50	<input type="checkbox"/>	51-55
<input type="checkbox"/>	56-60	<input type="checkbox"/>	61-65	<input type="checkbox"/>	66-70	<input type="checkbox"/>	71-75	<input type="checkbox"/>	76-80
<input type="checkbox"/>	81-85	<input type="checkbox"/>	86-90	<input type="checkbox"/>	91-95	<input type="checkbox"/>	Over 95	<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say

Q12. Do you have a disability, health condition, physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities?
Please select one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say

Q12a. If you answered 'Yes' to Q12, please tell us if any of the following disabilities or health conditions apply to you.
You may have more than one, so please select all that apply. If none of these applies to you, please select 'A different disability or health condition' and give brief details.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sensory (hearing, sight or both)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Longstanding illness or health condition, such as cancer, HIV/AIDS, heart disease, diabetes or epilepsy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mental health condition
<input type="checkbox"/>	Learning disability
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neurodivergent, such as ADHD, autism, dyslexia and dyspraxia
<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say
<input type="checkbox"/>	A different disability or health condition

If you have selected 'A different disability or health condition', please tell us:

Q13. What is your religion or belief?

Please select one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	No religion or belief	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Atheist	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Christian	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Buddhist	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hindu	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Jewish	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Muslim	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sikh	
<input type="checkbox"/>	A different religion or belief, please tell us:	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say	

Q14. Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

Please select one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Heterosexual/Straight	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bisexual	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gay or Lesbian	
<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer to define my own sexuality, please tell us:	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say	

A Carer is someone who gives unpaid care or help to anyone because they have a long-term physical or mental health condition or illness, or problem related to old age. Both children and adults can be Carers.

Q15. Are you a Carer?
Please select one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say

Q16. What is your ethnic group?
Please select one option.

White

<input type="checkbox"/>	English, Scottish, Welsh, Northern Irish or British
<input type="checkbox"/>	Irish
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gypsy or Irish Traveller
<input type="checkbox"/>	Roma
<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other White background, please tell us:

Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups

<input type="checkbox"/>	White and Black Caribbean
<input type="checkbox"/>	White and Black African
<input type="checkbox"/>	White and Asian

☐

Any other Mixed or Multiple background, please tell us:

Asian or Asian British

☐

Indian

☐

Pakistani

☐

Bangladeshi

☐

Chinese

☐

Any other Asian background, please tell us:

Black, Black British, Caribbean or African

☐

Caribbean

☐

African background, write in below

☐

Any other Black, Black British, or Caribbean background, please write in below:

Another ethnic group

☐

Arab

☐

Roma

☐

Any other ethnic group, please tell us:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire; your feedback is important to us. All feedback received will be reviewed and considered in the development of our policies.

We will report back on the feedback we receive, but details of individual responses will remain anonymous, and we will keep your personal details confidential.

Closing date for responses: midnight 23 March 2025

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Beverley Fordham, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

DECISION NO:

25/00044

For publication *[Do not include information which is exempt from publication under schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972]*

Key decision: YES

Key decision criteria. The decision will:

- a) *be significant in terms of its effects on a significant proportion of the community living or working within two or more electoral divisions – which will include those decisions that involve:*
- the adoption or significant amendment of major strategies or frameworks;*
 - significant service developments, significant service reductions, or significant changes in the way that services are delivered, whether County-wide or in a particular locality.*

Subject Matter / Title of Decision:

Determination of the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement including Post 19 Transport 2025-26

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, I agree the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement including Post 19 Transport 2025/26.

Reason(s) for decision:

Background

KCC has a duty to consult on and publish its Post 16 Transport Policy Statement every year. Whilst there is no statutory duty to provide transport for Post 16 Learners, there is a duty to consider applications for assistance with transport and to enable access to education and training to age 18. The transport policy sets out how KCC will meet this duty and what learners can expect by way of support. Councils also have a duty to make such arrangements as they consider necessary for the provision of transport and otherwise in respect of Adult learners including those with an EHCP.

Equality Implications

KCC is not proposing to make any substantive changes to the 2025-26 Post 16 Transport Policy Statement. The policy does clarify some wording relating to how contributions and refunds are made, to better explain these processes. It also included some limited new wording to explain KCC's current approach more clearly. Because no substantive changes are proposed it is not anticipated that there will be any particular impacts on protected groups.

Financial Implications

The Home to School Transport net budget is £97.7m for 2025-26. There are no specific Government grants for home to school transport and the Council are expected to fund their responsibilities

through the General Fund (Council Tax and other wider council funding) or where applicable, parental contributions. This budget covers mainstream, post 16 and SEN transport for eligible children aged up to 25.

The Council currently spends approximately £10m per annum on Post 16 transport to schools and further education providers. There are no substantive changes proposed to the 2025-26 policy and therefore spending patterns are expected to remain unchanged from the proposed 2025-26 Post 16 Transport Policy statement.

Legal Implications

The requirements placed on a local authority are defined in the Education Act 1996 (as amended), Education and Skills Act 2008, Education and Inspections Act 2006, Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 and the Equality Act 2010.

Local authorities do not have a general obligation to provide council tax funded or subsidised post 16 travel support but do have a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport or other support that the authority considers it necessary to make to facilitate the attendance of all persons of sixth form age receiving education or training.

The policy statement also sets out the duties on the LA to consider requests for transport support. KCC is required to enable access to education and will consider applications for support where a Kent 16+ Travel Saver pass is not suitable. Where support is agreed, the policy makes clear that learners will initially be assessed for Travel Training and alternative transport arrangements will only be provided where this training is not appropriate. Where additional support is refused learners can appeal to the Transport Regulation Committee Appeal Panel.

Local authorities also have a duty to encourage, enable and assist young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) to participate in education and training, up to the age of 25.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

A public consultation was held between 27 January and 23 March 2025

The proposed decision will be considered at the Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee on 15th July 2025.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

No alternatives considered for 2025. However, a parallel consultation was held which proposed changes for 2026/27, which are covered by a separate paper.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

.....
signed

.....
date

From: Beverley Fordham, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

Sarah Hammond, Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education

To: Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee

Subject: Post 16 Transport Policy Statement including Post 19 for 2026/27

Decision: 25/00045

Classification: Unrestricted

Future Pathway of Paper: Cabinet Member Decision

Summary:

Each year KCC has a legal duty to consult on its policy for Post 16 Transport and publish a Post 16 Transport Policy Statement. The key drivers for the proposed changes are as follows: promoting independence; rebalancing KCC's offer to learners of sixth form age and adult learners; and financial sustainability. These are explained in further detail within the report.

Recommendation(s):

The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills on the proposed decision as set out in the PROD.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The report is designed to brief and seek Members' views in regard to decisions to be taken relating to the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement including Post 19 Transport 2026/27. A companion paper discusses proposed provision for 2025/26, which remains substantively unchanged from the previous year's policy. It has been necessary to consult on both transport policies concurrently to fulfil KCC's legal duties, while providing parents and learners with sufficient early warning of potential changes for future academic years.
- 1.2 Local authorities do not have a general obligation to provide council tax funded or subsidised post 16 travel support but do have a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport or other support that the authority considers it necessary to make to facilitate the attendance of all *persons of sixth form age*

receiving education or training. This includes support for 19+ learners who started their course before their 19th birthday.

- 1.3 Councils also have a duty to make such arrangements as they consider necessary for the provision of transport and otherwise in respect of:
- *Adult learners* (i.e. those aged 19 or over, whose course started after their 19th birthday) for the purpose of facilitating their attendance at local authority maintained or assisted Further or Higher Education institutions or institutions within the Further Education sector; and
 - *Adult learners with an EHCP* (which can be maintained up until the age of 25) for the purpose of facilitating their attendance at institutions where they are receiving education and training outside the Further and Higher Education sectors, where the council has secured the provision of education or training at the institution and the provision of boarding accommodation in connection with that education or training.
- 1.4 These requirements derive from the Education Act 1996. The transport policy statement sets out how KCC will meet these duties and what learners can expect by way of support.
- 1.5 KCC's policy is that all young people carrying on their education post 16 must reapply for travel support annually.
- 1.6 The policy makes provision for appeals to be lodged with the Transport Regulation Committee Appeal Panel, where requests for support are declined, or is felt by learners to be insufficient to their needs. The Transport Regulation Committee Appeal Panel have discretionary authority to make alternative arrangements that they deem suitable for that learner

KCC's current approach

Learners of Sixth Form Age

- 1.7 The current policy statement (2024/25 policy statement - Appendix A) makes it clear that in the first instance there is an expectation that all learners of sixth form age, including those with SEND (Special Educational Need and Disabilities) and/or an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) will make use of the Kent 16+ Travel Saver. This is a discretionary scheme which aids access to both education and employment with training. This provides up to a 50% reduction in travel costs for the average user. Learning providers, at their discretion, can further subsidise this using bursary funding and we would expect bursary to be provided for up to 50% of the cost for low-income families. Because schools and colleges use bursary funding at their discretion, some choose to subsidise other localised bus travel cards as opposed to the KCC scheme which offers a broader transport offer.
- 1.8 In addition to this provision, the Policy Statement outlines the following additional options available to learners of sixth form age:

- Direction to provider led 16 to 19 Bursary Fund
- Subsidised travel cards for Young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- Active Travel Strategy
- Vacant Seat Payment Scheme
- Care to Learn
- Alternative Support for those learners requiring additional assistance

The Policy Statement explains that KCC will assess whether it is necessary to provide additional support taking into account a number of factors, including:

- The availability of courses at nearby learning providers;
- Any SEND or mobility issues which mean that it is not reasonably practicable to use public transport;
- Any SEND or mobility issues meaning that an individual may remain in education or training longer than other individuals;
- Whether it is reasonably practicable to attend a preferred provider on public transport, including because of the nature of the route;
- The distance and/or travel time between an individual's home and the learning provider, and whether this makes it impracticable to travel on public transport;
- Whether an individual or household cannot afford the Kent 16+ Travel Saver and has been unable to secure support from their learning provider;
- Whether reasons relating to religion or belief mean that use of the Kent 16+ Travel Saver pass is not practicable.

1.9 Currently, KCC provides alternative support to learners of sixth form age in different ways, including:

- Providing support to allow individuals to make use of public transport, including travel training for eligible individuals with an EHCP. Travel training helps young people travel safely from home to their place of learning and back again, promoting their independence.
- Providing a [Personal Transport Budget](#) or mileage payment, which is money to support families to make their own arrangements to access the place of learning
- Organising and paying for a vehicle to take a sixth form age learner to their place of learning. Each young person's individual circumstances will be considered when deciding what sort of vehicle is necessary and what journey they will undertake.

1.10 Individuals and/or their household are expected to contribute to the cost of providing additional support. The level of the contribution is equivalent to the cost of a K16+ Travel Saver pass (with reductions applied for low-income

families, as appropriate). The K16+ Travel Saver cost is subject to change annually but is currently up to £600 per annum. Families that meet the national criteria for low income support currently contribute £300.

Adult Learners

1.11 The following options are available for adult learners:

- 16 to 19 Bursary Fund – learners 19 and over could also get a bursary if they either:
 - are continuing a course they started aged 16 to 18 (known as being a '19+ continuer'), or
 - have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- Active Travel Strategy
- Care to Learn, for young parents under 20.
- Alternative Support for those learners requiring additional assistance

1.12 Currently, KCC will make transport arrangements for a young adult learner where KCC has secured and named a setting in an EHCP which provides both the provision of education and training and the provision of boarding accommodation. This applies to an adult learner aged under 25 with an EHCP and where it is considered necessary to facilitate that person's attendance at the place of education or training. Transport arrangements may also be made where an adult learner is receiving education or training at an establishment maintained or assisted by KCC and providing Further or Higher Education or within the Further Education sector, and KCC considers it necessary to provide transport to facilitate that person's attendance at the place of education or training.

In deciding whether it is necessary for KCC to make alternative support arrangements for an adult learner, KCC has regard to several factors including:

- The learner's age, ability and aptitude
- Any SEND the person may have
- The locations and times at which the education or training is provided
- The nature of the route, or alternative routes, which the learner could reasonably be expected to take.

1.13 For the purposes of deciding whether to make transport arrangements, KCC does not consider it necessary, other than in exceptional circumstances, for a young adult learner to attend an additional Further Education course at the same level or equivalent where the learner had previously attended and completed a course of that level at an establishment within the Further Education sector. KCC expects to see evidence of the learner making progression, but each case will be considered on its own merits.

1.14 Currently, KCC provides alternative support in different ways, including:

- Providing support to allow individuals to make use of public transport, including travel training for eligible individuals with an EHCP.
- Providing a Personal Transport Budget or mileage payment, which is money to support families to make their own arrangements to get access the place of learning
- Organising and paying for a vehicle to take an adult learner to their place of learning. Each young adult's individual circumstances will be considered when deciding what sort of vehicle is necessary and what journey they will undertake
- Where transport is provided (as opposed to transport assistance), it is provided through council tax funding, as a result of the different legislative requirements that apply to adult learners.

1.15 KCC currently provides a Kent 16+ Travel Saver to 6,625 pupils. 1,310 Post 16 pupils receive support via a KCC provided vehicle. 187 Post 16 pupils are provided a Personal Transport Budget. The number of young people using KCC arranged transport to FE colleges has increased by 75% in the past 6 years (since 2018-19), with the average cost of transport increasing by around 40% over the same period.

2. Why changes are being proposed

2.1 KCC has a duty to consider what support it is necessary to provide to facilitate each young person's attendance. Historically, KCC has offered more direct support for some Post 16 learners, particularly those with SEND including EHCPs. This meant that their transport has remained very similar after they turn 16, even though there is no legal requirement to provide that level of support. This offer has never been universal, with only a small proportion of learners getting this additional level of support. Most learners of sixth form age, including the majority of those with SEND including EHCPs are currently expected to make their own arrangements.

2.2 However, since 2018, Kent has seen over an 80% increase in the number of children aged 16 and above with an EHCP. The provision of transport for this group is inevitably more complex, which means that it usually requires more resources to fulfil. KCC is not provided with dedicated funds for Post 16 transport, which means that any additional offer that KCC makes must come from its general funds, namely the Council Tax that it collects from local residents and government grants. As a result, we need to ensure that our policy and transport services are both appropriate to meet the specific travel needs of learners and are sustainable now and in the future.

2.3 The key drivers for the proposed changes are as follows: promoting independence; rebalancing KCC's offer to learners of sixth form age and adult learners; and financial sustainability. These are explained in more detail below. More information is also provided below about the anticipated impacts of the proposed changes.

Promoting independence

- 2.4 Priority 5 of KCC's [SEND Strategy 2025 – 2028](#) sets out Kent's ambition to 'ensure that children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are prepared for independence. By focusing on skills development, future education, employment, and independent living, we aim to create clear, effective pathways for young people to transition confidently into adulthood'. Developing independence is a key outcome of a young person's education journey and young people need to be adequately prepared for adulthood by encouraging and enabling them to access education with reducing support from their local council. The proposed policy is intended to ensure that provision is made available to learners to develop important travel skills in the lead up to their transition to Post 16 education.
- 2.5 Under our current policy, KCC offers Independent Travel Training to learners of sixth form age and adult learners and this training takes place in the first year of their Post 16 education. This is the earliest point that families generally consider alternatives around transport, as before this point most pupils have a statutory entitlement to council tax funded school transport. Due to levels of demand, this often means that learners do not receive these lifelong skills until later into the academic year. There is also often understandable resistance to undertake this training where a continuation of historic transport arrangements remains available. KCC's proposed policy would allow travel trainers to focus their capacity on learners in the lead up to their transition to Post 16 education, instead of having to wait until a learner reaches sixth form age. Historic demand for travel training for those sixth form age and adult learners receiving transport arranged by KCC has always reduced the potential for KCC to offer this to younger learners. The full team's capacity could instead be targeted more fully toward learners as they approach the transition to sixth form. This means that they will learn these skills at an earlier point in their education, improving both their transition into Post 16 education or training and their independence at the end of secondary education. This in time would also benefit young adult learners as they progress from their sixth form education.

Rebalancing Kent's offer to learners of sixth form age and adult learners

- 2.6 For the majority of sixth form age pupils in Kent, a K16+ Travel Saver pass is considered an appropriate form of support. As explained above, alternatives are also available, such as travel training, Vacant Seat Payment Scheme (VSPS), Care to Learn and Active Travel. In providing this support, KCC expects that most families will be responsible for at least half of the costs associated with the learner of sixth form age's travel to education or learning and has provided support on this basis for a number of years. Currently 6,625 K16+ Travel Saver passes are provided to learners of sixth form age.
- 2.7 By contrast, KCC's current offer to the 1,497 learners of sixth form age and adult learners who need additional support is to source and pay for a vehicle to take them to their place of learning. Given the significant increases in costs

associated with providing this vehicle, which are outlined in more detail in the next section, the average cost to KCC Council Tax payers per learner of sixth form age is currently £8,200 per annum. This represents a 93% subsidy for full contributors and a 95% subsidy for low-income families.

- 2.8 The proposed changes would address this increased disparity between levels of expenditure on those with and without additional needs for support, while continuing to acknowledge the additional challenges that face those learners with a higher level of need by providing a greater level of support.
- 2.9 KCC has seen a significant increase in parental desire for a PTB in recent years. Since 2020, there has been nearly a threefold increase in the number of families electing to receive a PTB to support their child's transport needs. This suggests that the flexibility that PTBs provide can be an effective way for KCC to enable access to learning, and that reliance on a KCC provided vehicle is not as necessary as it may once have been.

Sustainability of KCC resources

- 2.10 The increase in children with EHCPs along with inflation, market supply and a greater number of destinations and journeys has meant that the cost of providing Post 16 transport has more than doubled since 2018 and continues to increase.
- 2.11 Like many other councils, KCC is facing significant financial challenges. KCC has been through an extraordinary period in the last few years with the Covid-19 pandemic followed by the significant economic turbulence arising from international and national circumstances. The cost of and demand for our services continue to increase at a much higher rate than the funding available from government, Council Tax, income from services users and a small proportion of Business Rates.
- 2.12 Since 2011, KCC has had to make almost £1 billion in savings and income generation in order to manage within the funding available. However, the demand for and cost of providing services was such that for the first time in 22 years Kent ended the 2022-23 financial year with a significant overspend of £44.4 million, followed by an overspend of £9.6m in 2023-24, and a forecast overspend of £23.3m in 2024-25 (reported to Cabinet on 30th January 2025)¹. Overspends will be funded by using reserves, but this is not an ongoing sustainable solution.
- 2.13 The biggest overspends during this period were in the areas of adult and children's social care, special educational needs, and home to school transport. In the past three years, the Home to School and College transport budget has been overspent by £5.8m in 2021-22, £16.1m in 2022-23 and £10.9m in 2023-24.
- 2.14 In response to the significant and ongoing overspends and historic trend of increasing costs, the Council has had to increase the budget for this service

¹ Latest reported position at the time of writing

by a total of £52m (equating to a 118% increase) over the past three years, to help avoid a continual overspend. Other savings initiatives (linked to purchasing and placement decisions) have helped to slow the increasing costs of transport further than initially assumed, leading to an underspend of approximately £8.6m in 2024-25 (reported to Cabinet on 30th January 2025). Whilst we expect these savings initiatives to continue to help contain future budget increases, they are not sufficient to reduce our current spending levels on transport services to historic levels, and therefore further revisions to our offer are required in order to support the Council to set a balanced budget. For 2025-26 the overall budget for Home to School Transport is £97.7m (an increase of £1.4m compared to 2024-25), this includes funding to cover possible costs of inflation and rising numbers travelling, along with the impact of introducing new route planning software. Indicative budgets for 2026-27 assume current trends continue.

2.15 Council services are continuing to face increasing demand and above-inflation cost pressures. The Budget for 2025-26 set out overall spending growth for all core funded services (i.e. excluding services funded by specific government grants) of £151.2m compared to £101.8m increase in funding. The difference has been covered by finding further savings and raising income to ensure there is enough money to fund what must be paid for.

2.16 In addition, the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) sets out indicative plans for 2026-27 and 2027-28 with costs forecast to continue to increase above the forecast funding available with an expectation that further savings will need to be found to meet the requirement to set a balanced budget in the future. Consequently, the financial challenges faced by KCC means it has been essential that all areas of spending are reviewed and considered for savings. This includes spending on Post 16 transport.

2.17 The financial implications of the proposed changes are detailed in Section 9 of this paper.

3. Proposals put to consultation

3.1 KCC has a duty to consult on and publish its Post 16 Transport Policy Statement every year. The proposals developed by officers, and subsequently consulted on, are explained immediately below.

3.2 The structure of KCC's standard offer of support to both learners of sixth form age and adult learners is proposed to remain unchanged for 2026/27, with the main areas of offer detailed in Section 1 remaining. Similarly, KCC is not proposing to alter the criteria it will apply in determining which learners of sixth form age receive support. This means the same learners will be identified for additional support under the proposed policy. KCC would however expect adult learners to seek support via the 16-19 Bursary Fund prior to applying for additional support from KCC.

3.3 The consultation also proposed the following changes to how Kent would provide alternative support to learners who qualify.

Proposed 2026-27 changes for Learners of Sixth Form Age

- 3.4 The consultation proposed to make Personal Transport Budgets (PTBs) KCC's default offer to learners who qualify for additional support, to facilitate their travel to their place of education. This means a KCC organised vehicle would only be provided in exceptional circumstances, rather than to the majority of pupils that qualify for additional support, as is currently the practice.
- 3.5 A PTB is a payment designed to support parents and young people in making their own personal arrangements to get to and from their school, college or training provider. Applicants are not limited in how they make use of the PTB to support travel, with the exception that funds cannot be used to purchase an alternative KCC pass or scheme for the young person, as these are already subsidised by KCC. KCC currently provides PTBs to some individuals who qualify for additional support. However, it is proposed that from 2026-27, PTB payments will be the standard means of supporting individuals who face additional challenges in accessing education or training.
- 3.6 Kent's PTB scheme has been operating for over 10 years and is already an established feature of our transport policy. Payments are made on the basis of the straight-line distance between the applicant's home and their main educational establishment or training provider in the Bands set out in the table below. An initial contribution is required which is equivalent to the full cost of the K16+ Travel Saver pass, including with appropriate adjustment to the rates for low income applicants, for the academic year that the application is being made. A family would be considered as qualifying for low income rates if they receive one of these benefits:
- Income support
 - Income based jobseekers allowance
 - Child Tax Credit (without Working Tax Credit and with an annual income of no more than £16,190)
 - Guarantee element of state pension credit
 - Income related employment and support allowance
 - Maximum level of Working Tax Credit (TC602).
- 3.7 The K16+ Travel Saver cost is subject to change annually but is currently up to £600 per annum. Families that meet the national criteria for low income support currently contribute £300. While actual PTB funding levels will be confirmed when K16+ Travel Saver costs are finalised in June/July 2026, the following table gives an indication based on current costs. The amounts below are therefore proposed amounts for 2026-27 and are subject to change if the K16+ Travel Saver price changes:

	Annual Fund	Total Annual Fund minus contribution (e.g. £600). This is the amount the applicant would receive.	Total Annual Fund minus low income contribution (e.g. £300). This is the amount the applicant would receive if they meet the low income criteria.
Band 1 – Less than 5 miles	£2,000	£1,400	£1,700
Band 2 – Between 5 and 10 miles	£3,000	£2,400	£2,700
Band 3 – Over 10 miles	£5,000	£4,400	£4,700

- 3.8 PTB payments are made in 11 monthly installments. Where learners do not take part in the equivalent of a full time education, or where attendance levels are low, total payments are offered on a pro rata basis.
- 3.9 In exceptional circumstances, KCC may still make alternative, cost-effective arrangements to provide transport (rather than a PTB) to a school, college or training provider. The nature of any such exceptional arrangements would be highly dependent on individual circumstances. The proposed 2026/27 Transport Policy Statement therefore omits previous general guidance relating to KCC-organised transport. Such arrangements would also be subject to an initial contribution in line with the total cost of the K16+ Travel Saver pass (with appropriate adjustments for low-income applicants). The proposed policy outlines how requests for exceptional consideration would be dealt with by KCC.
- 3.10 It is not proposed to change the support KCC currently provides to individuals of sixth form age through the K16+ Travel Saver. KCC will also continue to offer Independent Travel Training, and the eligibility criteria for this will not change. It is also not proposed to make changes to the support provided to young people who are not in education, employment or training through fixed term travel cards. Separately, the proposed 2026-27 Transport Policy Statement continues to refer to other potential means of support, which will continue to be available, including via the 16-19 Bursary Fund, Active Travel, the Vacant Seat Payment Scheme, and Care to Learn.
- 3.11 The remainder of the Post 16 transport offer for individuals of sixth form age remains unchanged.

Proposed 2026-27 changes for Adult Learners

3.12 The consultation proposed to make two linked changes to the support provided to adult learners, as follows:

- Adult Learners would be expected to apply for support via the Government funded 16 to 19 Bursary Fund from their learning provider before approaching KCC for any additional support. The 16 to 19 Bursary fund is national funding provided to learning providers to support a range of needs including transport.
- Where KCC assesses that any support provided to students via the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund is insufficient to facilitate a student's attendance at school, college or training, consideration would be given to support in the form of a mileage payment. KCC would offer a mileage payment, as standard. Under the proposed policy, KCC would generally no longer make transport arrangements for individuals to whom it provides support. KCC would only consider providing transport in exceptional circumstances.

3.13 As is currently the case, for the purposes of deciding whether to provide support KCC would not consider it necessary, other than in exceptional circumstances, for a young adult learner to attend an additional Further Education course at the same level or equivalent where the learner had previously attended and completed a course of that level at an establishment within the Further Education sector. KCC would expect to see evidence of the learner making progression, but each case will be considered on its own merits.

3.14 Mileage payments are made at a rate of 45p per mile, for four journeys a day, paid in arrears, following confirmation of attendance and submission of appropriate fuel receipts. Total annual payments would be subject to an overall contribution in line with the total cost of the Kent 16+ Travel Saver pass (with appropriate adjustments to the rates for low-income applicants, as explained above) for the academic year that the application is being made. The K16+ Travel Saver cost is subject to change annually but is currently up to £600 per annum or £610 where paid for in instalments. Contributions are reduced to £300 for low-income households.

4. Other options considered prior to consultation in the development of the proposals

4.1 During the development of the policy, Officers considered whether alternative adjustments could be made, which still achieved the objectives outlined in Section 2. These are outlined below:

4.2 Increase the current contribution required from Post 16 learners - In order to meet the financial challenges set out above, KCC could increase the level of contribution that applicants are asked to make towards each young person's transport arrangements. Unfortunately, a number of limitations mean

this approach was not taken forward to public consultation. KCC's assessment of the limitations of this approach was explained to the public, who have been able to express their views.

- 4.3 KCC has historically assessed that, for reasons of fairness, those who receive additional support and those who receive support in the form of a K16+ Travel Saver pass should make the same contribution.
- 4.4 There are currently 6,625 families across Kent that make use of a K16+ Travel Saver, compared to 1,497 families that are provided subsidised KCC transport. This means the total number of learners of sixth form age receiving some level of transport support from KCC is 8,122. To achieve the same level of impact as the proposed change, if KCC continued to require equivalent contributions from those who do and do not receive additional support, KCC would be required to increase the overall cost of both the K16+ Travel Saver and contribution by approximately £760 per learner. When considering that the current cost of a K16+ Travel Saver and contribution is £600, this would raise to £1,360 per annum per learner.
- 4.5 On average, users of a K16+ Travel Saver receive a 40-50% subsidy compared to the normal cost of a standard annual bus ticket. This is possible as KCC is able to take advantage of the number of travelers to secure a lower price point than that which families could arrange on their own. At £1,360 it is unlikely that any applicant would receive sufficient benefit from the scheme, as it would be considerably higher than the normal cost of bus travel. This in turn would diminish KCC's ability to secure lower travel costs for those small few that remain. It is highly unlikely that KCC could continue provide a K16+ Travel Saver in this situation.
- 4.6 This approach would therefore negatively affect a greater proportion of families and undermine another KCC travel option, so we did not consider it an appropriate alternative.
- 4.7 KCC also considered an alternative approach of limiting the contribution increases to those families that receive a higher level of support, as this would protect the ongoing viability of the K16+ Travel Saver pass. However, if KCC took this approach, the contribution would need to increase around £4,250 per person to an annual fee of £4,850, or around £1,600 per term. If KCC were to offer a lower contribution level to low income families, this amount would rise further for other learners. The average cost of transport for learners of sixth form age receiving additional support is £8,200, so this would still reflect an average subsidy of around 40% per learner. However, this would be the equivalent of over an eight-fold increase in the level of parental contribution.
- 4.8 KCC's experience of the introduction of the £600 contribution strongly indicates that this level of increase would not be viable for most families, and would create a major barrier to education.
- 4.9 As a PTB proactively provides families with additional funds to support the arrangements made for learners of sixth form age to attend education or

training, officers consider that this would be preferable to the significant contribution necessary to maintain the current system and make an equivalent contribution to financial sustainability. We explained this to the public as part of the consultation and consultees were able to express their views.

- 4.10 **Maintain current level of support** - KCC is facing considerable financial challenges across the majority of its portfolio. KCC could only continue to provide the current level of transport subsidy to this cohort of sixth form aged and young adult learners if savings were made elsewhere within the council.
- 4.11 The Council has set out the size of the financial challenge and the breadth of service areas that have been considered and will be expected to deliver savings in the Council document "[Securing Kent's Future](#)" agreed at Cabinet in October 2023. This document updated, the Council's ambitions in light of the changed financial landscape and the significance of adults & children's social care delivery within the Council's budget, by prioritizing "the delivery of the new models of care and support" objective within the "[Framing Kent's Future](#)" Strategic Statement. This has created an expectation that council services across all directorates must prioritize delivering this objective as a collective enterprise. This does not mean that the other objectives in "Framing Kent's Future" are not still important but the scope of these may have to be scaled back with policy ambitions in other areas becoming more limited. The provision of Post 16 Transport is connected to the Kent's objectives for "levelling up and infrastructure for communities". The proposals outlined in this report meet objectives 2 & 3 of the Securing Kent's Future document relating to Service Transformation (delivering savings from identified opportunity areas to set a sustainable budget and MTFP) and Policy Choices & Scope of Council ambitions (evaluation of statutory minimum requirements & review of discretionary spending). Other service areas are already being expected to deliver their own savings, with the agreed Medium Term Financial Plan setting out the expectation of delivering around £160m of savings across the Council over the next 3 years. Maintaining the current level of support would also not contribute to achieving the other objectives explained above.
- 4.12 The consultation provided respondents with an opportunity to comment on these discounted options and present alternative suggestions. Consultation responses are addressed in Section 6.

5. Anticipated impacts

- 5.1 Before the consultation, officers identified that KCC makes transport arrangements for 850 learners of sixth form age and 621 adult learners. A pre-consultation Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was completed to identify the potential impact of proposed changes.
- 5.2 In developing the proposals, officers also gave careful consideration to the likely impacts on those affected, as well as a number of statutory factors which KCC is obliged to consider, namely:

- The needs of those for whom it would not be reasonably practicable to access education or training if no arrangements were made by KCC
- The need to ensure that young people have reasonable opportunities to choose between different establishments at which education and training is provided
- The distances from learners' homes to education and training establishments
- The journey time to access different establishments
- The cost of transport to the establishments in question
- Alternative means of facilitating attendance at establishments
- Preferences based on religion
- Non-transport solutions to facilitate learner access

5.3 We acknowledge that, in summary, if the proposed changes are implemented:

- The financial support provided by KCC would be lower than the average cost of transport currently provided. It is therefore unlikely that learners would be able to replicate current arrangements solely with the PTB or mileage payment provided.
- Making arrangements for learners to access their place of learning would likely be more complex. Families would have to play a more active role in deciding the best option for them. This could impact school attendance where alternative arrangements are not made within similar timescales to arrangements made by KCC. However, the proposed changes may also allow more flexible arrangements. Some families prefer to receive a PTB, evidenced by the threefold increase in the number of families electing to receive a PTB since 2020.
- Families may need to change their routines to incorporate additional or longer journeys, which could negatively impact work or other commitments for some.
- Learners' transport arrangements may take longer, or they may have to travel further, especially if they make use of public transport instead of more direct options.
- It is possible that some learners may have reduced access to select schools of their preference.
- Where a learner or their family does not feel they could, or they could not, or could not afford to, make alternative arrangements, it is possible that changes to transport could result in the learner ceasing to remain in education. When KCC introduced a mandatory contribution for Post 16 transport and adjusted the offer to adult learners for the 2024-25 academic year, the overall cohort size reduced by around 8%, although annual variations could account for

some of this disparity. (Further post-consultation analysis of the potential impact is covered in Section 6).

- It is recognised that in some individual cases, the proposed reduction in support may give rise to a need to access other KCC services, such as children's or adult social care. As this would depend on individual circumstances, there is no accurate model to predict how widespread this may be, or what the cost implications would be. (However, further analysis in Section 6 can also inform Member thinking on this point).

- 5.4 If the proposals were implemented, the support provided to the majority of sixth form age learners in Kent would be unchanged. These pupils would still be able to apply for a K16+ Travel Saver pass, as well as the alternative forms of support currently offered by KCC and others.
- 5.5 Those sixth form age learners with additional needs, who would qualify for the provision of transport under KCC's current policy, would still receive significant extra support from KCC, in the form of a PTB. This would help ensure that those with additional needs continue to have reasonable opportunities to choose between different establishments. In assessing applications for additional support, KCC would continue to have regard to the same factors as at present, including distances, journey times, accessibility via public transport, affordability of a K16+ Travel Saver, and religion/belief. The level of support provided under a PTB would continue to account for the distance a learner needs to travel to access their establishment.
- 5.6 A large proportion of adult learners with additional needs, who would qualify for the provision of transport under KCC's current policy, may not qualify for support if the proposals are implemented. However, this would only be the case because they have received alternative support via the 16-19 Bursary Fund, or identified as not requiring support under that bursary and no additional information was provided to KCC to take a different view. Otherwise, those who are eligible for the provision of transport arrangements under the current policy would continue to receive significant extra support from KCC, in the form of a mileage payment. Aside from the requirement to seek help from other sources first, KCC will continue to apply the same criteria when determining applications for additional support.
- 5.7 In exceptional circumstances, KCC will also continue to consider making transport arrangements for both sixth form and adult learners.
- 5.8 Consultees were provided an opportunity to comment on the EqlA during the consultation process. Officers have carefully considered consultees' views and updated the EqlA in the light of consultation feedback. This is addressed in Section 8.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 KCC's public consultation ran from 27 January to 23 March 2025. As changes were being proposed for the 2026/27 academic year, the consultation was held a year earlier than usual to ensure that pupils and families who would be

affected by the potential changes had sufficient opportunity to consider the implications before future educational decisions are made.

6.2 To raise awareness of the consultation and encourage participation, the following activity was undertaken:

- Emails to stakeholders including maintained schools providing education for persons over compulsory school age and their governors, FE providers and their governors, bus operators and other school transport providers, such as taxis.
- Email/letter to all parents of year 10, 11 and post 16 students with an EHCP.
- Invite on the launch of the consultation to 13,911 Let's talk Kent registered users who have expressed an interest in being kept informed of consultation regarding transport, education, young people and children and families and a reminder email to 10,844 users on 17 March.
- Media release - <https://news.kent.gov.uk/articles/consultation-opens-on-kccs-home-to-school-transport-policy>
- Provided Kent PACT opportunities to engage in policy and communication planning in the pre-consultation period
- Promoted by Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) through their newsletter, website and Facebook page.
- Group Face to Face engagement event for post 16 providers
- Promoted through KCC's resident e-newsletter, SEND newsletter and Kelsi e-bulletin and intranet.
- Posters displayed in libraries and Gateways and feature on home screen of public computers in libraries.
- Promotional banners added to Kent.gov homepage and relevant service pages.
- Social media via KCC's corporate Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and Nextdoor accounts and paid targeted Facebook adverts.
- Promotion through KCC's intranet.
- All consultation material included details of how people could contact KCC to ask a question, request hard copies or alternative format.
- A Word version of the questionnaire was provided on the consultation webpage for people who did not wish to complete the online version. A Freepost address was provided for any hard copy responses.
- Large print, easy read and audio versions of the consultation material were available from the consultation webpage and on request.

6.2 Engagement with the consultation webpage, material and social media was as follows:

- 3,213 visits to the consultation webpage, by 2,879 visitors.
- 691 document downloads, including 329 downloads of the Consultation Document
- 120 downloads of the 2026-27 Statement

- Organic posts had a reach of 62,040 on Facebook and Instagram. There were 76,793 impressions on X (Twitter), LinkedIn, Nextdoor and Instagram. Reach refers to the number of people who saw a post at least once and impressions are the number of times the post is displayed on someone's screen. The posts generated approximately 2,266 clicks through to the consultation webpage. (Not all social media platforms report the same statistics.)
- 225 responses to 2026-27 Post 16 Transport Policy Statement sections of the consultation

6.3 A full consultation report providing an independent analysis of demographic profile and corresponding feedback received is available at Appendix C, which should be carefully considered by decision-makers.

Assessment of consultation feedback

6.4 Consultees were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the two proposals put forward:

- 34% agree with providing a Personal Transport Budget to most learners who qualify for additional support from KCC, to facilitate their travel to their place of education; 56% disagree. Strength of disagreement is higher than strength of agreement, with 45% strongly disagreeing and 17% strongly agreeing.
- 24% agree with the expectation that students aged 19+ apply for a discretionary bursary from their learning provider to facilitate their travel to and from their school or college, 63% disagree. Strength of disagreement is higher than strength of agreement, with 49% strongly disagreeing and 14% strongly agreeing.

6.5 In broad terms, and noting that full details are set out in Appendix C, the overriding oppositional themes across both proposals related to the likelihood that future transport will be more difficult or costly to arrange and learners and their families may have reduced options when considering what educational opportunities to pursue. Respondents raised concerns about learners' ability to engage in independent travel or making use of public transport options. Others commented that proposals were discriminatory and unfairly affected those with protected characteristics.

6.6 It should be noted, as KCC was required to consult on two concurrent Policy Statements at the same time, as outlined in the introduction to this report, that during the consultation some respondents made reference to concerns about the more substantial changes proposed for 2026/27 in their responses to 2025/26 questions. However, the issues followed the same themes and patterns as concerns raised in the sections of the consultation dealing specifically with the proposed changes for 2026/27.

6.7 These main themes broadly mirror those identified prior to the consultation and summarised in the consultation document (and in Section 5 above), and in the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken prior to and published alongside the consultation. There is understandably significant resistance to

any plan to reduced a transport offer that has been an established feature of Kent's educational system for many years. Families of learners with SEN felt that this was a further unwelcome pressure and would negatively impact the educational options available to their children. Respondents continued to express an expectation that KCC had a legal duty to provide the previous level of support, in spite of the information contained within the consultation which outlined that this was not supported by the relevant legislation.

6.8 The feedback does not in officers' view provide a compelling reason to reconsider any of the previously discounted alternative options that are outlined in Section 4. Officers therefore remain of the view that these alternatives are not suitable to be taken forward.

6.9 However, in addition to the previously identified themes, respondents identified some new areas for consideration.

Newly identified themes

6.10 Newly identified areas of consideration include:

- Post 16 Learning providers, particularly those in more rural locations, asked for reconsideration of the policy including "school led" transport arrangements that are present in the existing policy. There were also comments about whether KCC could give providers access to, or their own, minibuses. A policy adjustment has been suggested as a result of this feedback and detailed in the following section.
- Concerns were raised about the safeguarding implications of learners interacting with third parties that may not be subject to the same DBS checks that KCC sourced providers receive. However, all registered third party transport providers are expected to ensure that their employees are subject to the same enhanced DBS checks. No changes are therefore suggested for the policy.
- Adult learners were concerned that the additional requirement of engaging with their learning provider before applying to KCC will make the process more complex and time consuming. It is acknowledged that it will require additional organisation to engage with learning providers before submitting an application to Kent County Council. Most learners in this category will have an EHCP, which means that they should have their following year's educational arrangements finalised at least 5 months before the start of the new academic year. However, members should be aware that SEN services do not currently complete Phase Transfer activity for all Post 16 students by the expected deadline. This year, 58.4% of cases were completed on time, which rose to 83.8% roughly 2 months later. KCC has seen a considerable improvement in Phase Transfer outcomes as a result of the work related to its recent improvement notice. By comparison, 2 years ago, a little more than 20% of students received their outcome by the deadline. Members can anticipate, but cannot guarantee, that current levels will continue to improve before the policy is implemented in 2026/27, but should also consider that this additional complexity in the application process is

unavoidable if the new policy proposals are accepted, as a dual application will always be more complex than a single alternative.

- Adult Learners were concerned that mileage payments would be offered on a recoupment basis (payments would be made termly in arrears), meaning transport would need to be self-funded before being reclaimed from KCC. It is highly unlikely that learners with such constrained financial circumstances would be declined support under the 16 to 19 Bursary, which can be made available before transport arrangements are made. However, the proposed policy also allows for exceptional circumstances to be considered, alongside the Member led review process. This means that individual adjustments could be made if necessary. It is therefore proposed that no further changes are required to the policy statement to mitigate this concern.
- There was an expectation that proposals would result in increase traffic on the roads. This report identifies that around 1,310 learners are currently in receipt of a KCC provided vehicle, which on average is access to a four seater vehicle. This means that proposals could result in a range of somewhere between one quarter of that total (in the event learners all shared a vehicle) to the total number (in the event all learners travelled independently). This would make the range between 328 and 1,310, with the most likely outcome falling somewhere in the middle, around 700-800 potential vehicles across the county. Members should be mindful of this potential impact when reaching their decision.
- Concerns were raised that if learning providers supported learners' travel arrangements, there would be diminished funding for other areas of support. Officers accept that this may be a consequence for some learners. However, the Government-funded 16 to 19 Bursary is anticipated to provide support for a number of areas, including transport, so providers are expected to make balanced decisions within existing funding. In the event that any bursary support provided to learners is insufficient to facilitate a person's attendance at their place of education or training, they would be able to apply to KCC for additional support.
- Responses also prompted Officers to consider that changes are likely to create an increase demand for Member based appeals, which may require additional Member engagement to support. Members should also consider this when reaching their decision.

6.11 The EqIA has been updated to incorporate these additional themes.

6.12 In an effort to better understand the potential impact on learner attendance and potential cost-shunt to other KCC departments, Officers have analysed the behaviours of pupils who ceased to receive direct transport support following the policy revisions consulted on in 2023 and implemented in 2025, which were referenced in Section 5. These changes introduced new qualifying criteria for Adult Learners, which ceased provision of transport to most learners in the event they repeated a course of the same level or similar to one which they had completed previously.

- 6.13 As outlined above, 621 adult learners were provided transport support under the new policy. 24 adult learners were refused transport following those changes. Of these, five requested equivalent transport from social care, of which four were agreed at an annual cost of £100,105. Five adult learners requested direct payments to support alternative arrangements including funding personal assistants and/or their own transport arrangements. Social care agreed to all five of these requests at an annual cost of £140,011. Two of the 24 learners took the decision to move to alternative learning providers that they could more easily access. One learner made the decision to cease their education as a result of the lack of transport support. The remaining learners continued to access their original place of learning in spite of the policy changes.
- 6.14 This data is not definitive, as it does not cover those individuals who did not apply to KCC for support at all as a result of the previous changes. It also relates to post-19 learners only. However, the figures provide an indication of the possible impacts of the current proposals on learners' continued participation in education or training. In summary, of the 24 learners who were provided no support as a result of the introduction of the new criteria, only one learner ceased to remain in education. Others continued to access their original place of learning, moved to a more accessible provider, or received support from elsewhere in the system (Section 9 outlines how our financial assessment of these proposals have been adjusted for potential internal cost shunt to other services). Furthermore, the current proposed changes are not as significant as the previous introduction of new qualifying criteria, in the sense that they would involve a reduction in the level of support rather than the removal of support entirely (subject to the requirement to apply for bursary funding for post-19 learners). It is therefore not unreasonable to expect a similar profile of impact under the new proposed policy, i.e. that a relatively small minority of pupils affected will cease to attend education or training as a result of the changes. However, as it is not possible to conclusively predict future behaviour, Officers will keep under review the impacts of the changes once implemented. As explained elsewhere, we are also proposing a range of mitigations (including the exceptional circumstances category and the amount of notice given of the changes).
- 6.15 Consultation responses are also relevant. 22% of responses to the proposed changes for sixth form age learners and 23% of equivalent comments for adult learner changes indicated that the proposals would negatively impact their ability to attend a place of learning. This highlights that education attendance is likely to be affected. However, consultation responses should not be taken as an exact predictor of the overall level of impact. Officers anticipate that consultation responses are more likely to have overstated likely negative impacts as a result of general opposition to the provision of a lower level of support than understated those impacts.
- 6.16 Officers do not envisage significant additional impact on learner attendance beyond the factors outlined above. However, it is possible that some learners may only be able to make arrangements for part of their scheduled timetable, which may impact overall attendance. While it may be possible for

learning providers to mitigate some of this potential impact when designing timetables, Officers will also need to consider this when assessing what support is required to facilitate access to education.

- 6.17 Members should, in summary, be aware that in a minority of cases adult or children's social care may continue to pay for the continued home-to-school transport, even where the individual is not eligible under the Council's post-16 transport policy. This will reduce the overall savings generated by the policy, but officers assess that the financial impact is likely to be relatively limited (and, in any event, the policy allows for the continued provision of transport at KCC's expense in exceptional circumstances). Members should also be aware that the changes may result in some learners in both age groups ceasing to access education or training. As above, we assess that this is likely to be a relatively small minority of learners, but will keep this under close review after implementation.
- 6.18 Finally, the independent analysis of the feedback identified all themes that emerged from the consultation feedback. Officers' detailed consideration of themes emerging from the consultation (including but not limited to those set out above) is set out in Appendix D, which is a draft consultation response for consideration and approval by members. Both this and the Equality Impact Assessment found in Appendix E outline the mitigations that have been put in place to manage these impacts as much as possible.

7. Proposed Policy Statement adjustment following consultation

- 7.1 As outlined above, during consultation engagement activity with the education sector, two specialist provision Post 16 learning providers met with council Officers, outlining concerns around the specific implications of the proposed changes to their establishments and the learners that attend. Due to the rural nature of their location, these stakeholders were concerned that this could become a major barrier to attracting future pupil populations. This in turn has potential to negatively impact learners already attending the establishments
- 7.2 KCC's existing transport policies currently include the option for Transport Officers to engage with individual learning providers to develop school led transport schemes, where these are mutually beneficial for both parties and remain financially advantageous. While these are colloquially referred to as "school led" arrangements, they refer to agreements with any learning provider. School led transport options have been included in previous policies as they are beneficial to all parties. They allow KCC to pay the costs associated with a school organising the transport necessary for their learners, instead of KCC making arrangements with a third party. KCC fulfils its transport related duties at a lower price point, learners receive a more bespoke and responsive offer, often with staff members they already engage with on a daily basis and learning providers are empowered to support their learners directly, allowing them to react to individual pupil need without the need of lengthy interactions with council officers.
- 7.3 However, during the initial development of the proposed Policy Statement for September 2026, it was not initially considered that school led transport

schemes would operate effectively in conjunction with a change to a significant proportion of families receiving a direct PTB or mileage payment. While transitioning from a KCC provided vehicle to a school provided vehicle would be relatively easy to accommodate, KCC anticipated significant barriers in expecting providers to ask families to forward on the monies received from KCC. This was based on an assumption that providers would not want to create an expectation that attendance at that school would preclude a parents from electing to keep their PTB instead of using the school transport option. We anticipated that this ambiguity would impact provider confidence that funding would remain available for a sufficient period of time to invest in the necessary vehicles and infrastructure to support such a scheme. As a result, school led transport was not originally included in the proposed policy.

7.4 While Officers initially only envisioned a scheme where parents opted in to a school led system, learning providers were more confident that their settings could make school led options the default, ultimately making this transport a pre-requisite of electing to attend the school. Officers highlighted that if this option was considered, settings would have to support learner and parental understanding of the reasons behind the setting's decision, to ensure that this position was not eroded over time. KCC could not be pressured in future to provide a PTB or mileage payment to select parents attending those establishments that requested this option, as it would fundamentally undermine their ability to continue to deliver it to other students, as overall funding levels would be negatively impacted.

7.5 As such, it is proposed that this option be re-introduced into the finalised policy for 2026 implementation with some adjustments to accommodate the new wider intention of the proposed policy.

7.6 The current policy wording states, in the section entitled "School Led Transport":

"The Head of Fair Access will work in conjunction with schools with a willingness and sufficient capacity, to develop bespoke arrangements to provide transport to eligible YPs on their roll. Such arrangements will be agreed in line with principles outlined in this policy, but will be managed via separate formal agreements with the school."

7.7 On page 13 of the proposed 2026/27 policy found in Appendix B, the following wording has been inserted:

"The Assistant Director of Fair Access will work in conjunction with schools and other learning providers with a willingness and sufficient capacity, to develop bespoke arrangements to allow them to provide transport to eligible YPs on their roll. Such arrangements will be agreed in line with principles outlined in this policy, but will be managed via separate formal agreements with the establishment. These establishments may request, as a part of such arrangements, that all funding related to Personal Transport Budgets and/or mileage payments for students on their roll be paid directly to them instead of individual learners. Such establishments will be responsible for informing current and potential future students that this is a pre-requisite of securing a

place at the school, as exceptions to this direct establishment allocation will not be made.”

8. Equality Impact Assessment

- 8.1 The consultation included a detailed Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) which sought to identify the potential consequence of the proposed changes on those with different protected characteristics before the consultation began and identified most of the broad themes that were subsequently raised by consultees. However, some additional themes have been identified in section 6. Officers have carefully considered the additional themes relevant to potential equality impacts and have updated the EqIA accordingly. The updated EIA can be found in Appendix E and should be carefully considered by decision-makers.
- 8.2 The EqIA is accompanied by demographic information regarding the individuals who currently receive additional support. This demography has not been refreshed following the consultation as it took place during an academic year and it is highly unlikely to have changed significantly during that time, as transport arrangements tend to remain fairly static through the year. The vast majority of individuals who currently receive additional support have an EHCP and are more likely to have the protected characteristic of disability. They also fall into specific age ranges.
- 8.3 Respondents were provided an opportunity to highlight where they thought Kent's EqIA failed to identify potential impacts of proposed changes. They were also asked whether there were alternatives that could be considered to lessen the impacts on learners and their families.
- 8.4 The highest frequency of responses to these questions (40%) raised concerns about the policy that are detailed in section 6 and Appendix C and D, and so did not actually relate directly to the EqIA.
- 8.5 The remaining responses identified that those most likely to be affected by the proposed changes were learners and families of learners with protected characteristics, particularly those with SEND, those on the basis of age (over 16) and those from low income backgrounds.
- 8.6 While this aligns with the themes identified in the pre-consultation EqIA (and outlined in Section 5), a number of comments to the consultation outlined further areas that required consideration. These are interrogated in the EqIA found in Appendix E, with relevant mitigations for all impacts that have been identified. However, a summary of these newly considered areas include:
 - Adult learners are likely to have slightly more complex travel arrangements than learners of sixth form age, which means that they are more likely to be negatively impacted by proposed changes. This could negatively impact

attendance, school preference options and complexity of travel arrangements more for this group.

- While it was previously identified that pupils may have to travel longer, or undertake more complex travel arrangements as a result of proposed changes, consultation analysis highlighted that these pupils are already potentially more likely to undertake longer journeys as a result of the reduced school options available to them, particularly those attending specialist provision. This is likely to compound the impact on those affected by the proposals.
- Consultees highlighted that both groups of learners may face increased safeguarding risks. This could be as a result of travelling in new ways, adapting to change, or the increased chance of engaging with unknown third parties during daily journeys.
- Pupils travelling further distances will be affected differently, due to the differences between the offer available to learners of sixth form age and adult learners.
- Adult learners will face a more complex application process, as they may be required to interact with two organisations to receive the full level of travel support.

8.7 Insofar the EqIA assesses that protected groups may be placed at a particular disadvantage, officers continues to consider, following consultation, that the proposals are objectively justified so as not to give rise to discrimination. This is because the proposals are pursuing the legitimate aims of promoting independence, rebalancing KCC's approach to this area of transport, and financial sustainability to ensure KCC can continue to provide support to all learners, which would otherwise be jeopardised if its current approach continued. In addition, while most individuals within the relevant two cohorts will have any additional support assessed and provided in different ways, officers consider that this is justified, including in light of the general expectation of growing independence as learners age and mature. Officers additionally consider the proposals are a proportionate means of achieving KCC's objectives, including in light of the mitigations outlined in the EqIA.

9. Financial Implications

9.1 The Home to School Transport net budget is £97.7m for 2025-26. There are no specific grants for home to school transport and the Council are expected to fund their responsibilities through the General Fund (Council Tax and other wider council funding) or where applicable, parental contributions. This budget covers mainstream, post 16 and SEN transport for eligible children aged up to 25.

9.2 The Council currently spends approximately £10m per annum on Post 16 transport to schools and further education providers. Estimated total cost reductions from this proposal on home to school transport could be up to £6m per year (when fully implemented). This would include savings of approximately £4m a year based on around 900 learners of sixth form age

receiving support by way of a PTB rather than transport arranged by KCC; and approximately £2m a year based on around 600 adult learners receiving support by way of a bursary from their education provider, or mileage payments rather than transport arranged by KCC.

- 9.3 It is recognised that in some individual cases, the proposed reduction in support may give rise to a need to access other KCC services, such as children's or adult social care. However, this would have to be assessed on an individual basis. Of the 1,500 young people currently eligible for post 16 transport, 335 are open to either children's or adult social care (around 20% of the cohort). An initial analysis of the impact of changes to the Post 16 policy (introduction to charging and restriction of post 19 transport eligibility) from September 2025, indicated an additional cost to social care of around £70,000 per annum affecting around 10 young people, in addition to £240k of alternative transport arrangements (outlined in section 6.14). This is less than 1% of the total cohort. The total estimated annual saving to home to school transport from the September 2025 post 16 changes was £1.4m. Therefore these extra costs equate to around 20% of the saving. Therefore, it is recommended a combined risk annual contingency of £1.3m (20%) is also provided to mitigate against additional costs in other parts of the council and where continued provision of transport may be agreed for those with exceptional circumstances. If the contingency is fully utilised this will reduce the estimated annual saving from £6m to £4.7m. The contingency is only an estimate and the final savings may be more or less depending on individual circumstances including the proportion of individuals who receive support via college bursary funding and whom KCC will no longer support.

10. Legal Implications

- 10.1 As explained above, KCC's duties to provide transport to sixth form and adult learners derives from relevant provisions of the Education Act 1996. KCC has considered and taken counsel's advice on these proposals. KCC's duties are explained and addressed in the DfE's statutory guidance entitled, "*Post-16 transport and travel support to education and training*" (January 2019). Officers have carefully considered this statutory guidance in developing the proposed changes.
- 10.2 The requirements placed on a local authority are defined in the Education Act 1996 (as amended), Education and Skills Act 2008, Education and Inspections Act 2006, Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 and the Equality Act 2010.
- 10.3 Local authorities do not have a general obligation to provide council tax funded or subsidised post 16 travel support but do have a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport or other support that the authority considers it necessary to make to facilitate the attendance of all persons of sixth form age receiving education or training. As the statutory guidance explains, the overall intention of the sixth form age duty is to ensure that learners of sixth form age are able to access the education and training of their choice and, if support for access is requested, this will be assessed and provided where necessary.

- 10.4 As regards adult learners, local authorities are required to make such arrangements for the provision of transport as they consider necessary in respect of adults, and relevant young adults (see para 1.3 above). KCC must prepare a transport policy statement setting out any transport or other arrangements that it proposes to make for an academic year in respect of adults aged under 25 with EHCPs. As the statutory guidance explains, the overall intention of the adult transport duty is to ensure that those with the most severe disabilities with no other means of transportation are able to undertake further education and training after their 19th birthday to help them move to more independent living.
- 10.5 The policy statement also sets out the duties on the LA to consider requests for transport support. KCC is required to enable access to education and will consider applications for support where a Kent 16+ Travel Saver pass is not suitable. Where support is agreed, the policy makes clear that learners will initially be assessed for Travel Training and alternative transport arrangements will generally only be provided where this training is not appropriate. Where additional support is refused learners can appeal to the Transport Regulation Committee Appeal Panel.
- 10.6 In considering what arrangements it is necessary to make, KCC is required to have regard to its duty to secure that enough suitable education and training is provided to meet the needs of persons of sixth form age, and adult learners with an EHCP. Officers do not consider that the proposed changes are inconsistent with this sufficiency duty. KCC has had regard to the possible impacts of the changes on individuals' ability to access schools, as explained elsewhere. KCC has also engaged with providers who have raised concerns about potential impacts on their ability to attract future pupil populations. As explained below, adjustments have been made accordingly.
- 10.7 KCC also has duties to promote the effective participation in education or training of 16-18 year olds, and to encourage, enable and assist young people with SEND, to participate in education or training up to the age of 25. Officers consider that the support provided under the proposed policy would continue enable KCC to fulfil these duties.

11. Data Protection Impact Assessment

- 11.1 The Kent 16+ Transport privacy statement can be found here ([Kent Travel Saver and Kent 16+ Travel Saver privacy notice - Kent County Council](#)) and advised parents that they are consenting to the usage of their submitted data, how the data will be used, who it will be shared with and how long it will be held, in line with KCC's duties.
- 11.2 Changes associated with this consultation do not affect the data that is collected or how it is used, so previous DPIAs remain valid and do not require revision.

11. Conclusions

- 11.1 No council wishes to reduce a level of provision that constituents have become accustomed to, especially where it provides beneficial support to increase educational opportunities. However, it is vital that any offer is sustainable. In recent years, a growing number of local authorities have made similar changes to their offer to learners of sixth form age in response to the challenges all councils are facing in delivering Post 16 transport. Where these changes have been challenged legally, they have been found to be compliant with the relevant council's duties, which reflect the national expectation that personal or familial responsibility increases as learners transition to adulthood. A PTB will provide additional support to help those learners of sixth form age with greater need to take part in education, apprenticeships or work-based training. Similarly, Kent's proposals will continue to provide support to those adult learners with the highest level of need, albeit in the form of a mileage payment rather than the provision of transport.
- 11.2 While it is understood that the majority of respondents to the consultation were not in favour of proposals, and while KCC must conscientiously consider consultation responses in deciding whether to proceed, this paper highlights that KCC will continue to provide a range of transport support to all learners of sixth form age, with increased levels of support for those with higher levels of need. KCC will also continue to support adult learners who qualify for support, in line with national expectations. Officers consider these adjustments are necessary to ensure the ongoing sustainability of the whole scheme, as well as meeting the other objectives explained above. The proposed changes have been designed to ensure that negative impacts are mitigated as far as reasonably possible. It is therefore recommended that KCC implements these changes from September 2026.

12. Recommendations

Summary:

Each year KCC has a legal duty to consult on its policy for Post 16 Transport and publish a Post 16 Transport Policy Statement.

Each year KCC has a legal duty to consult on its policy for Post 16 Transport and publish a Post 16 Transport Policy Statement. The key drivers for the proposed changes are as follows: promoting independence; rebalancing KCC's offer to learners of sixth form age and adult learners; and financial sustainability. These are explained in further detail within the report.

Recommendation(s):

The Children, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills on the proposed decision as set out in the PROD.

13. Background Documents

- Appendix A - Post 16 Transport Policy Statement including Post 19 for 2024/25
- Appendix B - Post 16 Transport Policy Statement including Post 19 for 2026/27
- Appendix C – Transport Consultation Report
- Appendix D – Consultation Draft Feedback
- Appendix E – PRoD
- Appendix F - Equality Impact Assessment
- Consultation documents can be found at www.kent.gov.uk/post16consultation

14. Contact details

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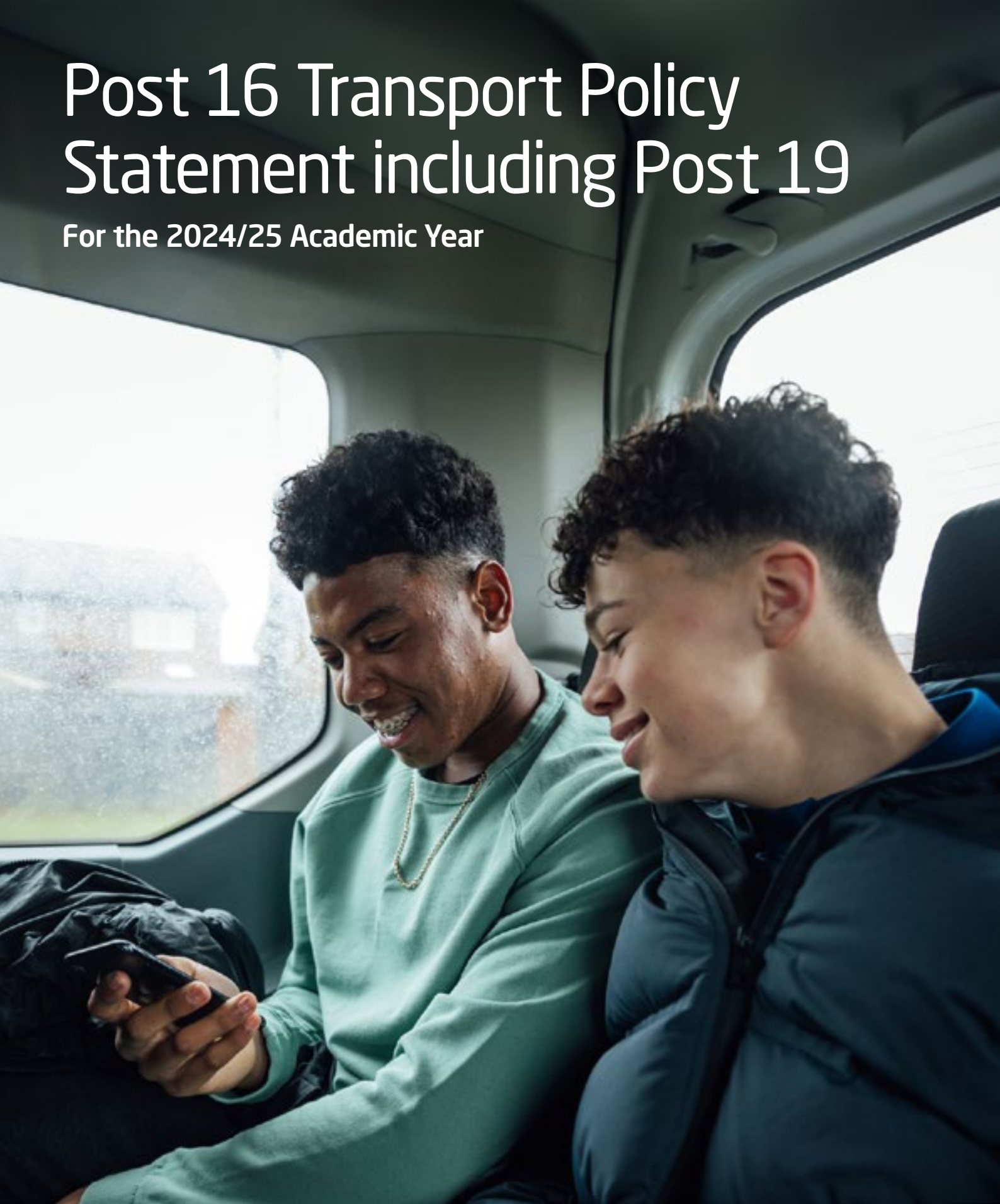
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Post 16 Transport Policy Statement including Post 19

For the 2024/25 Academic Year



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Introduction

Local authorities do not have a general obligation to provide free or subsidised post 16 travel support but do have a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport or other support that the authority considers it necessary to make to facilitate the attendance of all persons of sixth form age receiving education or training.

The requirements placed on a local authority are defined in the Education Act 1996 (as amended), Education and Skills Act 2008, Education and Inspections Act 2006, Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 and the Equality Act 2010.

All young people carrying on their education post 16 must reapply for travel support annually.

‘Sixth form age’ refers to those young people who are over 16 years of age but under 19 or continuing learners who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday (years 12,13,14).

Local authorities also have a duty to encourage, enable and assist young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) to participate in education and training, up to the age of 25.

This policy document specifies the support that Kent County Council (KCC) considers necessary to facilitate the attendance of Post 16 learners receiving education or training.

The statement also provides information about the travel provision put in place for young adult learners aged 19 – 25 with an Education, Health and Care (EHCP).

Education or training refers to learning or training at a school, further education institution, a council maintained or assisted institution providing higher or further education, an establishment funded directly by the Education Skills Funding Agency, learning providers delivering accredited programmes of learning which lead to positive outcomes and are funded by the council, for example, colleges, charities and private learning providers.

Where the policy refers to parents, it should be understood to equally apply to guardians and carers. Where a young person applies on their own behalf, the equivalent responsibilities that apply to their parent will transfer.

Where situations arise that are not directly addressed within this policy, Transport Officers will work in conjunction with the Head of Fair Access to apply the principles contained below to identify a suitable resolution.

This policy supersedes all previous policies and applies from the academic year 2024/25.

Transport and travel support

Kent 16+ Travel Saver

KCC considers that in most circumstances the provision of a subsidised KCC 16+ Travel Saver card is sufficient to facilitate the attendance of Young People (YP) of sixth form age at their chosen education or training provider. This may be at schools, academies, colleges or in the workplace through an apprenticeship or other work-based training provision.

The KCC 16+ Travel Saver card is available to purchase from KCC, with details of pricing and application processes available [here](#). The KCC 16+ Travel Saver card offers free at point of travel access, to the entire public bus network operating in Kent including single destination journeys out of Kent and back into the County. It is available for use 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Learning providers can choose to further subsidise this charge to their students or trainees if they meet Bursary conditions.

The KCC 16+ Travel Saver card may be available at an even lower rate for young people with parents on a low income. Applications for cards at this lower rate should begin with the YP's education provider.

Alternatively, YP who are not otherwise eligible for help with transport can apply for a seat on vehicles hired by KCC under the Vacant Seat Payment Scheme (VSPS).

Vacant seats on hired vehicles that meet suitability requirements are only made available after the start of term, once all statutorily entitled YPs have been accommodated onto transport and vehicle spaces are known. Consequently, parents seeking to purchase a vacant seat may need to make other arrangements for their child to access school during the period when vacant seats are being collated for allocation. This will not be refunded by KCC. VSPS awards seats on a first come first serve basis.

It will also be necessary for applications for VSPS to consider Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000, which potentially limit a number of larger vehicles from being considered for use in the scheme if they are not suitably accessible to all potential passengers. The Department for Transport have applied a number of exemptions which have delayed the implementation of these regulations, however, KCC will be required to apply them in the event that no further extensions are granted.

Where a VSPS seat is granted, it may have to be withdrawn at a later date for a YP who is entitled to free transport, if KCC decide to stop running the vehicle or if it is decided to run a smaller vehicle.

If the seat is taken away, parents will be given until the end of the academic year when they will then have to make their own arrangements.

VSPS is not available on public transport.

Young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)

To support the provision of suitable education or training for young people who are 16 and 17 years old and not in education, employment or training (NEET), KCC may offer fixed term (up to one month) travel cards at subsidised rates to facilitate travel to interviews, work experience and other activities necessary to secure appropriate provision. To be eligible, young people must be registered and receiving support through Early Help and Preventative Services.

Active Travel

Our Active Travel Strategy aims to make active travel an attractive and realistic choice for short journeys in Kent. Active travel means walking or cycling as a means of transport, in order to get to a particular destination such as school, the shops or to visit friends. Active travel can be for complete journeys or parts of a journey, and more people in the community making more active travel journeys can lead to a range of positive individual and shared outcomes. These include improved health, reduced traffic congestion, reduced pollution and financial savings to the individual and businesses. More information is available at www.kentconnected.org.

The 16-19 Bursary Fund

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help young people overcome specific barriers to participation so they can remain in education.

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- 1) A vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 a year for young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups below:
 - In care.
 - Care leavers.

- In receipt of Income Support, or Universal Credit in place of Income Support, in their own right.
- In receipt of Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit and Disability Living or Personal Independence Payments in their own right.
- Discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment.

2) Discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment

To be eligible for the discretionary bursary young people must:

- Be aged 16 or over but under 19.
- Be aged 19 or over and have an EHCP.
- Be aged 19 or over and continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers').
- Be studying a programme that is subject to inspection by a public body which assures quality (such as Ofsted), the provision must also be funded by either a Government funding agency or KCC.

Schools and colleges are responsible for managing both types of bursary. Young people who want to apply for support from the bursary fund should contact their chosen school or college to make an application.

Young parents / Care to Learn

If you are a young parent under 20, Care to Learn can help pay for your childcare and related travel costs, up to £160 per child per week, while you're learning.

Care to Learn can help with the cost of:

- Childcare, including deposit and registration fees.
- A childcare 'taster' session (up to 5 days).
- Keeping your childcare place over the summer holidays.
- Taking your child to the childcare provider.

Types of child care

The childcare provider must be Ofsted registered and can be a:

- Childminder.
- Pre-school playgroup.
- Day nursery.
- Out of school club.

If your child needs specialist childcare, the provider must also be on the Care Quality Commission's register for specialist provision.

If you want a relative to get Care to Learn for looking after your child they need to be both:

- Providing registered childcare for children they're not related to.
- Living apart from you and your child.

Payments

Childcare payments go directly to your childcare provider. Before your childcare provider can be paid:

- Your childcare provider needs to confirm your child's attendance.
- Your school or college needs to confirm that you're attending your course.

Payments for travel costs go to your school or college - they'll either pay you or arrange travel for you.

Attendance

Payments will stop if:

- You stop attending your course.
- You finish your course.
- Your child stops attending childcare.

Eligibility

You can get Care to Learn if:

- You're a parent under 20 at the start of your course.
- You're the main carer for your child.
- You live in England.
- You're either a British citizen or have a legal right to live and study in England.
- Your course is publicly funded (check with your school or college).
- Your childcare provider is registered with Ofsted or the Care Quality Commission.

Type of course

Care to Learn is only available for courses in England that have some public funding.

This includes courses that take place in:

- Schools.
- School sixth forms.
- Sixth form colleges.
- Other colleges and learning providers, including Foundation Learning.
- Your community at Children's Centres.

For more information please visit <https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn/how-to-claim>

Transport for sixth form aged young people for whom the KCC 16+ Travel Saver card, VSPS, Active Travel Strategy, 16-19 Bursary Fund and Care to Learn are not viable options

If, however, you have special circumstances which you believe should make you eligible to receive help of an alternative nature than those set out above you should apply for additional support at www.kent.gov.uk/applyforpost16transport. You may rely upon any circumstances which are relevant to your application. You will need to demonstrate why it is necessary for KCC to provide travel support to facilitate your attendance to receive education or training.

In looking at the suitability of establishments, KCC will look at the availability of preferred or specialist courses at nearby establishments, including those outside of KCC's

local authority area. If parents choose to send their YP to a school or college (or the YP chooses this themselves), which is not the nearest suitable setting, as described earlier, assistance with travel arrangements may not be provided by KCC.

Considerations which KCC will take into account

The following considerations will be given greater weight by us when we consider your application, but do not guarantee you will be eligible to receive additional assistance from KCC:

- (i) That you have special educational needs and/or a disability and/or mobility problems, which mean that it is not/would not be reasonably practicable for you to attend the educational establishment or training provider at which you are registered or at which you would like to register to receive education or training using a KCC 16+ Travel Saver card on the terms described earlier. KCC recognises that in some circumstances public transport may not be appropriate as a result of special educational needs, a disability or a mobility problem and again in these exceptional circumstances other means of support will be considered.

Learners aged 16 – 19 years for whom KCC maintains an EHCP are also expected to seek a KCC 16+ Travel Saver card. It is expected that where students have not accessed public transport previously, they will engage with KCC's Independent Travel Training Team to be trained to use public transport. Refusal to embark on such training where this is considered appropriate, may affect any future decisions where additional support for transport is being requested. Where the learners are unable, even with appropriate independent travel training, to access public bus travel as a result of their levels of need, consideration will be given to other means of support.

- (ii) That you have special educational needs and/or a disability and/or mobility problems, which mean that it may mean you are more likely to remain in education or training longer than your peers, which would in turn mean that your contribution to the cost of transport will go on over a longer period.
- (iii) That it is not/would not be reasonably practicable for you to attend the educational establishment or training provider at which you are registered or at which you would like to register to receive education or training using a KCC 16+ Travel Saver card on the terms described earlier.

(iv) That the distances and/or journey times, between your home and the educational establishment or training provider at which you are registered or would like to register makes the use of a KCC 16+ Travel Saver card, on the terms described earlier impractical or not practical without additional assistance.

(v) That you and your family cannot afford the KCC 16+ Travel Saver card on the terms described earlier and have been unable to secure support from your learning provider.

This will normally require proof of receipt of certain benefits i.e.

- Income support.
- Income based jobseekers allowance.
- Child Tax Credit (TC602 for the current tax year with a yearly income of no more than £16,385 pa).
- Guaranteed element of state pension credit.
- Income related employment and support allowance.
- Maximum Level of Working Tax Credit.
- Universal Credit (provided you have an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400, as assessed by earnings from up to three of your most recent assessment periods).

Assistance on this ground will normally only be given where the educational establishment or training provider is not more than 6 miles from your home. Any additional provision or assistance would be reviewed on an annual basis and your parents would be required to provide the Transport Eligibility Team with up to date proof of the family's income at that time. KCC will usually only provide one form of support for Low Income Families.

(vi) That the nature of the route, or alternative routes, which you can reasonably be expected to take with a KCC 16+ Travel Saver card makes the use of the Card impractical or not practical without additional assistance.

(vii) That reasons relating to your religion or belief (or that of your parents) mean that the use of the KCC 16+ Travel Saver card is not practical or is not practical without additional assistance.

Where a YP is attending or wants to attend an educational establishment of the same denomination as themselves

(or religion in cases where the religion does not have denominations) in order to be considered for transport arrangements, they must also have the application form signed by a vicar/priest or religious leader of the same denomination (or religion where there are no denominations) as the educational establishment stating that the YP is a regular and practising member of a church or other place of worship of the same denomination (or religion where there are no denominations) as the educational establishment concerned.

Where a YP is attending a church school of a different denomination or religion to that of the parent, in order to be considered for transport arrangements, they must also have the application form signed by a vicar/priest or other religious leader stating that the YP is a regular and practising member of that religion or denomination. The YP will also need to explain why their religion or belief makes it desirable for the YP to attend that particular educational establishment rather than another educational establishment nearer to the YP's home, given that the chosen educational establishment is not of the same religion or denomination as that practised by the YP.

Where a YP is attending or wants to attend an educational establishment for reasons connected with his or her non-religious belief, in order to be considered for transport assistance the YP will need to explain what that belief is and why the belief makes it desirable for the YP to attend that particular educational establishment rather than another nearer educational establishment. The YP will also need to provide evidence to prove that they do indeed hold the belief in question. This could be confirmation from a person of good standing in the community who knows the YP, for example a councillor, a doctor, a social worker or a lawyer or alternatively proof of the YP or his parent's medium or long term membership of a society or other institution relating to that belief.

Free transport or other transport arrangements will only be awarded under any of the categories above where KCC is persuaded that the religion or belief is genuinely held and that the placement of the YP at the institution in question will be of significant benefit to the YP because of the relationship between the religion or belief of the YP and the nature of the educational institution in question.

KCC will normally only agree to such requests for a maximum period of one year. Arrangements would then be reviewed. The Local Authority can then agree such requests for the duration of the course up until the end of the year in which the young person reaches the age of 19.

Other information you should provide with your application

You should also state what additional or alternative provision you would like KCC to make to assist you in attending the educational establishment or training provider at which you are registered/would like to register.

You should also provide evidence to support any case that you may present, for example and where relevant:

- (i) Proof that you have applied to or are registered at a particular educational establishment or training provider such as a copy of your acceptance/offer letter from the college.
- (ii) Proof of your and/or your family's income and savings e.g. TC602 from HM Inland Revenue.
- (iii) Proof of any special educational needs, disability or mobility problems that you have; (for example, a copy report from consultant or from your local authority's Special Educational Needs Department or a health or educational professional providing confirmation that you are unable to access a suitable educational establishment or training provider nearer to your home and/or are unable to access public transport). KCC is not able seek this information on an applicant's behalf.
- (iv) Proof that you have applied to colleges or other educational establishment or training provider closer to your home (for the same course or for a similar course), which if accepted would have meant that you would not have required additional assistance from us and proof that that those applications were turned down. (Copies of refusal letters would be required).
- (v) Details of the unsuitable route that you say you would need to travel and detailed reasons why you consider the same to be unsuitable.
- (vi) Proof that you are a member of a particular religion or religious denomination or (where possible) that you have a particular belief where that is relevant to your argument. Ordinarily, where you are making an application on faith grounds, you will be required to attend an establishment with the same religious denomination as your place of worship.

Please note that we cannot return documents that you supply to us, and so you are requested to only provide copies of documents that you may wish to send accompanying or supporting your application.

The types of provision which KCC might make

The provision of financial or practical support is entirely at the discretion of KCC. The type of support which may be provided in appropriate circumstances is set out below. Of course, the outcome of your application may also be that KCC decides to offer no additional support.

Young adult learners, aged 19 – 25 with an EHCP

Please note that this section only applies to young adults aged 19-25 who are in education or training and who have an EHC plan. The considerations to be taken into account in relation to sixth form age individuals with an EHCP are set out in the earlier section.

Transport arrangements will be made to a young adult learner (not being a person of sixth form age), where KCC has secured and named a setting in an EHCP which provides both the provision of education or training and the provision of boarding accommodation. This applies to an adult learner aged under 25, subject to an EHCP and where it is considered necessary to facilitate that person's attendance at the place of education or training.

Transport arrangements may also be made where an adult learner is receiving education or training at an establishment maintained or assisted by KCC and providing further or higher education or within the further education sector, and KCC considered that it was necessary for KCC to provide transport to facilitate that person's attendance at the place of education or training.

In deciding whether it is necessary for KCC to make transport arrangements for an adult learner, KCC would amongst other things, have regard to:

- The learner's age, ability and aptitude.
- Any SEND the person may have.
- The locations and times at which the education or training is provided.
- The nature of the route, or alternative routes, which the learner could reasonably be expected to take.

For the purposes of deciding whether to make transport arrangements, KCC would not consider it necessary, other than in exceptional circumstances, for a young adult learner to attend an additional Further Education course at the same level or equivalent where the learner had previously attended and completed a course at an establishment within the Further Education sector. KCC expects to see evidence of the learner making progression, but each case will be considered on its own merits.

Where transport is provided (as opposed to transport assistance), it will be provided for free.

Appeals

In the event that transport assistance is refused in any of the categories above, details of the appeals procedure can be found in Annex 2.

Transport Assistance for Young People that KCC have identified as requiring additional support

Reassessment

The transport needs of YP with SEND will be reassessed by KCC (following receipt of an application) when the YP moves from compulsory schooling to Post-16 education so that the appropriate support can be put into place.

Arrangements for accessing education

KCC recognises that it is the parent and/or the YP's responsibility for ensuring attendance at a school, other educational establishment or training provider.

Where YPs have been identified as requiring additional transport assistance, KCC is required to identify the most cost-effective way for YPs to access their education or training taking account of their needs and circumstances.

KCC may initially provide support to allow pupils to make use of public transport.

Where there is no access to public transport, bespoke transport arrangements may be put in place from designated collection points to enable access to a hired vehicle. KCC may finally commission private hire vehicles through local taxi operators where no other arrangements are suitable, subject to an initial contribution in line with the total cost of the Kent 16+ Travel Saver pass (with similar adjustments to the rates for low income applicants) for the academic year that the application is being made.

In exceptional circumstances and as a last resort, the Head of Fair Access may approve alternative, cost-effective arrangements to provide free school transport for YP who otherwise could not be transported to their place of learning, subject to a contribution as outlined above.

Transport other than at the beginning and end of the academic day

Home to school transport is only provided at the beginning and end of the normal academic day. The beginning and end of the academic day is determined by the times of the first programmed educational lesson delivered during normal establishment hours and the end of the last programmed lesson during normal establishment hours for that educational establishment or learning provider. Any transport arrangements in order for the YP to attend extended lessons outside of the normal establishment hours, will be the responsibility of the parent or establishment/provider to arrange. Vehicles transporting more than one YP will not be delayed to accommodate an individual YP's return from an alternative site of education. Similarly, for YPs accessing a bespoke timetable, it may be necessary to wait at school to access the dedicated vehicle that is made available to others at the same establishment. KCC may be flexible in this regard where it does not impact other supported YPs or result in additional expenditure, but all decisions are subject to revision following any change in circumstance.

Alternative Transport Assistance

Travel Training

Travel training may be available to YPs with an EHCP and who meet the criteria to receive transport support.

Travel training helps YP with special educational needs to travel independently to their learning provider. Being able to access public transport provides important life skills for YP.

YP will be trained to travel safely from home to their place of learning and back again, promoting their independence. Training will focus on providing the skills and knowledge that is needed to be able to complete journeys safely, confidently and successfully. The training and support will be delivered on a 1:1 basis and tailored and delivered at the pace suitable for the YP.

Travel training will be provided until the YP is confident and competent on the journey from home to the learning

provider and return. Following training, a travel trainer will carry out an assessment to ensure competency.

On 'sign off' the young person will be issued a bus pass (or train pass if this is the appropriate route) for the remainder of the academic year. If the young person continues in education the following academic year they will be required to purchase a Kent 16+ Travel Saver and/or train pass – if age appropriate.

Mileage Payment

Applicants can request to have a mileage payment in order to drive the YP to and from school. The Post 16 Transport Eligibility Team will assess whether this is a cost-effective option for KCC and may award payments if no existing contracts are operating that could accommodate the YPs. Payments will be made at 45p per mile, paid in arrears, following confirmation of attendance and submission of appropriate fuel receipts. Initial payments will be withheld until an initial contribution is recouped in line with the total cost of the Kent 16+ Travel Saver pass (with appropriate adjustments to the rates for low income applicants who are unable to secure direct bursary support from their provider) for the academic year that the application is being made

Where applicants request a voluntary mileage payment, it is calculated for one journey to school and one return journey home. It is unlikely that a voluntary mileage payment will be granted where this exceeds the cost of a Personal Transport Budget and consequently payments are usually capped at £2000 per annum.

Where KCC agrees that a mileage payment is the only acceptable form of transport based on a YP's need, consideration will be given to the number of daily journeys that are covered, dependent on the family's individual circumstances and daily responsibilities to ensure transport arrangements are provided at no cost to the family.

Where there are two or more YPs from the same family attending the educational establishment or training provider, only one claim for mileage payment is allowed.

A mileage payment is provided solely to offset costs incurred where a YP is transported to school in a parent's own vehicle. A mileage payment will be withdrawn where a YP has access to the use of an alternative subsidised KCC transport scheme.

Personal Transport Budgets

A Personal Transport Budget (PTB) is a payment designed to help parents make their own arrangements to facilitate the YP accessing school. Parents are not limited in how they make use of the PTB to support school transport arrangements, with the exception that funds cannot be used to purchase an alternative subsidised KCC pass or scheme for the YP.

A PTB is primarily available to YPs with an EHCP. They must also be identified to receive home to school transport support when assessed in accordance with KCC's Transport policy. In exceptional circumstances and where it is financially beneficial to KCC, mainstream YPs may be offered a PTB on the same basis as YPs with EHCPs – this is entirely at the discretion of the Council and will only be available where it can be demonstrated to be the most cost-effective use of resources. Applicants who have previously been withdrawn from the PTB scheme by KCC will be ineligible for consideration for future requests.

PTB payments are made on the basis of the straight-line distance between the YP's home and their main educational establishment or training provider in the following Bands (minus an initial contribution in line with the total cost of the Kent 16+ Travel Saver pass, including with appropriate adjustment to the rates for low income applicants who are unable to secure direct bursary support from their provider, for the academic year that the application is being made):

Band 1 – Less than 5 miles - £2000 Annual Budget

Band 2 – Between 5 and 10 miles - £3000 Annual Budget

Band 3 – Over 10 miles - £5000 Annual Budget

Where a YP receives a PTB partway through an academic year, the total payment will be offered on a pro rata basis to account for the reduced timescale that the parent will be responsible for transport arrangements.

Where a YP is accessing education or training on a part-time basis, or they are making use of boarding facilities, their PTB payments will be offered on a pro rata basis to account for the reduction in journey frequency (in most cases for learners who board, mileage payments offer more benefit than the PTB).

The PTB is reviewed on a regular basis taking into account the YP's attendance at the educational establishment or training provider and the transport arrangements that may be provided by KCC that are in place at the current

time. The YP's attendance will be monitored and where attendance falls below 85% within a period, payments for any days that they are absent will be deducted from a later PTB payment. There is no guarantee that a PTB will continue to be paid where the YP's attendance is seen to be low or where there is more cost-effective transport which can be accessed. Parents will be required to enter into a contract with KCC in which they agree to ensure the YP can access their educational establishment or training provider in a safe and legal way and arrive in a fit state to learn in return for the PTB payment.

PTB payments are made in 11 monthly instalments. No payment will be made in July to allow KCC sufficient time to confirm that a reduction is not required in the final

monthly instalment to account for low attendance. The final payment will be made in August to account for transport that parents have provided in July of that academic year.

Payments are paid directly into a bank account nominated on the Parental Agreement Form on the 15th of each month or the previous working day where the 15th falls on a weekend or public holiday.

Payments will be calculated from the date that the Parental Agreement Form is returned.

Payments are not back dated and no refunds are provided if the application for a PTB is processed within six weeks of receipt of the application.

A PTB can be offered to up to two YPs within a family, however, the additional YP will normally only be granted 50% of the entitlement. Any subsequent YP would not normally qualify for PTB.

School Led Transport

The Head of Fair Access will work in conjunction with schools with a willingness and sufficient capacity, to develop bespoke arrangements to provide transport to eligible YPs on their roll. Such arrangements will be agreed in line with principles outlined in this policy, but will be managed via separate formal agreements with the school.

Annexes

Annex 1 - General Processes, Explanations and Definitions

How to Apply

Information about how to apply for Post 16 transport support can be found at www.kent.gov.uk/post16transport

Application timescales

KCC seek to administer the assessment process and provision of identified transport arrangements inside of six weeks wherever possible. Several factors will determine KCC's ability to deliver on this commitment. In some instances, the assessment may be delayed where further information is required about a YP's individual needs, or at peak times of the year. Once an applicant has been assessed as requiring additional arrangements, details are passed to colleagues in Public Transport who determine the most suitable and cost-effective means to enable the YP to access their education provider. For some YP with more complex requirements, more time may be needed for a transport procurement processes to be conducted. Where these more complex transport arrangements need to be put in place, parents might expect a delay in transport arrangements being confirmed as a fair and legal process must be followed to identify the named operator through a competitive process.

For YP with SEN, when Post 16 Transport applications are made to coincide with a new academic year, it is advisable to apply as soon as the Post 16 learning provider has been named in the YP's EHCP.

Applications should be made at www.kent.gov.uk/applyforpost16transport

Refunds

KCC is not responsible for any costs incurred by YP or parents during the normal application timescale. Where assessment for transport support takes longer than six weeks and a YP is subsequently found to require additional transport support, YP or parents may request a refund. Refunds will usually be in the form of a mileage payment for each additional academic day YP or parents were required to provide transport.

If a YP was initially assessed as not requiring additional transport support, but following a Transport Eligibility Officer review (See Annex 3) is reassessed as requiring support, a refund can be requested from the initial assessment decision date or the date six weeks after the initial application was received, whichever is earlier. If the review overturns the decision as a result of additional information that the YP or parent did not make available when first applying, a refund will only be made available where the review is completed after the 20 working day limit. In this event, refunds will be calculated from 20 working days after any new information was received by the Post 16 Transport Eligibility Team.

Where additional transport support is provided following a Stage 2 transport appeal, no refund will be provided for transport that a YP or parent has been required to organise until their appeal hearing date, as panel members have additional discretionary authority to consider wider personal circumstances which could not be considered during the normal assessment process. A full or partial refund will only provided where panel members have concluded that this is appropriate during the appeal.

Mode of transport

KCC will determine the most appropriate way to provide transport assistance necessary to support the needs of the YP. Where the YP or parents wish to make their own arrangements and be reimbursed, this may be considered at the discretion of KCC and payment may be awarded where it is not financially disadvantageous to KCC.

Where transport is commissioned by KCC, suitable arrangements will be made for the YP to get on or off the vehicle allocated to them at a point as near to the home and school as possible. There is no fixed distance, although a distance of up to a mile would generally be considered a reasonable walk for a YP in order to reach a drop off and collection point. Consideration of the individual circumstances, including the YP's age, health, wider needs and the nature of the journey, would be taken into account.

Due to tendering process that is required to finalise arrangements, KCC cannot guarantee that a YP will be offered transport by a particular provider, driver or in a specific vehicle. Similarly, arrangements are subject to change throughout the academic year, although KCC will endeavour to keep changes to a minimum wherever possible.

Journey times

A reasonable journey time for a YP of Secondary age is normally regarded as 75 mins. This would therefore form a sensible basis for a reasonable journey time for a Post 16 YP. For YP with SEN and/or disabilities, journeys may be more complex and a shorter journey time, although desirable, may not always be possible. This could vary according to the individual needs of the YP and it may not always be possible to keep within these timeframes. The times detailed above are indicative of an average journey and would not account for unexpected increases as a result of temporary road works or other such delays.

Transport assistance should be such that YPs could expect to reach their place of learning without undue stress, strain and difficulty as would prevent them from benefiting from their education.

Change of address or place of learning

If a YP moves or changes their place of learning, their suitability to receive transport assistance would be reassessed in accordance with the policy. There is no guarantee that because they may have received transport assistance previously, that they will continue to do so. During the time it will take for KCC to reassess the YP's application, it will be the parents' responsibility to make their own arrangements to transport the YP to and from school.

If a YP moves on a temporary basis, transport would not normally be provided.

Additional alternative addresses

Transport assistance is normally only provided from the YP's home to the main learning provider at which they are on roll. The YP's home will normally be the address where they reside for the greatest number of school nights (eg Sunday evening to Thursday evening). Where a YP spends an equal number of school nights at more than one residence, transport support will be provided to the address which is closest to their place of learning via the shortest available route.

In exceptional circumstances, transport may also be provided to an additional alternative address where there is no additional expenditure to KCC. Transport will only be approved for permanent arrangements and will not be implemented for temporary changes in transport requirements. Where transport is provided in these

circumstances, arrangements will only remain in place until such a time as they are no longer cost neutral. At that point, transport to the alternative address will be removed and the YP or parents will be offered an opportunity to appeal.

Off-site provision

If educational establishments or training providers arrange any off-site provision for a YP who is on their roll, they will be responsible for making any transport arrangements and meeting the costs.

Work experience

KCC will not provide transport assistance for YPs on work experience. Any costs that arise as a result of work experience, including transport costs, are the responsibility of the educational establishment or training provider or parent.

Apprenticeships/Supported Internships

Where a YP considers that they may require travel assistance and they wish this to apply to either an apprenticeship or to a traineeship, they should submit an on-line application as for all other learners. The principles outlined throughout this policy will be used to assess whether transport support should be provided.

Examinations

Public examinations are usually taken during the normal school day. Transport will not be provided at alternative times for YPs who take public examinations.

Out of county residents

A YP that resides outside of the administrative boundary of KCC but attends a Kent school must apply for transport assistance from their home Local Authority where this is required.

Independent schools

Where a YP attends an independent fee-paying school, transport support from KCC will not be provided unless it is named in an EHCP as a YP's nearest suitable learning provider.

Transport provided in error

If following an internal review it is identified that a YP has been incorrectly assessed as suitable for transport

assistance and whose personal circumstances do not actually meet the required criteria, transport assistance will be withdrawn. YPs and parents will be given at least one term's notice before transport is withdrawn to allow sufficient time to organise alternative arrangements.

YP behaviour

Inappropriate behaviour on a vehicle is a safety hazard and can put all passengers, the driver and other road users at risk. Drivers and passenger assistants will normally notify the head teacher or nominated person at the learning provider of any problems with the YP's behaviour once the journey is concluded. The learning provider will ensure that Public Transport and where necessary the SEN Caseworker are kept informed.

Where appropriate, parents will be informed of any problems and are expected to assist in preventing their recurrence. If it is considered that a YP's behaviour is likely to endanger them and others, then it may be necessary to withdraw transport either temporarily or permanently. The length of any temporary withdrawal is at the discretion of Transport Eligibility Team, following consultation with the learning provider and other relevant parties.

Where a YP's behaviour is unacceptable during the journey the route will be completed and they will not be put off the vehicle anywhere other than at the agreed destination. However, if a driver feels that a YP's behaviour on any journey is such that they cannot guarantee the safety of the other YPs and adults on the vehicle or other road users, they should take immediate advice from their employer, the learning provider or Public Transport.

Where a YP's behaviour persistently endangers themselves or others KCC reserves the right to withdraw the transport.

Further details can be found in the Code of Conduct found in Annex 4.

Assessment and trial periods

Where it has been recommended by KCC that a YP attend an educational establishment or training provider for a period of assessment or trial, transport will be provided as long as the YP meets the criteria for travel support.

Passenger assistants (for individuals with an EHCP)

There is no automatic entitlement to provision of a passenger assistant on a vehicle if a YP travels by minibus or taxi. The need for a passenger assistant will be considered on a case by case basis, taking in to account the YP's age, the nature of their special educational needs and whether a passenger assistant is already present within the vehicle.

Passenger assistants may also be provided where there are five or more YPs with EHCPs travelling in one vehicle who would otherwise not require individual support, although this may not be necessary where the collective level of need is low.

All passenger assistants are employed by the transport provider. Before they can commence their duties, they must undertake an Enhanced DBS check, which is repeated annually, and attend a KCC induction course. All PAs are issued with photo ID which they must wear at all times. Any further training is provided by their employer.

Passenger assistants' duties are to supervise YPs on a vehicle and to assist with boarding and leaving the vehicle where the YP has physical, sensory and/or medical difficulties. They are not able to collect YPs from home. It is the YP's or parents' responsibility to make arrangements, where necessary, to ensure the YP gets to and from the vehicle.

No passenger assistant will be permitted to administer treatment or medication without the consent of the parent, which must be obtained in advance in writing together with clear details of when and how the treatment/medication is to be administered.

A passenger assistant may administer treatment or medication only if they have been trained to do so. If the condition needs treatment which is complicated to deliver it may be necessary to provide a trained nurse or individual who has received the necessary specialist training.

On some occasions the passenger assistant who has been authorised and trained to administer treatment or medication, may not be available. Ideally in such circumstances, the contractor will have an alternative passenger assistant available, also trained and authorised. Where this is not possible, the parents may be able to travel during the school run or asked to make alternative arrangements. On no account may a YP travel without a passenger assistant who is authorised and trained to administer the necessary treatment or medication.

Where KCC has exhausted all possible avenues and remains unable to secure a suitably trained passenger assistant, it may be necessary for alternative transport support to be offered. The Head of Fair Access may approve alternative, cost-effective arrangements to provide free school transport for eligible CYP who otherwise could not be transported to their place of learning.

Passenger assistants' duties also include the delivery of notes, medication or money between home and school where the YP is not capable of doing so or cannot be relied upon to do so. Guidelines and training are provided for all passenger assistants and each one carries an identity card which is subject to renewal annually.

Passenger assistant arrangements will be reviewed annually to ensure they remain appropriate.

Boarders

Transport for boarders will be provided at the beginning and end of each agreed scheduled boarding period. Outside of these times, the YP or parent, assisted as necessary by the learning provider, will be required to facilitate and fund any exceptional transport arrangements that may be required in the event of extraordinary occurrences such as school closures, medical appointments etc.

Specialist equipment

Where special equipment is necessary for the safe transport of YPs, the contractor will be expected to provide this if it is commonly available, and this will be stipulated in the contract.

For some YPs, individual specialist equipment is necessary which it would be unreasonable to expect a transport provider to provide. This may be purchased by KCC and loaned to the contractor for the duration of the contract.

Transportation of equipment and luggage

YPs travelling to school on a daily basis are expected to travel with one item of hand luggage and YPs attending residential schools are expected to travel with one suitcase (or equivalent). Additional equipment will be transported only by prior arrangement and details of any additional equipment needing to be transported must be provided when transport is being requested, at least ten working days before it is needed. Any one-off arrangements where there is a need to transport an item of equipment must

be notified to Public Transport and, if it requires additional expense to transport, the SEN Area Manager will take a decision on whether this should be approved. Should special arrangements need to be made, Public Transport will require at least ten working days' notice.

In cases where large pieces of equipment are needed by a YP at all times and so requires transporting on a daily basis, the SEN Area Manager will investigate the possibility of purchasing a second piece of equipment for use whilst the YP is in school. Equipment purchased in this way is not for use at home and must be returned to KCC when the YP no longer requires it in school. In considering the purchase of an additional piece of equipment, the SEN Area Manager will consider the difference between the cost of transporting the equipment and the cost of buying and maintaining it and will normally fund the cheaper option.

Additional Support

Information about additional support provided through Adult's Social Care can be found here: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/adult-social-care/care-and-support/how-to-get-adult-social-care-support>

Annex 2 - Post 16 Transport Appeals

Parents and YP are entitled to appeal against decisions by KCC to refuse their application for transport support. This appeal process has two stages and appellants should complete the first stage before moving on to the next.

Stage 1 – Procedure for Appeals to the Post 16 Transport Eligibility Team – Officer Review

Applications for transport arrangements are only refused where a YP is not eligible under KCC's transport criteria. Where applicants receive a refusal to their application, the first step is to carefully read the outcome letter that has been sent to you by KCC's Post 16 Transport Eligibility team. It will explain to you why transport cannot be offered to your child.

While applicants may feel strongly that they should be given transport support, Officers are obliged to follow the assessment criteria outlined in the main policy. There is no discretion for Officers to deviate from strictly applying the transport assessment procedures when considering spending from the public purse. This stage is designed to ensure that there have been no mistakes in the processing and to check that the information supplied was correct at the time of assessment.

Applicants should carefully consider before submitting an Officer Review whether they are likely to have their decision overturned, in light of the information above. If applicants feel that they can submit sufficient additional evidence to show that their application was assessed incorrectly, they should contact the Post 16 Transport Eligibility team with the YP's full name, learning provider, date of birth and an explanation as to why they feel that their application should be reassessed within 20 working days from receipt of KCC's home to school transport decision. Requests for Officer Review that are received after this date cannot be considered. Transport Officers cannot discuss an applicant's reasons for requesting a reassessment over the telephone. It is important that Officers maintain a written audit trail of their assessment decisions. Applicants will be responsible for any alternative transport arrangements while their application is being reassessed. Officers will endeavour to respond within 20 working days.

Applicants wishing to complain about the service provided by the local authority should use the local authority's complaints procedure.

If the Officer Review relates to the provision of a mileage payment or Personal Transport Budget and highlights that applicants received an incorrect initial assessment, a payment will be provided and backdated to the initial assessment decision date or the date six weeks after the initial application was received, whichever is earlier. If the review overturns the decision as a result of additional information that the applicant did not make available when first applying, a payment will be provided and will start from the date the parental agreement is returned.

Stage 2 – Procedure for Appeals to Members of the Transport Regulation Committee Appeals Panel

Where an applicant's Officer Review is not upheld, if they wish, they are then able to appeal to Members of the County Council's Transport Regulation Committee Appeal Panel.

You can attend the hearing to put your case to the panel, or have your case considered on your written submission only. You will be given an opportunity to select which option best suits your need.

The hearing panel consists of between 3 and 5 elected Members. The panel will consider whether our policy on free home to school transport has been applied properly and, if so, whether the strength of your case outweighs the most cost effective and appropriate mode of

transport. The panel cannot change the policy itself or the designation of the nearest appropriate school for the area.

You will be offered the following options for your appeal hearing:

- A face to face meeting.
- A virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams (a secure system that is similar to Zoom).
- A paper-based process, where you submit information for the panel to take into account when considering your appeal.

An appellant has 20 working days from receipt of KCC's stage one written decision notification to make a written request to escalate the matter to stage two. Stage 2 requests that are received after this date cannot be considered.

Grounds for Appealing

Applicants can appeal for any reason or combinations of reasons that they wish.

Applicant cannot appeal for the YP to be transported by a particular driver or transport provider, as KCC is obliged to secure transport through a fair and open tendering process.

The Members of the County Council's Regulation Committee Appeal Panel ("the Members") will consider any arguments that are put to them.

Procedure

An online appeals form is available to complete here: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/school-transport/free-school-transport/school-transport-appeals>

It is important that you submit any evidence that supports your appeal (for example letters from your school, GP or social worker or financial evidence such as benefit receipts). You can appeal for any reason or combination of reasons, but you should carefully consider if you have sufficient additional evidence to support your case.

No charge is made for the appeal but appellants must meet any costs they incur for preparing their appeal or attending the hearing, such as photocopying or transport costs.

The Transport Appeals Team in Democratic Services will acknowledge appellant's appeal and offer a date and time to hear the appeal. All paperwork will be issued electronically unless an alternative format is requested.

If appellants wish to, they can, for a good reason, reject the first hearing date. If the second hearing date is also rejected or if appellants fail to attend a hearing on a date that has been accepted they will not, other than in exceptional circumstances, be offered a further hearing. The Members will, however, consider the appeal in their absence, based upon the information that has been provided in writing. Please note that it is not possible to hold appeals in the evenings or at the weekend.

At least five days before the hearing date, the Appeals Team will electronically send appellant and the Officer presenting the Council's case a copy of each other's written case and supporting documentation.

Witnesses

Appellants are welcome to bring a witness, including their locally elected Kent County Councillor, but they must advise the Transport Appeals team at least one day in advance who this will be. Appellants may wish to provide a written summary of the witnesses' evidence on the day of the hearing as this may be helpful to the Members considering the case.

Please note that the Members hearing the appeal have the right to refuse to listen to witnesses produced by appellants or by the Officer presenting the Council's case if they believe that the evidence given is irrelevant to the appeal.

No fees, expenses or allowances will be paid to the witnesses by the Council under any circumstances.

Appellants can have a friend to accompany them or represent them at the appeal and must ensure the Appeals Team know his or her identity at least one day prior to the hearing date. If the friend is a lawyer, they cannot act as one as part of a lawyer/client relationship.

Legal presentation is not allowed and the Officer presenting the case on behalf of the County Council will also not be allowed to have legal representation. The Members deciding the appeal do have the right to have a legal adviser if they so wish.

There will be an official note taker at the hearing provided by the Council and any video or attempt by appellants to record the hearing will lead to its immediate termination and the dismissal of the appeal.

As far as possible appellants should send all evidence with their appeal letter. Any additional evidence should be sent to the Transport Appeals Team at least two days before the appeal hearing. Written evidence produced on the day of the appeal hearing will be considered at the absolute discretion of the Members hearing the appeal and may lead to the hearing being adjourned to a later date.

The Appeal Hearing

There will normally be a panel of between three to five Members considering the appeal. There will also be a clerk to advise Members and take notes of the appeal hearing. If you opt to have your appeal heard under a face to face or virtual setting, at the beginning of the appeal hearing the Chairman elected by the Members will introduce everyone present at the hearing and explain the procedure. The procedure is as follows:

1. A Presenting Officer will explain the reasons that have prevented the County Council meeting parents wishes up to this stage.
2. Appellants and the Members may then ask the Officer questions.
3. Appellants and/or their representative (who can be a Member of the County Council) will explain the grounds of the appeal and its desired outcome.
4. The Presenting Officer and the Members will ask parents and/or their representative questions.
5. Appellants and the Presenting Officer will be asked to leave the room and the Members will make a decision.

For paper based appeals, Members and the Clerk will meet and make their decision based on the written submission only and neither appellants or a Presenting Officer will be in attendance.

The Members may ask anyone questions at any time or may alter the order of steps 3 and 4 above at any time. Members may agree to consider only written evidence for either or both parties.

The Decision

In reaching their decision the Members must have regard to Kent's Post 16 Transport policy. They need to satisfy themselves that the policy has been applied correctly. They will then look at the specific circumstances to determine whether they are sufficiently strong to enable them to use their discretion to make an exception. The Members have a responsibility to consider the most cost effective and appropriate mode of transport support taking into account the family circumstances at the time of the appeal.

The Members may decide to:

- Uphold the appeal in all respects; or
- Not uphold the appeal; or
- They may decide to partially uphold the appeal.

This can include meeting appellant's wishes in part or for a time limited period. At the end of the time limited period the Members can review the circumstances again and may ask that additional information such as up to date medical records or learning provider attendance records be made available at the time of the review.

In the event members agree to the provision of a mileage payment or Personal Transport Budget, they will decide the date at which calculation of payments will begin, how long this provision will remain available and whether there is a need for regular review of circumstances.

Appellants will receive a decision in writing within five working days of the appeal hearing. Decisions cannot be given over the telephone.

There is no further appeal within the Council's procedures. If appellants believe that they have suffered injustice as a result of maladministration by the Panel then they do have the right to pursue a complaint with the Local Government Ombudsman.

This is not a right of appeal and relates only to issues such as failure to follow correct procedures, or failure to act independently and fairly. If the person making the complaint simply disagrees with the decision there is no

recourse. If appellants have a complaint of a procedural nature, they can refer it direct to the Local Government Ombudsman

Appellants will not be able to make any further applications for free or subsidised transport in relation to the same YP at the same learning provider unless:

- They can demonstrate a significant and material change in circumstances since the previous appeal was decided; or
- The County Council changes the criteria for offering free or subsidised transport under the Council's published Post 16 Transport Policy and that change is relevant to the case; or
- There is a relevant change to the law.

If any of the above grounds apply parents will need to write a fresh appeal to the Transport Appeals Team, setting out the reasons in detail. Appellants will then be informed whether the Council will be prepared to consider the new application.

Annex 3 - Health, Safety and YP Protection

Life threatening conditions

If a YP, who is entitled to travel arrangements, suffers from a life-threatening condition, which may require immediate medication or treatment, arrangements may be made for the parent or another individual to take the YP to their learning provider themselves or to travel with them in the vehicle provided. This will only be possible if the YP is traveling in a sole occupancy vehicle. A mileage payment is payable in those cases where a parent takes the YP to their place of education or training.

Disclosure and Barring Service

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is responsible for confirming whether it is appropriate for an adult to interact with YPs. Drivers and passenger assistants must be DBS checked and cleared and the passenger assistant provided with an identity card following vetting and training.

All operators must be in possession of a DBS before contracts are granted.

Mobile phones/Radios

All transport contracted specifically for YPs with special educational needs will be equipped with a radio or mobile phone. This will not necessarily apply when YPs with special needs travel on mainstream school transport or local bus services.

Annex 4 - Transport Related Responsibilities and Expectations

A copy of KCC's Transport Code of Conduct, which applies equally to YP in Post 16 education, can be found [here](#)

Annex 5 - Home to School and Post-16 Transport Retendering Procedure for Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and/or Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Introduction

Councils are required by law to adhere to the government's Public Contract Regulations 2015, which provides rules to the public sector for the procurement of goods or services. Procurement is how the public sector purchases services to ensure they provide value for money, are effective and deliver quality services.

The regulations govern how councils engage with commercial suppliers when buying their services, making sure there is a fair and transparent process. This process is applied in the purchasing of services for Home to School and Post 16 Transport.

Commissioning Cycle

Kent County Council (KCC) adopts a commissioning cycle when purchasing services. The commissioning cycle and how we apply it to Home to School Transport is summarised below:



Analyse:

For Home to School Transport there is a statutory (legal) obligation to provide transport to entitled pupils. For Post 16 Transport, KCC has a duty to consider what additional support a learner may need to access education, which may result in the provision of a vehicle organised by KCC. To identify what the service needs to deliver we review each pupil's application and any additional supporting information and consider it in line with responsibilities detailed in the Education Act and statutory guidance.

Plan:

Using the information gathered during the analysis phase we plan how to provide transport for identified pupils. We review the existing transport arrangements for pupils to determine whether we can manage the demand for services more efficiently. We consider; statutory guidance, pupil need and the efficient use of resources to deliver these services. This process may conclude that pupils may be able to share transport with others on existing services or determine that new services are required.

Do:

Where there is a need to purchase services to provide transport, we will undertake a procurement process. The procurement process invites suppliers who have registered with the Kent Business Portal and agreed to our terms and conditions to submit a proposal for an advertised school contract. We award the contract to the supplier who submits the lowest cost proposal. This ensures we make efficient use of public money.

The contract with the successful supplier sets out the roles and responsibilities of both, the council, and the supplier, to deliver the services which include but not limited to:

- Licensing regulations for drivers and vehicles, for example, DBS checks are undertaken to find out whether someone has a criminal record and insurances are in place.
- Arriving on time.
- Paying for services.
- Upholding contract management standards should something go wrong, for example by ensuring the service is running as we expect in accordance with our terms and conditions of contracts and taking action to address any concerns promptly. This ensures pupils travel in a safe and appropriate manner.

A contract may only be for a fixed period. A contract for our services shall not exceed a maximum of five years due to the level of change from pupils starting and leaving the service. This means we cannot guarantee the same supplier will deliver our services throughout the academic life of a pupil.

Review:

We regularly review the transport arrangements for pupils by gathering feedback from families, learning providers and suppliers to ensure the services are performing as expected, are fit for purpose for pupils and the contracts represent value for money. KCC is reliant on parents and third parties to keep them updated with this information. Legislation and guidance are also kept under review. The information gathered will help inform the next commissioning cycle.

By adopting the commissioning cycle it allows us to prepare for “planned changes”. These are when we expect services to change when a contract has reached its natural end date. It may also occur as a result of pupils leaving the service meaning the contract may become financially unviable for the supplier or council. When planned changes are due to occur, we notify parents and carers in good time to allow them to prepare their child for a potential change. Parents will be contacted again when the outcome of the retendering process is known and an appropriate provider has been identified.

How we will communicate and engage with key stakeholders

We will:

1. Provide parents and carers with notice two months prior to planned changes occurring
2. Explain why the change is occurring
3. Engage with schools and/or learning provisions to inform them of any planned change and where possible seek their views on new travel arrangements prior to commissioning services
4. Listen and consider the views of parents and carers regarding their child’s travel needs
5. Inform parents and carers via letter or email upon determining a child’s transport arrangement and securing those arrangements.

Unexpected changes in transport

On occasion transport may need to change more suddenly – this would be considered a “not planned” change. This may be due to the supplier/transport operators serving notice on their contract, or they may be unavailable with immediate effect due to factors outside of the council’s control. Where these cases occur, we will endeavour to inform parents and carers as soon as reasonably practicable.

However, by their nature it will not be possible to provide as much warning as a planned change. As the council is reliant on the supplier to be informed of these changes, it is possible that parents may hear from their child’s driver before KCC is able to make contact. In any event, KCC will immediately begin the process of sourcing new services via the process outlined above.

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Kent County Council

**Post 16 Transport Policy
Statement including Post
19
for the
2026/27 Academic Year**

Produced by:

Fair Access – Transport Eligibility

Introduction

Local authorities do not have a general obligation to provide free or subsidised post 16 travel support but do have a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport or other support that the authority considers it necessary to make to facilitate the attendance of all persons of sixth form age receiving education or training.

The requirements placed on a local authority are defined in the Education Act 1996 (as amended), Education and Skills Act 2008, Education and Inspections Act 2006, Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 and the Equality Act 2010.

All young people carrying on their education post 16 must reapply for travel support annually.

'Sixth form age' refers to those young people who are over 16 years of age but under 19 or continuing learners who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday (years 12,13,14).

Local authorities also have a duty to encourage, enable and assist young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) to participate in education and training, up to the age of 25. However, a pupil in receipt of an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), is not automatically entitled to transport support to whichever setting or establishment named in their Plan. This policy document specifies the support that Kent County Council (KCC) considers necessary to facilitate the attendance of Post 16 learners receiving education or training.

The statement also provides information about the provision available for young adult learners aged 19 – 25 with SEND.

Education or training refers to learning or training at a school, further education institution, a council maintained or assisted institution providing higher or further education, an establishment funded directly by the Education Skills Funding Agency, learning providers delivering accredited programmes of learning which lead to positive outcomes and are funded by the council, for example, colleges, charities and private learning providers.

Where the policy refers to parents, it should be understood to equally apply to guardians and carers. Where a young person applies on their own behalf, the equivalent responsibilities that apply to their parent will transfer.

Where situations arise that are not directly addressed within this policy, Transport Officers will work in conjunction with the Assistant Director for Fair Access to apply the principles contained below to identify a suitable resolution.

This policy supersedes all previous policies and applies from the 2026/27 academic year.

Transport and travel support

Kent 16+ Travel Saver

KCC considers that in most circumstances the provision of the KCC 16+ Travel Saver card is sufficient to facilitate the attendance of Young People (YP) of sixth form age at their chosen education or training provider, including the majority of pupils with SEND including those with an EHCP. This may be at schools, academies, colleges or in the workplace through an apprenticeship or other work-based training provision.

The KCC 16+ Travel Saver card is available to purchase from KCC, with details of pricing and application processes available [here](#). The KCC 16+ Travel Saver card offers free at point of travel access, to the entire public bus network operating in Kent including single destination journeys out of Kent and back into the County. It is available for use 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Learning providers can choose to further subsidise this charge to their students or trainees if they meet Bursary conditions.

The KCC 16+ Travel Saver card may be available at an even lower rate for young people with parents on a low income. Applications for cards at this lower rate should begin with the YP's education provider.

Alternatively, YP who are not otherwise eligible for help with transport can apply for a seat on vehicles hired by KCC under the Vacant Seat Payment Scheme (VSPS).

Vacant seats on hired vehicles that meet suitability requirements are only made available after the start of term, once all statutorily entitled YPs have been accommodated onto transport and vehicle spaces are known. Consequently, parents seeking to purchase a vacant seat may need to make other arrangements for their child to access school during the period when vacant seats are being collated for allocation. This will not be refunded by KCC. VSPS awards seats on a first come first serve basis.

It will also be necessary for applications for VSPS to consider Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000, which potentially limit a number of larger vehicles from being considered for use in the scheme if they are not suitably accessible to all potential passengers. The Department for Transport have applied a number of exemptions which have delayed the implementation of these regulations, however, KCC will be required to apply them in the event that no further extensions are granted.

Where a VSPS seat is granted, it may have to be withdrawn at a later date [for a YP who is entitled to transport support,] if KCC decide to stop running the vehicle or if it is decided to run a smaller vehicle.

If the seat is taken away, parents will be given until the end of the academic year when they will then have to make their own arrangements.

VSPS is not available on public transport.

Young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)

To support the provision of suitable education or training for young people who are 16 and 17 years old and not in education, employment or training (NEET), KCC may offer fixed term (up to one month) travel cards at subsidised rates to facilitate travel to interviews, work experience and other activities necessary to secure appropriate provision. To be eligible, young people must be registered and receiving support through Early Help and Preventative Services

Active Travel

Our Active Travel Strategy aims to make active travel an attractive and realistic choice for short journeys in Kent. Active travel means walking or cycling as a means of transport, in order to get to a particular destination such as school, the shops or to visit friends. Active travel can be for complete journeys or parts of a journey, and more people in the community making more active travel journeys can lead to a range of positive individual and shared outcomes. These include improved health, reduced traffic congestion, reduced pollution and financial savings to the individual and businesses. More information is available at www.kentconnected.org.

The 16-19 Bursary Fund

The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help young people overcome specific barriers to participation so they can remain in education.

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

- 1) A vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 a year for young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups below:
 - in care
 - care leavers
 - in receipt of Income Support, or Universal Credit in place of Income Support, in their own right
 - in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit and Disability Living or Personal Independence Payments in their own right
 - discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment
- 2) Discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment

To be eligible for the discretionary bursary young people must:

- be aged 16 or over but under 19

- be aged 19 or over and have an EHCP
- be aged 19 or over and continuing on a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers')
- be studying a programme that is subject to inspection by a public body which assures quality (such as Ofsted), the provision must also be funded by either a Government funding agency or KCC.

Schools and colleges are responsible for managing both types of bursary. Young people who want to apply for support from the bursary fund should contact their chosen school or college to make an application.

Young parents / Care to Learn

If you are a young parent under 20, Care to Learn can help pay for your childcare and related travel costs. You can get:

- £180 per child per week if you live outside London
- £195 per child per week if you live in London

Care to Learn can help with the cost of:

- childcare, including deposit and registration fees
- a childcare 'taster' session (up to 5 days)
- keeping your childcare place over the summer holidays
- taking your child to the childcare provider

Types of child care

The childcare provider must be Ofsted registered and can be a:

- childminder
- pre-school playgroup
- day nursery
- out of school club

If your child needs specialist childcare, the provider must also be on the Care Quality Commission's register for specialist provision.

If you want a relative to get Care to Learn for looking after your child they need to be both:

- providing registered childcare for children they're not related to
- living apart from you and your child

Payments

Childcare payments go directly to your childcare provider. Before your childcare provider can be paid:

- your childcare provider needs to confirm your child's attendance

- your school or college needs to confirm that you're attending your course

Payments for travel costs go to your school or college - they'll either pay you or arrange travel for you.

Attendance

Payments will stop if:

- you stop attending your course
- you finish your course
- your child stops attending childcare

Eligibility

You can get Care to Learn if:

- you're a parent under 20 at the start of your course
- you're the main carer for your child
- you live in England
- you're either a British citizen or have a legal right to live and study in England
- your course is publicly funded (check with your school or college)
- your childcare provider is registered with Ofsted or the Care Quality Commission

Type of course

Care to Learn is only available for courses in England that have some public funding.

This includes courses that take place in:

- schools
- school sixth forms
- sixth form colleges
- other colleges and learning providers, including Foundation Learning
- your community at Children's Centres

For more information please visit <https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn/how-to-claim>

Transport for sixth form aged young people for whom the KCC 16+ Travel Saver card, VSPS, Active Travel Strategy, 16-19 Bursary Fund and Care to Learn are not viable options

If, however, you have special circumstances which you believe should make you eligible to receive help of an alternative nature than those set out above you can apply for additional support at www.kent.gov.uk/applyforpost16transport You may rely upon any circumstances which are relevant to your application. You will need to demonstrate why it is necessary for KCC to provide travel support to facilitate your attendance to receive education or training.

In looking at the suitability of establishments, KCC will look at the availability of preferred or specialist courses at nearby establishments, including those outside of KCC's local authority area. If parents choose to send their YP to a school or college

(or the YP chooses this themselves), which is not the nearest suitable setting, as described earlier, travel assistance may not be provided by KCC.

Considerations which KCC will take into account

The following considerations will be given greater weight by KCC when we consider your application, but do not guarantee you will be eligible to receive additional assistance from KCC:

(i) that you have special educational needs and/or a disability and/or mobility problems, which mean that it is not/would not be reasonably practicable for you to attend the educational establishment or training provider at which you are registered or at which you would like to register to receive education or training using a KCC 16+ Travel Saver card on the terms described earlier. KCC recognises that in some circumstances public transport may not be appropriate as a result of special educational needs, a disability or a mobility problem and again in these exceptional circumstances other means of support will be considered.

Learners aged 16 – 19 years with SEND are also expected to seek a KCC 16+ Travel Saver card. It is expected that students will have taken opportunities where available to engage with KCC's Independent Travel Training Team at an earlier point in their academic career to be trained to use public transport. Refusal to embark on such training where this was considered appropriate, may affect any future decisions where additional support for transport is being requested. Where the learners are unable, even with appropriate independent travel training, to access public bus travel as a result of their levels of need, consideration will be given to other means of support.

(ii) that you have special educational needs and/or a disability and/or mobility problems, which mean that it may mean you are more likely to remain in education or training longer than your peers, which would in turn mean that your contribution to the cost of transport will go on over a longer period.

(iii) that it is not/would not be reasonably practicable for you to attend the educational establishment or training provider at which you are registered or at which you would like to register to receive education or training using a KCC 16+ Travel Saver card on the terms described earlier.

(iv) that the distances and/or journey times, between your home and the educational establishment or training provider at which you are registered or would like to register makes the use of a KCC 16+ Travel Saver card, on the terms described earlier impractical or not practical without alternative assistance.

(v) that you and your family cannot afford the KCC 16+ Travel Saver card on the terms described earlier and have been unable to secure support from your learning provider.

This will normally require proof of receipt of certain benefits i.e.

- Income support
- Income based jobseekers allowance

- Child Tax Credit (TC602 for the current tax year with a yearly income of no more than £16,385pa)
- Guaranteed element of state pension credit
- Income related employment and support allowance
- Maximum Level of Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit (provided you have an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400, as assessed by earnings from up to three of your most recent assessment periods).

Assistance on this ground will normally only be given where the educational establishment or training provider is not more than 6 miles from your home. Any travel support would be reviewed on an annual basis and your parents would be required to provide the Transport Eligibility Team with up to date proof of the family's income at that time.

(vi) that the nature of the route, or alternative routes, which you can reasonably be expected to take with a KCC 16+ Travel Saver card makes the use of the Card impractical or not practical without alternative assistance.

(vii) that reasons relating to your religion or belief (or that of your parents) mean that the use of the KCC 16+ Travel Saver card is not practical or is not practical without alternative assistance.

Where a YP is attending or wants to attend an educational establishment of the same denomination as themselves (or religion in cases where the religion does not have denominations) in order to be considered for travel support, they must also have the application form signed by a vicar/priest or religious leader of the same denomination (or religion where there are no denominations) as the educational establishment stating that the YP is a regular and practising member of a church or other place of worship of the same denomination (or religion where there are no denominations) as the educational establishment concerned.

Where a YP is attending a church school of a different denomination or religion to that of the parent, in order to be considered for travel support, they must also have the application form signed by a vicar/priest or other religious leader stating that the YP is a regular and practising member of that religion or denomination. The YP will also need to explain why their religion or belief makes it desirable for the YP to attend that particular educational establishment rather than another educational establishment nearer to the YP's home, given that the chosen educational establishment is not of the same religion or denomination as that practised by the YP.

Where a YP is attending or wants to attend an educational establishment for reasons connected with his or her non-religious belief, in order to be considered for travel support the YP will need to explain what that belief is and why the belief makes it desirable for the YP to attend that particular educational establishment rather than another nearer educational establishment. The YP will also need to provide evidence to prove that they do indeed hold the belief in question. This could be confirmation from a person of good standing in the community who knows the YP, for example a councillor, a doctor, a social worker or a lawyer or alternatively proof of the YP or his

parent's medium or long term membership of a society or other institution relating to that belief.

Travel support will only be considered under any of the categories above where KCC is persuaded that the religion or belief is genuinely held and that the placement of the YP at the institution in question will be of significant benefit to the YP because of the relationship between the religion or belief of the YP and the nature of the educational institution in question.

KCC will normally only agree to all such requests outlined above for a maximum period of one year. Arrangements would then be reviewed. The Local Authority can then agree such requests for the duration of the course up until the end of the year in which the young person reaches the age of 19.

Other information you should provide with your application

You should also provide evidence to support any case that you may present, for example and where relevant:

- (i) proof that you have applied to or are registered at a particular educational establishment or training provider such as a copy of your acceptance/offer letter from the college;
- (ii) proof of your and/or your family's income and savings e.g. TC602 from HM Inland Revenue;
- (iii) proof of any special educational needs, disability or mobility problems that you have; (for example, a copy report from consultant or from your local authority's Special Educational Needs Department or a health or educational professional providing confirmation that you are unable to access a suitable educational establishment or training provider nearer to your home and/or are unable to access public transport). KCC is not able seek this information on an applicant's behalf;
- (iv) proof that you have applied to colleges or other educational establishment or training provider closer to your home (for the same course or for a similar course), which if accepted would have meant that you would not have required additional assistance from us and proof that that those applications were turned down. (Copies of refusal letters would be required);
- (v) details of the unsuitable route that you say you would need to travel and detailed reasons why you consider the same to be unsuitable;
- (vi) proof that you are a member of a particular religion or religious denomination or (where possible) that you have a particular belief where that is relevant to your argument. Ordinarily, where you are making an application on faith grounds, you will be required to attend an establishment with the same religious denomination as your place of worship.

Please note that we cannot return documents that you supply to us, and so you are requested to only provide copies of documents that you may wish to send accompanying or supporting your application.

KCC provided Travel Support

Where KCC assesses that the available support is not sufficient to facilitate the YP's attendance at their place of education or training, consideration will be given to a Personal Transport Budget (PTB). A PTB is a payment designed to help parents and YP make their own arrangements to facilitate school attendance. Applicants are not limited in how they make use of the PTB to support school travel, with the exception that funds cannot be used to purchase an alternative subsidised KCC pass or scheme for the YP.

PTB payments are made on the basis of the straight-line distance between the YP's home and their main educational establishment or training provider in the following Bands (minus an initial contribution in line with the full cost of the Kent 16+ Travel Saver pass, including with appropriate adjustment to the rates for low income applicants who are unable to secure direct bursary support from their provider, for the academic year that the application is being made). The Kent 16+ Travel Saver cost is subject to change annually and can be found [here](#), however, it is currently up to £600 per annum. While actual PTB funding levels will be confirmed at the point 2026/27 Kent 16+ Travel Saver costs are finalised in June/July 2026, the following table gives an indication based on current costs:

	Annual Fund	Annual Fund minus contribution (eg £600)	Annual Fund minus low income contribution (eg £300)
Band 1- Less than 5 miles	£2,000	£1,400	£1,700
Band 2 – Between 5 and 10 miles	£3,000	£2,400	£2,700
Band 3 - Over 10 miles	£5,000	£4,400	£4,700

Where a YP receives a PTB partway through an academic year, the total payment will be offered on a pro rata basis to account for the reduced timescale that the YP will undertake.

Where a YP is accessing education or training on a part-time basis, or they are making use of boarding facilities, their PTB payments will be offered on a pro rata basis to account for the reduction in journey frequency (in most cases for learners who board, mileage payments offer more benefit than the PTB, so will be offered as an alternative).

The PTB is reviewed termly taking into account the YP's attendance at the educational establishment or training. The YP's attendance will be monitored and where attendance falls below 90% within a term, payments for any days that they are absent

will be deducted from a later PTB payment. KCC will issue a payment schedule to each qualifying family that details how these deductions will be undertaken through the academic year, should they prove necessary. There is no guarantee that a PTB will continue to be paid where the YP's attendance is seen to be low. Parents will be required to enter into a contract with KCC in which they agree to ensure the YP accesses their educational establishment or training provider in a safe and legal way in return for the PTB payment.

PTB Payments are made in 11 monthly instalments. No payment will be made in July to allow KCC sufficient time to confirm that a reduction is not required in the final monthly instalment to account for low attendance. The final payment will be made in August to account for transport that parents have provided in July of that academic year.

Payments are paid directly into a bank account nominated on the PTB Agreement Form on the date specified within the payment schedule.

Payments will be calculated from the date that the Parental Agreement Form is returned.

Payments are not back dated and no refunds are provided if the application for a PTB is processed within six weeks of receipt of the application.

A PTB can be offered to up to two YPs within a family to the same place of learning, however, the additional YP will normally only be granted 50% of the entitlement. Any subsequent YP would not normally qualify for PTB to the same place of learning.

In exceptional circumstances, the Assistant Director for Fair Access may approve alternative, cost-effective arrangements to provide transport support to facilitate a YP's attendance at their place of learning. These decisions will take into account the principles and expectations outlined above. Such arrangements would be subject to an initial contribution in line with the total cost of the Kent 16+ Travel Saver pass (with similar adjustments to the rates for low income applicants) for the academic year that the application is being made. Requests for exceptional consideration should be made in writing at the conclusion of the normal application process outlined above, and should detail why the provision made available under this policy is insufficient to facilitate attendance. A response will be provided within 20 working days. Where exceptional arrangements are not provided as a result of this review, requests in future academic years will only be considered where applicants can demonstrate a material change in circumstances since the last review. KCC emphasises that where support in addition to a 16+ Travel Saver is provided, it is not generally considered necessary to make arrangements other than by way of a PTB.

Young adult learners, aged 19 – 25 with SEND.

Please note that this section only applies to young adults aged 19-25 who are in education or training and who have SEND (including those with an EHCP). The considerations to be taken into account in relation to sixth form age individuals with SEND are set out in the earlier section.

Initially, young adult learners would be expected to apply to their learning provider for a discretionary budget as outlined in the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund section above. Applicants will be expected to share evidence of these requests and the resultant decisions provided by the learning provider when submitting their application.

In the event that any support provided to learners via the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund is insufficient to facilitate that person's attendance at the place of education or training, an application can be made to KCC.

Travel support will be made available to a young adult learner (not being a person of sixth form age), where KCC has secured and named a setting in an EHCP which provides both the provision of education or training and the provision of boarding accommodation. This applies to an adult learner aged under 25, subject to an EHCP and where it is considered necessary to facilitate that person's attendance at the place of education or training.

Travel support may also be made available where an adult learner is receiving education or training at an establishment maintained or assisted by KCC and providing further or higher education or within the further education sector, and KCC considered that it was necessary for KCC to provide further support to facilitate that person's attendance at the place of education or training.

In deciding whether it is necessary for KCC to provide travel support for an adult learner, KCC would amongst other things, have regard to:

- the learner's age, ability and aptitude
- any SEND the person may have
- the locations and times at which the education or training is provided
- the nature of the route, or alternative routes, which the learner could reasonably be expected to take.
- the alternative support options available to learners and the assessment decisions provided by those processes

It will be necessary for applying young adults to provide evidence relevant to these factors.

For the purposes of deciding whether to provide transport support, KCC would not consider it necessary, other than in exceptional circumstances, for a young adult learner to attend an additional Further Education course at the same level or equivalent where the learner had previously attended and completed a course at an establishment within the Further Education sector. KCC expects to see evidence of the learner making progression if they are to consider providing discretionary support for transport, but each case will be considered on its own merits. This does not preclude a young adult learner from choosing to take part in whichever educational opportunity they prefer, but they should consider what transport support may be available to them before finalising their plans.

Where KCC assesses that any support, or lack thereof, provided to learners via the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund is insufficient to facilitate that person's attendance at the place of education or training, consideration will be given to a potential mileage payment.

Payments will be made at 45p per mile, paid termly in arrears, following confirmation of attendance and submission of appropriate fuel receipts.

Total annual payments will be subject to an overall contribution in line with the total cost of the Kent 16+ Travel Saver pass, (with appropriate adjustments to the rates for low income applicants) for the academic year that the application is being made. The Kent 16+ Travel Saver cost is subject to change annually and can be found [here](#).

Where there are two or more YPs from the same family attending the educational establishment or training provider, only one claim for mileage payment is allowed.

Mileage payments will be withdrawn where a YP has access to the use of an alternative subsidised KCC transport scheme. This includes the Kent 16+ Travel Saver and Vacant Seat Payment Scheme.

In exceptional circumstances, the Assistant Director for Fair Access may approve alternative, cost-effective arrangements to provide transport support to facilitate a YP's attendance at their place of learning. These decisions will take into account the principles and expectations outlined above. Where these arrangements include provision of a vehicle, it will be provided without cost. Requests for exceptional consideration should be made in writing at the conclusion of the normal application process outlined above, and should detail why the provision made available under this policy is insufficient to facilitate attendance. A response will be provided within 20 working days. Where exceptional arrangements are not provided as a result of this review, requests in future academic years will only be considered where applicants can demonstrate a material change in circumstances since the last review. KCC emphasises that, where support in addition to any support provided under the 16-19 Bursary Fund, it is not generally considered necessary to make arrangements other than by way of a mileage payment. Where KCC assesses that in order to attend education or training a young adult learner requires transport arranged by the local authority, such as a specialised vehicle or minibus, this will be provided without charge, in line with the statutory requirement under 508F of the Education Act 1996.

Appeals

In the event that travel support is not provided in any of the categories above, details of the appeals procedure can be found in Annex 2.

School Led Transport

The Assistant Director of Fair Access will work in conjunction with schools and other learning providers with a willingness and sufficient capacity, to develop bespoke arrangements to allow them to provide transport to eligible YPs on their roll. Such arrangements will be agreed in line with principles outlined in this policy, but will be managed via separate formal agreements with the establishment. These establishments may request, as a part of such arrangements, that all funding related to Personal Transport Budgets and/or mileage payments for students on their roll be paid directly to them instead of individual learners. Such establishments will be responsible for informing current and potential future students that this is a pre-

requisite of securing a place at the school, as exceptions to this direct establishment allocation will not be made.

PROPOSED

Annexes

Annex 1 - General Processes, Explanations and Definitions

Application timescales

KCC seek to administer the assessment process and provision of travel support inside of six weeks wherever possible. Several factors will determine KCC's ability to deliver on this commitment. In some instances, the assessment may be delayed where further information is required about a YP's individual needs, or at peak times of the year.

For YP with an EHCP, when Post 16 and 19 Transport applications are made to coincide with a new academic year, it is advisable to apply as soon as the learning provider has been named in the YP's EHCP.

Refunds

KCC is not responsible for any costs incurred by YP or parents during the normal application timescale. Where assessment for travel support takes longer than six weeks and a YP is subsequently found to require additional transport support, YP or parents may request a refund. Refunds will take the form of a backdated PTB or mileage payment, from the date that the assessment decision should have been made.

If a YP was initially assessed as not requiring additional transport support, but following a Transport Eligibility Officer review (See Annex 2) is reassessed as requiring support, a refund can be requested from the initial assessment decision date or the date six weeks after the initial application was received, whichever is earlier. If the review overturns the decision as a result of additional information that the YP or parent did not make available when first applying, a refund will only be made available where the review is completed after the 20 working day limit. In this event, refunds will be calculated from 20 working days after any new information was received by the Post 16 Transport Eligibility Team.

Where additional travel support is provided following a Stage 2 transport appeal, no refund will be provided for transport that a YP or parent has been required to organise until their appeal hearing date, as panel members have additional discretionary authority to consider wider personal circumstances which could not be considered during the normal assessment process. A full or partial refund will only provided where panel members have concluded that this is appropriate during the appeal.

Refund payments will be issued separately from any required contribution toward KCC provided transport support.

Change of address or place or learning

If a YP moves or changes their place of learning, their suitability to receive travel support would be reassessed in accordance with the policy. There is no guarantee that because they may have received travel support previously, that they will continue to do so.

If a YP moves on a temporary basis, transport would not normally be provided.

Off-site provision

If educational establishments or training providers arrange any off-site provision for a YP who is on their roll, they will be responsible for making any transport arrangements and meeting the costs.

Work experience

KCC will not provide travel support for YPs on work experience. Any costs that arise as a result of work experience, including transport costs, are the responsibility of the educational establishment or training provider or parent.

Apprenticeships/Supported Internships

Where a YP considers that they may require travel support and they wish this to apply to either an apprenticeship or to a traineeship, they should submit an on-line application as for all other learners. The principles outlined throughout this policy will be used to assess whether travel support should be provided.

Out of county residents

A YP that resides outside of the administrative boundary of KCC but attends a Kent school must apply for transport assistance from their home Local Authority where this is required.

Independent schools

Where a YP attends an independent fee-paying school, travel support from KCC will not be provided unless it is named in an EHCP as a YP's nearest suitable learning provider.

Transport provided in error

If following an internal review it is identified that a YP has been incorrectly assessed as suitable for travel support and whose personal circumstances do not actually meet the required criteria, transport assistance will be withdrawn. If this incorrect assessment was as a result of misleading information supplied by the applicant, any provided funds will be recouped via KCC's centralised debt management processes.

Assessment and trial periods

Where it has been recommended by KCC that a YP attend an educational establishment or training provider for a period of assessment or trial, travel support will be provided as long as the YP meets the criteria.

Boarders

Travel support for boarders will be provided at the beginning and end of each agreed scheduled boarding period. Outside of these times, the YP or parent, assisted as necessary by the learning provider, will be required to facilitate and fund any exceptional transport arrangements that may be required in the event of extraordinary occurrences such as school closures, medical appointments etc.

Additional Support

Information about additional support provided through Adult Social Care can be found [here](#).

PROPOSED

Annex 2 – Post 16 Transport Appeals

Parents and YP are entitled to appeal against decisions by KCC to refuse their application for travel support. This appeal process has two stages and appellants should complete the first stage before moving on to the next.

Stage 1 – Procedure for Appeals to the Post 16 Transport Eligibility Team – Officer Review

Applications for travel support are only declined where a YP is not eligible under KCC's criteria. Where applicants receive a decline to their application, the first step is to carefully read the outcome letter that has been sent to you by KCC's Post 16 Transport Eligibility team. It will explain to you why travel support cannot be offered.

While applicants may feel strongly that they should be given travel support, Officers are obliged to follow the assessment criteria outlined in the main policy. There is no discretion for Officers to deviate from strictly applying the transport assessment procedures when considering spending from the public purse. This stage is designed to ensure that there have been no mistakes in the processing and to check that the information supplied was correct at the time of assessment.

Applicants should carefully consider before submitting an Officer Review whether they are likely to have their decision overturned, in light of the information above. If applicants feel that they can submit sufficient additional evidence to show that their application was assessed incorrectly, they should contact the Post 16 Transport Eligibility team with the YP's full name, learning provider, date of birth and an explanation as to why they feel that their application should be reassessed within 20 working days from receipt of KCC's home to school transport decision. Requests for Officer Review that are received after this date cannot be considered. Transport Officers cannot discuss an applicant's reasons for requesting a reassessment over the telephone. It is important that Officers maintain a written audit trail of their assessment decisions. Applicants will be responsible for any alternative transport arrangements while their application is being reassessed. Officers will endeavour to respond within 20 working days.

Applicants wishing to complain about the service provided by the local authority should use the local authority's complaints procedure.

If the Officer Review highlights that applicants received an incorrect initial assessment, a payment will be provided and backdated to the initial assessment decision date or the date six weeks after the initial application was received, whichever is earlier. If the review overturns the decision as a result of additional information that the applicant did not make available when first applying, a payment will be provided and will start from the date the parental agreement is returned.

Stage 2 – Procedure for Appeals to Members of the Regulation Committee Transport Appeals Panel

Where an applicant's Officer Review is not upheld, if they wish, they are then able to appeal to Members of the County Council's Regulation Committee Transport Appeal Panel.

You can attend the hearing to put your case to the panel, or have your case considered on your written submission only. You will be given an opportunity to select which option best suits your need.

The hearing panel consists of between 3 and 5 elected Members. The panel will consider whether our policy has been applied properly and, if so, whether the strength of your case outweighs the expectations of that policy. The panel cannot change the policy itself or the designation of the nearest appropriate school for the area.

You will be offered the following options for your appeal hearing:

- A face to face meeting
- A virtual meeting via Microsoft Teams (a secure system that is similar to Zoom)
- A paper-based process, where you submit information for the panel to take into account when considering your appeal.

A appellant has 20 working days from receipt of KCC's stage one written decision notification to make a written request to escalate the matter to stage two. Stage 2 requests that are received after this date cannot be considered.

Grounds for Appealing

Applicants can appeal for any reason or combinations of reasons that they wish. They will be given an opportunity to explain where they believe previous decisions have not been made in line with this policy, or on what grounds they believe support should be provided regardless of KCC's published transport offer.

The Members of the County Council's Regulation Committee Transport Appeal Panel ("the Members") will consider any arguments that are put to them.

Procedure

An online appeals form is available to complete [here](#).

It is important that you submit any evidence that supports your appeal (for example letters from your school, GP or social worker or financial evidence such as benefit receipts). You can appeal for any reason or combination of reasons, but you should carefully consider if you have sufficient additional evidence to support your case. No charge is made for the appeal but appellants must meet any costs they incur for preparing their appeal or attending the hearing, such as photocopying or transport costs.

The Transport Appeals Team in Democratic Services will acknowledge appellant's appeal and offer a date and time to hear the appeal. All paperwork will be issued electronically unless an alternative format is requested.

If appellants wish to, they can, for a good reason, reject the first hearing date. If the second hearing date is also rejected or if appellants fail to attend a hearing on a date that has been accepted they will not, other than in exceptional circumstances, be

offered a further hearing. The Members will, however, consider the appeal in their absence, based upon the information that has been provided in writing. Please note that it is not possible to hold appeals in the evenings or at the weekend.

At least five days before the hearing date, the Appeals Team will electronically send appellant and the Officer presenting the Council's case a copy of each other's written case and supporting documentation.

Witnesses

Appellants are welcome to bring a witness, including their locally elected Kent County Councillor, but they must advise the Transport Appeals team at least one day in advance who this will be. Appellants may wish to provide a written summary of the witnesses' evidence on the day of the hearing as this may be helpful to the Members considering the case.

Please note that the Members hearing the appeal have the right to refuse to listen to witnesses produced by appellants or by the Officer presenting the Council's case if they believe that the evidence given is irrelevant to the appeal.

No fees, expenses or allowances will be paid to the witnesses by the Council under any circumstances.

Appellants can have a friend to accompany them or represent them at the appeal and must ensure the Appeals Team know his or her identity at least one day prior to the hearing date. If the friend is a lawyer, they cannot act as one as part of a lawyer/client relationship.

Legal presentation is not allowed and the Officer presenting the case on behalf of the County Council will also not be allowed to have legal representation. The Members deciding the appeal do have the right to have a legal adviser if they so wish.

There will be an official note taker at the hearing provided by the Council and any video or attempt by appellants to record the hearing will lead to its immediate termination and the dismissal of the appeal.

As far as possible appellants should send all evidence with their appeal letter. Any additional evidence should be sent to the Transport Appeals Team at least two days before the appeal hearing. Written evidence produced on the day of the appeal hearing will be considered at the absolute discretion of the Members hearing the appeal and may lead to the hearing being adjourned to a later date.

The Appeal Hearing

There will normally be a panel of between three to five Members considering the appeal. There will also be a clerk to advise Members and take notes of the appeal hearing. If you opt to have your appeal heard under a face to face or virtual setting, at the beginning of the appeal hearing the Chairman elected by the Members will introduce everyone present at the hearing and explain the procedure. The procedure is as follows:

1. A Presenting Officer will explain the reasons that have prevented the County Council meeting parents wishes up to this stage.
2. Appellants and the Members may then ask the Officer questions.
3. Appellants and/or their representative (who can be a Member of the County Council) will explain the grounds of the appeal and its desired outcome.
4. The Presenting Officer and the Members will ask parents and/or their representative questions.
5. Appellants and the Presenting Officer will be asked to leave the room and the Members will make a decision.

For paper based appeals, Members and the Clerk will meet and make their decision based on the written submission only and neither appellants or a Presenting Officer will be in attendance.

The Members may ask anyone questions at any time or may alter the order of steps 3 and 4 above at any time. Members may agree to consider only written evidence for either or both parties.

The Decision

In reaching their decision the Members must have regard to Kent's Post 16 Transport policy. They need to satisfy themselves that the policy has been applied correctly. They will then look at the specific circumstances to determine whether they are sufficiently strong to enable them to use their discretion to make an exception. The Members have a responsibility to consider the most cost effective and appropriate travel support taking into account the family circumstances at the time of the appeal

The Members may decide to:

- uphold the appeal in all respects; **or**
- not uphold the appeal; **or**
- they may decide to partially uphold the appeal.

This can include meeting appellant's wishes in part or for a time limited period. At the end of the time limited period the Members can review the circumstances again and may ask that additional information such as up to date medical records or learning provider attendance records be made available at the time of the review.

In the event members agree to the provision of a mileage payment or Personal Transport Budget, they will decide the date at which calculation of payments will begin, how long this provision will remain available and whether there is a need for regular review of circumstances.

Appellants will receive a decision in writing within five working days of the appeal hearing. Decisions cannot be given over the telephone.

There is no further appeal within the Council's procedures. If appellants believe that they have suffered injustice as a result of maladministration by the Panel then they do have the right to pursue a complaint with the Local Government Ombudsman.

This is not a right of appeal and relates only to issues such as failure to follow correct procedures, or failure to act independently and fairly. If the person making the complaint simply disagrees with the decision there is no recourse. If appellants have a complaint of a procedural nature, they can refer it direct to the Local Government Ombudsman

Appellants will not be able to make any further applications for free or subsidised transport in relation to the same YP at the same learning provider unless

- they can demonstrate a significant and material change in circumstances since the previous appeal was decided; **or**
- the County Council changes the criteria for offering free or subsidised transport under the Council's published Post 16 Transport Policy and that change is relevant to the case; **or**
- there is a relevant change to the law.

If any of the above grounds apply parents will need to write a fresh appeal to the Transport Appeals Team, setting out the reasons in detail. Appellants will then be informed whether the Council will be prepared to consider the new application.

Annex 3 - Transport Related Responsibilities and Expectations

A copy of KCC's Transport Code of Conduct, which applies equally to YP in Post 16 education, can be [found on the kent.gov website](https://www.kent.gov.uk/transport).

Annex 4 - Home to School and Post-16 Transport Retendering Procedure for Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and/or Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Introduction

Councils are required by law to adhere to the government's Public Contract Regulations 2015, which provides rules to the public sector for the procurement of goods or services. Procurement is how the public sector purchases services to ensure they provide value for money, are effective and deliver quality services.

The regulations govern how councils engage with commercial suppliers when buying their services, making sure there is a fair and transparent process. This process is applied in the purchasing of services for Home to School and Post 16 Transport.

Commissioning Cycle

Kent County Council (KCC) adopts a commissioning cycle when purchasing services. The commissioning cycle and how we apply it to Home to School Transport is summarised below:



Analyse: For Home to School Transport there is a statutory (legal) obligation to provide transport to entitled pupils. For Post 16 Transport, KCC has a duty to consider what additional support a learner may need to access education, which may result in the provision of a vehicle organised by KCC. To identify what the service needs to deliver we review each pupil's application and any additional supporting information and consider it in line with responsibilities detailed in the Education Act and statutory guidance.

Plan: Using the information gathered during the analysis phase we plan how to provide transport for identified pupils. We review the existing transport arrangements for pupils to determine whether we can manage the demand for services more efficiently. We consider; statutory guidance, pupil need and the efficient use of resources to deliver these services. This process may conclude that pupils may be able to share transport with others on existing services or determine that new services are required.

Do: Where there is a need to purchase services to provide transport, we will undertake a procurement process. The procurement process invites suppliers who have registered with the Kent Business Portal and agreed to our terms and conditions to submit a proposal for an advertised school contract. We award the contract to the supplier who submits the lowest cost proposal. This ensures we make efficient use of public money.

The contract with the successful supplier sets out the roles and responsibilities of both, the council, and the supplier, to deliver the services which include but not limited to:

- licensing regulations for drivers and vehicles, for example, DBS checks are undertaken to find out whether someone has a criminal record and insurances are in place
- arriving on time
- paying for services
- upholding contract management standards should something go wrong, for example by ensuring the service is running as we expect in accordance with our terms and conditions of contracts and taking action to address any concerns promptly. This ensures pupils travel in a safe and appropriate manner.

A contract may only be for a fixed period. A contract for our services shall not exceed a maximum of five years due to the level of change from pupils starting and leaving the service. This means we cannot guarantee the same supplier will deliver our services throughout the academic life of a pupil.

Review: We regularly review the transport arrangements for pupils by gathering feedback from families, learning providers and suppliers to ensure the services are performing as expected, are fit for purpose for pupils and the contracts represent value for money. KCC is reliant on parents and third parties to keep them updated with this information. Legislation and guidance are also kept under review. The information gathered will help inform the next commissioning cycle.

By adopting the commissioning cycle it allows us to prepare for “planned changes”. These are when we expect services to change when a contract has reached its natural end date. It may also occur as a result of pupils leaving the service meaning the contract may become financially unviable for the supplier or council. When planned changes are due to occur, we notify parents and carers in good time to allow them to prepare their child for a potential change. Parents will be contacted again when the outcome of the retendering process is known and an appropriate provider has been identified.

How we will communicate and engage with key stakeholders

We will:

1. provide parents and carers with notice two months prior to planned changes occurring
2. explain why the change is occurring

3. engage with schools and/or learning provisions to inform them of any planned change and where possible seek their views on new travel arrangements prior to commissioning services
4. listen and consider the views of parents and carers regarding their child's travel needs
5. inform parents and carers via letter or email upon determining a child's transport arrangement and securing those arrangements.

Unexpected changes in transport

On occasion transport may need to change more suddenly - this would be considered a "not planned" change. This may be due to the supplier/transport operators serving notice on their contract, or they may be unavailable with immediate effect due to factors outside of the council's control. Where these cases occur, we will endeavour to inform parents and carers as soon as reasonably practicable. However, by their nature it will not be possible to provide as much warning as a planned change. As the council is reliant on the supplier to be informed of these changes, it is possible that parents may hear from their child's driver before KCC is able to make contact. In any event, KCC will immediately begin the process of sourcing new services via the process outlined above.

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Kent County Council

Post 16 Transport for Mainstream and SEND students

Consultation report



Prepared by Lake Market Research



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Executive Summary

- 228 responses were received to this consultation via the consultation questionnaire.
- 71% of consultees completed as parents / carers of children / young people in education. 76% of this consultee group indicated any of their children use KCC organised transport and 92% indicated any of their children / young people have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities and an Education, Health and Care Plan.
- 6% completed as students aged 16-19, or up to 25 if they have Special Educational Needs and / or Disabilities.
- 23% completed in another capacity. 62% of this consultee group responded as a Kent education professional. 34% identified as 'other' with the majority noting they are Kent residents or grandparents. 4% completed as a transport professional.
- Consultees were first asked to provide any comments on the draft Post 16 Transport Policy Statement for 2025-26 in their own words. Whilst this question asked for comments on the 2025-26 statement, feedback received spans both the 2025-26 and 2026-27 statements. The most common themes reported are:
 - Children / young people not being able to access public transport / travel independently
 - The statement's contents making education inaccessible for some children / young people
 - The statement being unfair / discriminatory
 - Concern families cannot afford to pay for transport.
- Concerning the draft Post 16 Transport Policy Statement for 2026-27, consultees were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the two proposals put forward:
 - 34% agree with providing a Personal Transport Budget to most learners who qualify for additional support from KCC, to facilitate their travel to their place of education; 56% disagree.
 - 24% agree with the expectation that students aged 19+ apply for a discretionary bursary from their learning provider to facilitate their travel to and from their school or college, 63% disagree.
- Consultees were asked to provide any comments on the proposals in their own words. Common themes reported under proposals are consistent with those reported under the 2025-26 statement are:
 - Children / young people not being able to access public transport / travel independently
 - The statement's contents making education inaccessible for some children / young people
 - The statement being unfair / discriminatory
 - Concern families cannot afford to pay for transport
- 26% of consultees providing a comment about the first proposal (PTB) commented that parents / carers would be affected / they would need to change their working hours / give up work. 21% commented that families cannot afford to pay for transport / Personal Transport Budget will not cover costs

- 23% of consultees providing a comment about the second proposal (discretionary bursary) commented they believe the process would be complicated / time consuming / the application process raises some concerns. 15% raised concerns that establishments do not have the funds / already have a tight budget.

Background and Methodology

Background

Kent County Council (KCC) consulted on their Post 16 Transport Policy statements for the 2025-26 and 2026-27 academic years. There are no significant changes proposed for the 2025-26 statement, however, KCC are legally required to consult each year. Whilst there are no changes to the level of support being offered for 2025-26, KCC have clarified some wording in the policy relating to how contributions and refunds are made, to better explain these processes, and included some limited additional wording to clarify KCC's current approach.

There are two main changes proposed for the 2026-27 Post 16 Transport Policy statement:

1. A Personal Transport Budget (PTB) to be provided to most learners of sixth-form age who qualify for funded travel support from KCC.

PTBs give families the flexibility and control in making their own travel arrangements. They may help towards covering the costs of running a family car or be used to make other arrangements to enable students to get to their place of learning.

Eligible families would receive between £1,400 and £4,700 to help with the cost of travel, depending on how far away home is from school, college or training. Parents would no longer have to directly pay the contribution (the equivalent of the Kent 16+ Travel Saver pass which is currently up to £600) as this would be calculated into the total amount they are eligible to receive.

2. Initially require adult learners (those aged 19 or over, whose course started after their 19th birthday) to apply for a discretionary bursary from their education or training provider for help with travel costs first before applying to KCC for additional support. These providers receive direct funding for these bursaries, whereas KCC does not receive dedicated monies for any travel support they provide adult learners.

Consideration may be given to providing mileage payments to students whose bursary is not sufficient to enable them to get to or from their place of education or training.

Consultation process

On the 27 January 2025, an 8-week consultation was launched and ran until the 23 March 2025. The consultation invited residents, library users and other interested parties to provide views on the proposed options or suggest potential alternatives.

Feedback was captured via a consultation questionnaire which was available on the KCC engagement website (www.kent.gov.uk/post16consultation). Hard copies of the consultation material were also available on request. Large print format was available from the consultation webpage and consultation material and the webpage included details of how people could contact KCC to ask a question, request hard copies or an alternative format. A Word version of the questionnaire was provided on the webpage for people who did not wish to complete the online version.

A consultation stage Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was carried out to assess the impact the proposals could have on those with protected characteristics. The EqIA was available as one of the consultation documents and the questionnaire invited consultees to comment on the

assessment that had been carried out. An analysis of responses to this question can be found with the overall findings' sections of this report.

Activities to raise awareness of the consultation and encourage participation, included the following:

- Email sent to stakeholder database and those registered with Let's talk Kent who had expressed an interest in being kept informed of consultations about 'children and families' and 'schools and education' (13,912 people). A reminder email was also sent towards the end of the consultation period.
- Email / letter to stakeholders including: existing Kent 16+ Travel Saver pass holders, potential users (sent to current Year 10 and 11 users of the Kent Travel saver or those Year 10 and 11 students in receipt of free school transport), head teachers, Further Education providers, bus operators and other school transport providers, such as taxis and relevant organisations from equality groups distribution list.
- Media release.
- Posters in Kent Libraries and Gateways and on some Kent buses.
- Promoted in newsletters and bulletins including: KCC residents' e-newsletter, KCC staff channels; KELSI bulletin, KCC SEND e-newsletter.

A summary of interaction and supply of consultation material can be found below:

- 3,213 visits to the consultation webpage by 2,879 visitors during the consultation period.
- Organic posts via KCC's corporate channels had a reach of 62,048 on Facebook and Instagram. There were 76,793 impressions on X (Twitter), LinkedIn, Nextdoor and Instagram. Reach refers to the number of people who saw a post at least once and impressions are the number of times the post is displayed on someone's screen. The posts generated 2,266 clicks through to the consultation webpage. (Not all social media platforms report the same statistics).
- The number of document downloads are show in the table below:

Document name	Downloads / views
Consultation document	329
Policy Statement for 2025/26	158
Policy Statement for 2026/27	120
Equality Impact Assessment	34
Equality Impact Assessment - Appendix	5
Word version of the questionnaire	28
Consultation Document – large print	4
Policy Statement 2025/26 – large print	1
Policy Statement 2026/27 – large print	2
Equality Impact Assessment – large print	0
Consultation Questionnaire – large print	4
Consultation Document – easy read	6

Consultation response

There were 228 responses to this consultation and all were received via the online consultation questionnaire.

Points to note

- Consultees were given the choice of which questions to answer / provide a comment for. The number of consultees providing an answer to each question is shown on each chart / data table featured in this report.
- Consultees were asked to detail the reasons for their views in their own words. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed the comments made for each of these questions and grouped common responses together into themes. These themes are reported where relevant in this report. Please note the percentages in these data tables will exceed the sum of 100% and comments often cover more than one theme.
- Please note the sum of individual percentages in any single choice question in this report may not sum to 100% due to rounding.
- Please note that participation in consultations is self-selecting and this needs to be considered when interpreting responses. Inclination to take part in the consultation is subject to individual personal topic interest and service usage.
- KCC were responsible for the design, promotion and collection of the consultation responses. Lake Market Research were appointed to conduct an independent analysis of feedback.

Consultation profile

Response profile

The majority of consultees responding to the consultation questionnaire are parents / carers of children / young people in education (71%). 6% of consultees are students aged 16-19, or up to 25 if they have Special Educational Needs and / or Disabilities. 23% of consultees completed the questionnaire in another capacity.

CONSULTEE TYPE	Count	Percentage
As a parent / carer of children / young people in education (attending nursery, school, college or other further learning)	162	71%
As a student aged 16 to 19, or up to 25 if you have Special Educational Needs and / or Disabilities (SEND)	14	6%
In another capacity	52	23%
Total	228	

Profile of parents / carers answering

The majority of parents / carers answering indicated their child(ren) are of secondary age / in years 7-11 (50%) or are in years 12-13 (44%). 26% of parents / carers indicated any of their children / young people are older than year 13 up to 25 years old.

Two thirds of parents / carers of children in years 7-11 indicated any of them attend a Kent special school (66%) and 39% attend a Kent mainstream school. Just under six in ten parents / carers of child(ren) in years 12-13 indicated any of them attend a Kent special school (56%), 13% attend a Kent mainstream school and 21% attend a Kent college.

20% of parents / carers of children in years 7-11 indicated any of them use the KCC Travel Saver and 24% of parents / carers of children/young people in years 12-13 indicated any of them use the KCC Travel Saver.

76% of all parents / carers answering indicated any of their children / young people use KCC organised transport. The majority of parents / carers indicated any of their children / young people have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities and an Education, Health and Care Plan (92%).

PARENTS / CARERS OF YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 19-25	Count	Percentage
Early Years (0-4 years)	1	1%
Reception (4-5 years)	1	1%
Years 1-6 (Primary aged 5-11)	16	10%
Years 7-11 (Secondary aged 11-16)	80	50%
Years 12-13 (Post-16 aged 16-18)	71	44%
Later than Year 13, but started current course / qualification before 19 th birthday	16	10%
Aged 19-25 (started current course / qualification after 19 th birthday)	25	16%
Blank	1	1%

If your children/young people attend a school or further education establishment, please select which type from the list below

PARENTS / CARERS OF YEARS 7-11 CHILDREN	Count	Percentage
Special school in Kent	53	66%
Special school outside of Kent	2	3%
Mainstream school in Kent	31	39%
Mainstream school outside of Kent	0	0%
Grammar school in Kent	15	19%
Grammar school outside of Kent	0	0%
College in Kent	7	9%
College outside of Kent	0	0%
Kent Independent education provider	0	0%
Other	3	4%

PARENTS / CARERS OF YEARS 12-13 CHILDREN	Count	Percentage
Special school in Kent	40	56%
Special school outside of Kent	4	6%
Mainstream school in Kent	9	13%
Mainstream school outside of Kent	0	0%
PARENTS / CARERS OF YEARS 12-13 CHILDREN	Count	Percentage
Grammar school in Kent	6	8%

Grammar school outside of Kent	0	0%
College in Kent	15	21%
College outside of Kent	0	0%
Kent Independent education provider	3	4%
Other	2	3%

PARENTS / CARERS OF LATER THAN YEAR 13 CHILDREN BUT STARTED COURSE BEFORE 19TH BIRTHDAY	Count	Percentage
Special school in Kent	7	44%
Special school outside of Kent	0	0%
Mainstream school in Kent	1	6%
Mainstream school outside of Kent	0	0%
Grammar school in Kent	1	6%
Grammar school outside of Kent	0	0%
College in Kent	6	38%
College outside of Kent	0	0%
Kent Independent education provider	0	0%
Other	1	6%

PARENTS / CARERS OF YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 19-25	Count	Percentage
Special school in Kent	9	36%
Special school outside of Kent	0	0%
Mainstream school in Kent	0	0%
Mainstream school outside of Kent	0	0%
Grammar school in Kent	0	0%
Grammar school outside of Kent	0	0%
College in Kent	16	64%
College outside of Kent	0	0%
Kent Independent education provider	1	4%
Other	2	8%

Do your children/young people currently use a KCC Travel Saver pass?

PARENTS / CARERS OF YEARS 7-11 CHILDREN	Count	Percentage
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Yes use KCC Travel Saver (years 7-11)	16	20%
Yes use KCC 16+ Travel Saver (years 12-14)	0	0%
No	65	81%

PARENTS / CARERS OF YEARS 12-13 CHILDREN	Count	Percentage
Yes use KCC Travel Saver (years 7-11)	0	0%
Yes use KCC 16+ Travel Saver (years 12-14)	17	24%
No	53	76%

PARENTS / CARERS OF LATER THAN YEAR 13 CHILDREN BUT STARTED COURSE BEFORE 19TH BIRTHDAY	Count	Percentage
Yes use KCC Travel Saver (years 7-11)	0	0%
Yes use KCC 16+ Travel Saver (years 12-14)	5	31%
No	12	75%

Do any of your children/young people receive KCC organised transport?

ALL PARENTS / CARERS ANSWERING	Count	Percentage
No	38	24%
Yes, 1 child	101	63%
Yes, 2 children	17	11%
Yes, 3 or more children	4	3%

Do any of your children/young people have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities?

ALL PARENTS / CARERS ANSWERING	Count	Percentage
Yes, with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	148	92%
Yes, without an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	8	5%
No	9	6%

ALL PARENTS / CARERS ANSWERING	Count	Percentage
Yes, with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	148	92%

Yes, without an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	8	5%
No	9	6%

Profile of students answering

The fourteen students answering are of mix of ages and therefore also attend a mix of education establishments. Nine of the students answering use KCC organised transport and two use a KCC Travel Saver. Twelve indicated they have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities and have an Education, Health and Care Plan. One indicated they have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities but do not have an Education, Health and Care Plan.

Are you a student aged 16 to 19, or up to 25 if you have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)?

ALL STUDENTS ANSWERING	Count	Percentage
Early Years (0-4 years)	0	0%
Reception (4-5 years)	0	0%
Years 1-6 (Primary aged 5-11)	0	0%
Years 7-11 (Secondary aged 11-16)	0	0%
Years 12-13 (Post-16 aged 16-18)	4	29%
Later than Year 13, but started current course / qualification before 19 th birthday	4	29%
Aged 19-25 (started current course / qualification after 19 th birthday)	6	43%
Blank	0	0%

If you attend a school or further education establishment, please select which type from the list below.

ALL STUDENTS ANSWERING	Count	Percentage
Special school in Kent	5	36%
Special school outside of Kent	0	0%
Mainstream school in Kent	1	7%
Mainstream school outside of Kent	0	0%
Grammar school in Kent	0	0%
Grammar school outside of Kent	0	0%
College in Kent	4	29%
College outside of Kent	0	0%
Kent Independent education provider	3	21%
Other	2	14%

Do you use KCC organised transport?

ALL STUDENTS ANSWERING	Count	Percentage
No	3	20%
Yes	9	60%
Not sure	3	20%

Do you currently use the Kent 16+ Travel Saver pass?

ALL STUDENTS ANSWERING	Count	Percentage
Yes	2	14%
Yes use KCC 16+ Travel Saver (years 12-14)	0	0
No	12	86%

Do you have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities?

ALL STUDENTS ANSWERING	Count	Percentage
Yes, with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	12	86%
Yes, without an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	1	7%
No	1	7%

Profile of consultees answering in another capacity

The profile of consultees answering in another capacity is mixed. 62% indicated they are responding as a Kent education professional (31 consultees); 35% representing special schools, 10% representing mainstream schools, 57% representing colleges and 10% representing Kent Independent education providers. 34% (17 consultees) identified as 'other' with the majority noting that they are Kent residents or grandparents.

	Count	Percentage
Transport professional	2	4%
- Minibus operator	1	2%
- Other	1	2%
Education professional in Kent	31	62%
- Special school Head / teacher or another representative	11	35%
- Mainstream school Head / teacher or another representative	3	10%
- Grammar school Head / teacher or another representative	0	0%
- College Head / teacher or another representative	8	57%
- Kent Independent education provider	3	10%
- Other	6	19%
Education professional outside in Kent	0	0%
Other (including Kent residents, grandparents, other interested professionals)	17	34%

Demographic profile

The tables below show the demographic profile of consultees who completed the consultation questionnaire. The proportion who left these questions blank or indicated they did not want to disclose this information has been included as applicable.

Gender	Number of responses	Percentage
Male	111	49%
Female	34	15%
Prefer not to say / blank	83	36%

Gender same as birth	Number of responses	Percentage
Yes	143	63%
No	1	0.4%
Prefer not to say / blank	84	37%

Age	Number of responses	Percentage
16-17	3	1%
18-20	2	1%
21-25	2	1%
26-30	3	1%
31-35	2	1%
36-40	7	3%
41-45	22	10%
46-50	31	14%
51-55	34	15%
56-60	16	7%
61-65	7	3%
66-70	5	2%
71-75	4	2%
76-80	7	3%
Prefer not to say / blank	83	36%

Disability	Number of responses	Percentage
Yes	27	12%
- Physical	12	5%
- Sensory (hearing, sight or both)	1	0.4%
- Longstanding illness or health condition	8	4%
- Mental health condition	8	4%
- Learning disability	6	3%
- Neurodivergent	8	4%
- Other	5	2%
No	111	49%
Prefer not to say / blank	90	39%

Ethnicity	Number of responses	Percentage
White English, Scottish, Welsh, Northern Irish or British	136	60%
Irish	1	0.4%
Any other White background	3	1%
Prefer not to say / blank	88	39%

Religion	Number of responses	Percentage
Atheist	4	2%
Christian	63	28%
Buddhist	1	0.4%
A different religion or belief (Agnostic / Pagan)	2	1%
No religion or belief	69	30%
Prefer not to say / blank	89	39%

Sexuality	Number of responses	Percentage
Heterosexual / Straight	136	60%
Bisexual	0	0.4%
Gay or Lesbian	0	0.4%
Prefer to define my own sexuality	1	1%
Prefer not to say / blank	91	40%

Response to consultation proposals

Consultees' comments on the draft Post 16 Transport Policy Statement for 2025-26

Consultees were given the opportunity to provide any comments on the draft Post 16 Transport Policy Statement for 2025-26 in their own words. The comments have been reviewed and grouped into themes consistent with the process reported in the 'Points to Note' section. Half of consultees answering (50%) provided a comment to this question. Whilst this question asked for comments on the 2025-26 statement, feedback received spans the 2025-26 and 2026-27 statements.

The most common themes reported are children / young people not being able to access public transport / travel independently (26% of consultees answering), the statement's contents making education inaccessible for some children / young people (23%), the statement being unfair / discriminatory (22%) and concern families cannot afford to pay for transport (22%).

18% of consultees commented that all education transport should be provided / funded by KCC.

If you have any comments on the draft Post 16 Transport Policy Statement for 2025-26, please provide them in the box below. Base: all consultees providing a response (111)

	Number of responses	Percentage
Cannot access public transport / travel independently	29	26%
Making education inaccessible / young people will miss out / changes will affect attendance	26	23%
Unfair / discriminatory to families / those with SEND	24	22%
Families cannot afford to pay for transport	24	22%
All education transport should be provided / funded by KCC	20	18%
Children / young people are legally obligated to be in education until 19	13	12%
Parents / carers affected / change working hours / give up work	13	12%
Establishments are not on public transport routes / not accessible by public transport	13	12%
Special schools are often further away / are few and far between / little choice where to send young people	11	10%
Should continue to be able to use same transport as used before the age of 16	11	10%
Public transport is poor / poor availability / timings / long journey times / expensive	10	9%
Concerns about payments / basis / criteria for charging	9	8%
Young person suffers with anxiety / mental health / disability / changes could exacerbate issues	8	7%
Complicated process / time consuming / concerns about application process	7	6%
Safety issues / safeguarding / vulnerable at risk when travelling	6	5%
Agree with Personal Transport Budget	6	5%

	Number of responses	Percentage
Agree with proposals / praise for KCC	5	5%
Any changes will be disruptive for young people / KCC letting them down	5	5%
Happy with status quo / happy no changes for next year	4	5%
Personal Transport Budget is not appropriate / would not work / would be insufficient	4	4%
Cannot apply a one-size fits all approach / all young people are different / have different needs	4	4%
Live rurally so journeys are even more complicated	4	4%
Young people are entitled to an education	4	4%
Young person or family should contribute financially to transport	4	4%

Example verbatim, in consultees' own words, about children / young people not being able to access public transport / travel independently and making education inaccessible can be found below:

“My son is in a special school with severe and complex needs and when he reaches 16 he will still require transport to school. He cannot travel along on public transport as has no awareness of danger and I cannot afford to pay for his transport. If changes are made and his transport stops he would be unable to attend school and this would be damaging to his health and social wellbeing and I regard it as discrimination as he has an EHCP which is covered to age 25 so should be able to get to his education without costs to parent who can't afford. A local school cannot accommodate his needs or I would have walked him to his local school but as this is not the case and has never been I have always had to rely on school transport. Taking this away at age 16 when education continues as a compulsory service until 18/19 is unacceptable and I object to this fiercely.” (Parent / carer)

“The proposals being mooted would affect my son's ability to attend college, he isn't able to travel alone or on public transport , I also cannot afford to pay for him to get to colleges unless he receives a taxi , he would have to leave education which at the moment is his life, he doesn't meet people outside of college so it would have a detrimental effect on his life .” (Parent / carer)

“Our 16 year old son would not be able to make his own way via public transport to his school, he doesn't go anywhere alone due to his disability, also the school is difficult to get to by public transport. While KCC provides transport I know that the drivers have all been vetted and approved by the Local Authority (they have checked DBS etc), they have assessed best value as they have that expertise and can compare tenders and the young people have consistent transport.” (Parent / carer)

“As a student in a SEN college most SEN students will not be able to handle a journey on public transport independently.” (Student)

“The change in policy was introduced rapidly last year without clear information being sent to parents so many of our pupils did not have transport at the beginning of the academic year. How do you reach out to parents with their own learning difficulties? I think the

policy discriminates against pupils in Special Schools as often those pupils have to travel to attend their District Special School and are unable to use public transport. It is then ludicrous that post 19 transport is provided again free of charge. Surely transport should be allocated as to whether those pupils have the capacity to travel independently on public transport and not on age.” (Education professional)

“I agree that all learners with an EHCP should not automatically be awarded home school transport - however, those that cannot travel independently and meet the criteria of not attending an additional placement should receive this support. I also think it’s wrong that a post 19 learner cannot financially contribute to their travel. I am aware that this rule is set in state law.” (Education professional)

Example verbatim, in consultees’ own words, about families who cannot afford to pay for transport can be found below:

“I think that moving everyone (with limited exceptions) is unfair. as the cost of transport will far exceed the amount of PTB. If my child continues on to the sixth form of his current school is will cost £15,600 per annum for the same transport he has now. This is unsustainable even with the PTB, and no guarantee that they will qualify for a KCC organised vehicle.” (Parent / carer)

“Charging for transport puts many families, already at financial hardship due to supporting a child or young person with special needs, at greater levels of difficulty. Education is compulsory up to the age of 18. A young person with SEND does not have the luxury of being able to choose where they can attend. My child cannot attend the closest sixth form provision as it is not suitable. We do not have a choice where our child attends - we cannot choose somewhere within walking distances at a) this would not be suitable b) this would not be possible.” (Parent / carer)

“Your proposals will have a negative impact on many of our students’ abilities to access our sites and therefore their education with us as a provider. Not all of our students even get a bursary so this will mean that we will become inaccessible to them altogether because of the cost of transport.” (Education professional)

Example verbatim, in consultees’ own words, about being unfair / discriminatory to families / those with SEND can be found below:

“The change in policy was introduced rapidly last year without clear information being sent to parents so many of our pupils did not have transport at the beginning of the academic year. How do you reach out to parents with their own learning difficulties? I think the policy discriminates against pupils in Special Schools as often those pupils have to travel to attend their District Special School and are unable to use public transport. It is then ludicrous that post 19 transport is provided again free of charge. Surely transport should be allocated as to whether those pupils have the capacity to travel independently on public transport and not on age.” (Parent / carer)

“Very concerned about current proposals as feel there are yet more barriers for SEND YP and particularly Young Adults attending education. There are a limited number of specialist college places for example and these will only be accessible for the majority by arranged

transport- admittedly this will not be the case for everyone but does feel that ultimately there could be an increase in SEND individuals with poor outcomes if this is poorly handled and rushed through.” (Parent / carer)

“Our 16 year old son would not be able to make his own way via public transport to his school, he doesn't go anywhere alone due to his disability, also the school is difficult to get to by public transport. While KCC provides transport I know that the drivers have all been vetted and approved by the Local Authority (they have checked DBS etc), they have assessed best value as they have that expertise and can compare tenders and the young people have consistent transport.” (Parent / carer)

“The lack of PTB for Post 16 pupils with SEN will create a further year of financial crisis for families and pupils continuing to miss education.” (Education professional)

“How is the system going to maintain and keep consistent the opportunity to access education for students who have learning or mental health disabilities by making these changes? How is the system going to protect vulnerable students from being financially abused from parents / carers? How are students going to be able to access more remote locations to access the courses that suits their career paths?” (Education professional)

Example verbatim, in consultees' own words, about children / young people being legally obligated to be in education until 19 can be found below:

“Still find it appalling that SEN children that are unable to access public transport have to pay to go to school when it's a legal requirement.” (Parent / carer)

“As all children are required to attend education until 19 years the transport should be funded until the legal obligation expires and then be looked at in a case by case needs requirement. Sometimes disabilities become more affecting at an older age especially in areas of anxiety and mental health alongside their everyday challenges and this should continue to be widely supported until any form of education ceases.” (Parent / carer)

“Why are post 16 students living in rural areas with very limited public transport still not allowed to get the KCC provided school bus to 6 form! Applying for a spare seat is nonsense as they never get one and they are then expected to pay for it. 16 to 18 year olds are now legally required to be in education or approved training so surely they should be able to use the school bus they have always got to get to the same school to do A levels. The first public bus leaving our village is at 9.20am too late for school.” (Parent / carer)

Example verbatim, in consultees' own words, about how parents / carers will be affected / need to change working hours / give up work can be found below:

“While I understand the financial pressures Kent are facing as a Head Teacher myself I am concerned about how my child with epilepsy, social and communication difficulties and learning difficulties will be able to continue to access school from 16 if transport will not be provided. Even if he could get to Ashford on the train, which he could not as he cannot walk to the shop in the village on his own, he would then not be able to get to Wyvern school as it is too far to walk and he could not manage a bus on his own. I work full time and my husband is away a lot with work. One of us would have to give up work to be able to

transport him if these changes go ahead. This would mean a complete change to our lives and out ourselves in a very difficult, financial situation. Our lines of work do not give us flexibility to provide transport at the right times.” (Parent / carer)

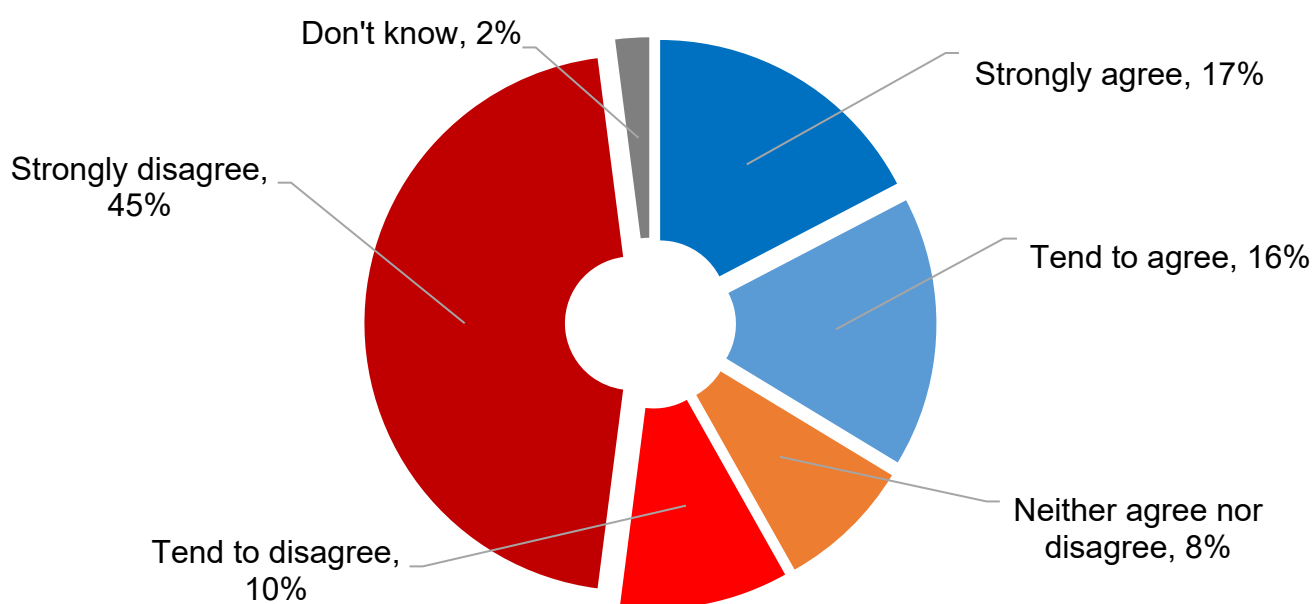
“My son, and all 3 of my children are far too vulnerable to get a train or a bus to school, for when the time comes post 16. They are not street wise at all. I am going to have to drive my son (he's the eldest) to his current school he's at the moment, because he is happy there. So, wants to stay there. This is going to be detrimental to my working life, as I will have to drive him from Sittingbourne to the Malling school everyday. Twice a day.” (Parent / carer)

“This proposal will not work for most parents as they can't be in two places at once and also you will be adding more stress to parents and children with SEN having to arrange their own transport.” (Parent / carer)

2026-27 statement proposals - Provision of a Personal Transport Budget to most learners who qualify for additional support

Just over a third of consultees (34%) agree with the first proposal for the 2026-27 statement to provide a Personal Transport Budget to most learners who qualify for additional support from KCC, to facilitate their travel to their place of education. 56% disagree with this proposal; 45% strongly disagree. 8% indicated they neither agree nor disagree and 2% are unsure.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to provide a Personal Transport Budget to most learners who qualify for additional support from KCC, to facilitate their travel to their place of education? Base: all providing a response (225)



Supporting data table	Number of responses	Percentage
Net – Agree	76	34%
Net – Disagree	125	56%
Strongly agree	39	17%
Tend to agree	37	16%
Neither agree nor disagree	19	8%
Tend to disagree	23	10%
Strongly disagree	102	45%
Don't know	5	2%

Agreement proportions are broadly consistent by parents / carers of children / young people of different ages and attendance at different types of school. However, a lower proportion of consultees who receive KCC organised transport agree compared to consultees who do not receive KCC organised transport.

% agree (subgroups shown where base sizes permit)	Number of responses	Percentage
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Years 7-11 (Secondary aged 11-16)	21	27%
Years 12-13 (Post-16 aged 16-18)	22	31%
Attend a special school	23	26%
Attend a mainstream school	9	25%
Receive KCC organised transport	24	19%
Do not receive KCC organised transport	24	60%
Consultee with a disability	10	42%
Consultee with a caring responsibility	10	42%
Education professional	11	35%

Consultee comments on proposal to provide a Personal Transport Budget

Consultees were asked to add any comments in their own words on the proposal to provide a Personal Transport Budget to most learners who qualify for additional support from KCC, to facilitate their travel to their place of education. The comments have been reviewed and grouped into themes consistent with the process reported in the 'Points to Note' section. 69% of consultees provided a comment to this question. 48% of those who indicated they agree with the proposal provided a comment; 86% of those who indicated they disagree with the proposal provided a comment.

26% of consultees answering commented that parents / carers would be affected / they would need to change their working hours / give up work. Consistent with themes reported previously, consultees also commented that children / young people not being able to access public transport / travel independently (24%), the statement's contents making education inaccessible for some children / young people (22%) and concern families cannot afford to pay for transport / Personal Transport budget will not cover costs (21%).

13% made reference to special schools often being further away / few / there was little choice on where to send young people. 11% expressed concerns with assessment / monitoring criteria and how this affects who is entitled and the definition of exceptional circumstances.

Please add any comments you have on this proposal in the box below.

Base: all consultees providing a response (154)

	Number of responses	Percentage
Parents / carers would be affected / change working hours / give up work / can't be in two places at once	40	26%
Children / young people cannot access public transport / travel independently	37	24%
Makes education inaccessible / young people will miss out / changes will affect attendance	34	22%
	Number of responses	Percentage
Families cannot afford to pay for transport / Personal Transport Budget will not cover costs	33	21%

All education transport should be provided / funded by KCC	31	20%
Special schools are often further away / are few and far between / little choice where to send young people	20	13%
Concerns with assessment / monitoring criteria / what are exceptional circumstances?	17	11%
Young person suffers with anxiety / mental health / changes could exacerbate issues / need a routine	16	10%
Unfair / discriminatory for families / those with SEND	16	10%
Young people are entitled to an education	15	10%
Safety issues / safeguarding / vulnerable at risk when travelling	14	9%
Difficulty in arranging alternative transport	14	9%
KCC has more resources / better at co-ordinating / optimising vehicle capacity / routes	14	9%
Public transport is poor / poor availability / timings / long journey times / expensive	13	8%
Cannot apply a one-size fits all approach / all young people are different / have different needs	10	6%
Receiving a Personal Transport Budget should be a choice rather than a mandate	10	6%
No access to own transport / cannot drive	10	6%
Agree with Personal Transport Budget / good idea	10	6%
Legally obligated to be in education until 19	9	6%
PTB is not appropriate / would not work / would be insufficient	8	5%
Lead to an increase in traffic on the roads	8	5%
Young people qualifying for Personal Independence Payment / have an EHCP should continue to receive funded transport	8	5%
Those with physical disabilities face further challenges / add complications	7	5%
Potential difficulty in budgeting if in receipt of Personal Transport Budget	7	5%
Parents / families should contribute to cost of transport	7	5%
Establishments are not on public transport routes / not accessible by public transport	6	4%
Concerned that money will not be used for its intended use	5	3%
Live rurally so journeys are even more complicated	5	3%
Agree with Personal Transport Budget if it covers costs / can be used by family members / carers	5	3%
KCC should not be funding transport	5	3%
	Number of responses	Percentage
Complicated process / time consuming / concerns about application process	4	3%
Travel training would not work	4	3%

Understand it's expensive for KCC / there are budget restrictions	4	3%
Would welcome a train pass	4	3%

Example verbatim, in consultees' own words, about how parents / carers would be affected / would need to change their working hours / give up work can be found below:

"It's not the cost that concerns me, but rather the time and effort to accompany children to school during a working day. I would not expect help for my younger child, who also has SEN but is able to get to and from school independently. However, my older child, who has SEN and an EHCP cannot independently go anywhere unaccompanied and is vulnerable. Her needs are such that there are extra pressures on the family and we need the extra support eg home-to-school transport to continue post 16. I am concerned about moving over to a PTB system, but that is based on our individual circumstances. Other families might prefer it." (Parent / carer)

"It is a good idea for families that are able to drive their children to school themselves, however for those who can't get their children to school themselves because maybe they work or don't even drive it is not particularly helpful. Some children are not able to get public transport on their own either so the Bus pass may not be helpful to them as well." (Parent / carer)

"This is just another way for you to reduce the travel spaces on the buses as it's still costing you more than we are paying for now! I'm a parent of 4 SEN children with ECHP's at 2 schools how on earth am I meant to be in 2 places at once? And before you use the free school breakfast/ after school clubs our child can't access those due to their needs and no trained staff!" (Parent / carer)

"While I agree that PTBs should be offered, they will not be a practical or cost effective solution for many families. For working parents, using the PTB to take young people to school is unlikely to be an option and parents are very unlikely to have the ability/skills or local contacts to be able to make arrangements with other transport providers in the way that the KCC team is able to do, which would be more resource effective than individual transport arrangements for each young person." (Parent / carer)

Example verbatim, in consultees' own words, about children / young people not being able to access public transport / travel independently and making education inaccessible can be found below:

"I think this would make applying for transport for those aged 16 and above who have SEND, and cannot travel independently due to their needs, so much more complicated than the current system. It will be so much harder for young people and their parents/carers to navigate this system - of jumping through extra hoops before transport is arranged. I think it will put post 16 learners off applying for help with transport and therefore will affect their attendance at their education setting. With the previous changes, the cohort of youngsters accessing education shrank, and I am worried that these proposals will decrease the numbers of young people who can access education still further. In your own EqIA you indicate that this is a concern. The more you deny young people access to education, the more likely it is that they will become economically inactive as adults." (Parent / carer)

“My daughter's school is not close to any public transport route. There is a station at Thanet Parkway however she would need to take a 20-25 minute walk including crossing a dual carriageway where there is no crossing provided. She is not streetwise as she does not go out independently. The risk of her crossing this road is too dangerous and is a safeguarding issue. She also would not be willing to do this. She would also need to walk down an isolated lane with no buildings nor lighting. Again, this is too risky and would affect her attendance at school as she would not be willing to undertake this. (Parent / carer)

“This would be extremely detrimental to my son and would mean he can no longer attend the special school he has thrived in for many years. Another KCC cost cutting venture, our poor kids suffer as usual with no regard to their needs. Transport should be provided whilst children with an EHCP are in education. The whole of their education. It is discriminatory to change things the way you propose and will no doubt go ahead as our voices usually mean very little.” (Parent / carer)

“There are many students with EHCPs for whom independent travel is an aspiration not a reality at the present time. Travel provision from KCC facilitated these learners continuing their education and teaching their potential. This is crucial for these individuals to go on and be able to access the workplace rather than having to rely on a lifetime of benefits.” (Parent / carer)

“Many learners with SEND could not be supported to effectively manage this budget with their parents. They are more at risk of financial abuse and some parents have SEND or severe mental health issues themselves. This will stop so many students attending college and accessing their right to education.” (Education professional)

“Most of our sites are not accessible by public transport so these budgets would be insufficient OR leave young people in dangerous situations whereby they have to walk the last length of their journeys along country lanes in isolation, often in the dark in the winter months.” (Education professional)

“This works well for students who have parents available to drive them to a destination but it will be very difficult for students who live in a remote location & do not have a mobile parent. They are even more likely to drop out of education which put them at an even greater disadvantage.” (Education professional)

“I work in a SEN college where students rely on taxis to attend college. we are a remote college where public transport is not available. We have a number of students with severe needs that would not be able to access public transport as this would be too triggering for them. In general, the majority of students in my college would struggle to attend college which would then effect their entitlement to an EHCP and an education. Our students would stop attending college if travel was disrupted.” (Education professional)

Example verbatim, in consultees' own words, about families not being able to afford to pay for transport / Personal Transport Budget will not cover costs can be found below:

“We live some distance from the special needs school - my child is severely disabled and cannot attend any other setting. I work full time and do not have the time to spend 2 hours plus a day taking her to school. I cannot see that £4000 will cover her journeys when 1 taxi journey from Ashford to Tenterden costs £80. In addition to this, she requires an escort in

the car as she is severely epileptic.. Not only is this proposal already causing me some stress (as the parent of a severely disabled child I am already under considerable stress) but potentially puts at risk her ability to attend school.” (Parent / carer)

“I have doubts as to whether the amount allocated will be enough to provide taxis for our students. Many parents also have learning needs or difficulties with form-filling and may lose out if required to complete application forms. Any shortfall will not be able to be covered by bursaries or other college funds. If students cannot come to college by taxi due to lack of funds, their entire education will be affected. This could also affect taxi drivers who often rely on regular school trips as the main part of their income.” (Education professional)

“The journey time to college is 45mins to an hour ; that would mean approx. 2 hours there and back twice a day; Its simply not possible to drive for that long 5 days a week and £5000 would not cover the cost ; My daughter is really learning and improving at college but it is the nearest one to us so for her to keep on improving she has to go there.” (Parent / carer)

Example verbatim, in consultees’ own words, about concerns with assessment / monitoring criteria / the definition of exceptional circumstances can be found below:

“I think there should be some clarity on the phrase 'exceptional circumstances'- what are the circumstances where a learner would have an organised vehicle rather than a PTB?” (Parent / carer)

“Only offering transport in exceptional circumstances will mean many young adults will not be able to access educational settings. Your staff do not have the knowledge or training necessary to determine an individual’s needs or ability. Providing a young adult with funding will not magically give them the skills necessary to native public transport, manage or afford daily taxis or have the ability to learn to drive.” (Parent / carer)

“Exceptional circumstances needs to refer to those with severe and complex disabilities. Those who have received their own or 2:1 KCC provided transport and assistant in the past. Age is not substantially going to change a person's level of need related to their disability, perhaps as compared to others who need less support as they age. Level of need is not linear with age progression. In some cases, the level of need can increase with age. (Parent / carer)

Example verbatim, in consultees’ own words, about special schools often being further away / few and far between / there is little choice where to send young people can be found below:

“Most adult learners have to travel long distances to the most suitable special college for their needs. This proposed policy would make it very difficult in most cases for them to access their college, in most cases, colleges where they are settled and are progressing in their chosen course to enable them to be able to be more independent and employable. The KCC are potentially taking this away.” (Parent / carer)

“I think there is unrealistic expectations around how KCC is going to meet this growing demand for specialised transport. 16-18 year olds are still 'children' and parents would still be expected to help them access education. I think that helping parents with car transport costs makes lots of sense. Relentless increases in taxi transport is just not sustainable. However this policy change is likely to spotlight a bigger issue around why young people are having to travel long distances in the first place (lack of appropriate local SEN provisions). That is a better focus to work on than taxi provision. My only proviso is that

there are always cases where 'normal' is not going to work. For example if a parent has to be at three different settings simultaneously. So there will always need to be a safety net. In the policy for where families are realistically not going to be able to meet the need.” (Parent / carer)

“We live some distance from the special needs school - my child is severely disabled and cannot attend any other setting. I work full time and do not have the time to spend 2 hours plus a day taking her to school. I cannot see that £4000 will cover her journeys when 1 taxi journey from Ashford to Tenterden costs £80. In addition to this, she requires an escort in the car as she is severely epileptic.. Not only is this proposal already causing me some stress (as the parent of a severely disabled child I am already under considerable stress), but potentially puts at risk her ability to attend school.” (Parent / carer)

Example verbatim, in consultees' own words, about being unfair / discriminatory to families / those with SEND can be found below:

“Not viable for SEN children where independent travel is not possible. Will prohibit my child attending full time education. Under PTB will also lose economies of scale as taxi is shared and at full capacity with other pupils at same educational establishment.” (Parent / carer)

“This would be extremely detrimental to my son and would mean he can no longer attend the special school he has thrived in for many years. Another KCC cost cutting venture, our poor kids suffer as usual with no regard to their needs. Transport should be provided whilst children with an EHCP are in education. The whole of their education. It is discriminatory to change things the way you propose and will no doubt go ahead as our voices usually mean very little.” (Parent / carer)

“In the case of my son and family I'm a single parent, I work and do not have the ability to take my son to school and pick him up. He is not able to get public transport on his own and I would not be able to continue with my employment if I had to take him to school and pick him up five days a week. I feel I'd be discriminated against for having a child with a disability, who can't travel on public transport but has to legally be in education until at least 18.” (Parent / carer)

“As with all the consultations, It is clear and obvious that there is a real need to cut over spending where it can be cut and to slim down on areas that can be slimmed down. There will always be a cohort that wins and others that loose as a direct result of any change. My/our personal concern is around the overwhelming need for travel for the extremely vulnerable SEND students that rely on Special schools, like ourselves. Where parental involvement/ability is an issue, we would like to maintain the need for exceptional circumstances to always be able to be discussed and a bespoke plan put into place. Working closely with KCC for sometime, I am sure this will be the case, but needed to highlight the need for some will not to fit into the box not matter what you plan. We would hate to have such a barrier to learning, making our bespoke teaching ineffective as they would be unable to attend placement.” (Education professional)

“Many learners with SEND could not be supported to effectively manage this budget with their parents. They are more at risk of financial abuse and some parents have SEND or

severe mental health issues themselves. This will stop so many students attending college and accessing their right to education.” (Education professional)

Example verbatim, in consultees own words, from those agreeing with the proposal can be found below:

“SEN children need additional support. Personal transport budget is a massive help.”
(Parent / carer)

“I think this is sensible as the bus network is now very limited so having a budget would enable each family to make arrangements for whatever form of transport makes the most sense for their young person - in my situation this would be train-fare. Also, there are some families who can afford to pay for the transport themselves.” (Parent / carer)

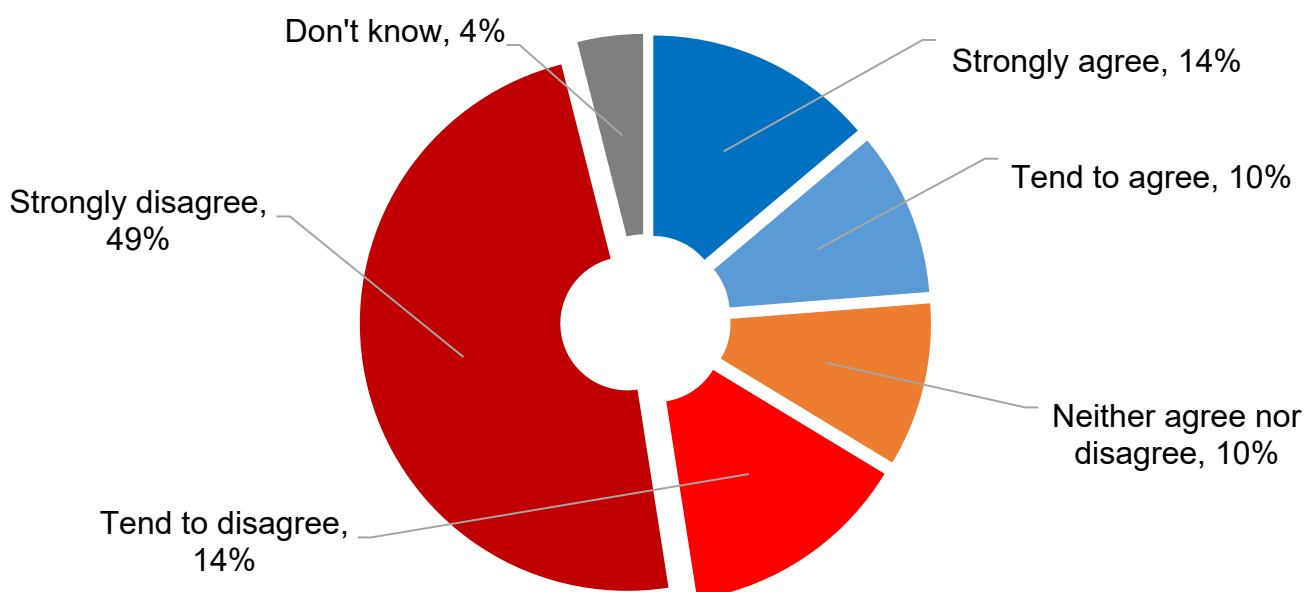
“There are many reasons why students are unable to use public transport or why parents would be unable to transport them personally so as long as parents are not overly questioned as to why their child requires KCC provided transport I agree with the PTB.”
(Responded in another capacity)

“Times are hard for all of us, but for KCC to continue funding where it is not legally required needs to be addressed.” (Responded in another capacity)

2026-27 statement proposals - Expectation students aged 19+ apply for a discretionary bursary to facilitate travel

Just under a quarter of consultees (24%) agree with the expectation for the 2026-27 statement that students aged 19+ apply for a discretionary bursary from their learning provider to facilitate their travel to and from their school or college. 63% disagree with this proposal; 49% strongly disagree. 10% indicated they neither agree nor disagree and 4% are unsure.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the expectation that students aged 19+ apply for a discretionary bursary from their learning provider to facilitate their travel to and from their school or college? Base: all providing a response (225)



Supporting data table	Number of responses	Percentage
Net – Agree	53	24%
Net – Disagree	142	63%
Strongly agree	31	14%
Tend to agree	22	10%
Neither agree nor disagree	22	10%
Tend to disagree	32	14%
Strongly disagree	110	49%
Don't know	8	4%

Agreement proportions are broadly consistent by parents / carers of children / young people of different ages and attendance at different types of school. However, a lower proportion of

consultees who receive KCC organised transport agree compared to consultees who do not receive KCC organised transport.

% agree (subgroups shown where base sizes permit)	Number of responses	Percentage
Years 7-11 (Secondary aged 11-16)	12	15%
Years 12-13 (Post-16 aged 16-18)	12	17%
Attend a special school	12	14%
Attend a mainstream school	7	19%
Receive KCC organised transport	14	11%
Do not receive KCC organised transport	13	33%
Consultee with a disability	6	25%
Consultee with a caring responsibility	14	16%
Education professional	9	29%

Consultee comments on expectation students aged 19+ apply for a discretionary bursary to facilitate travel

Consultees were asked to add any comments in their own words on the proposal that students aged 19+ would apply for a discretionary bursary to facilitate travel to their place of education. The comments have been reviewed and grouped into themes consistent with the process reported in the 'Points to Note' section. 56% of consultees provided a comment to this question. 32% of those who indicated they agree with the proposal provided a comment; 70% of those who indicated they disagree with the proposal provided a comment.

Consultees reiterated earlier comments namely the statement being unfair / discriminatory (20%) and the statement's contents making education inaccessible for some children / young people (15%). In addition to the most common themes expressed so far, consultees commented they believe the process would be complicated / time consuming / the application process raises some concerns (23% of consultees answering) and establishments do not have the funds / already have a tight budget (15%).

22% of consultees commented that all education transport should be provided / funded by KCC.

Please add any comments you have on this proposal in the box below.

Base: all consultees providing a response (124)

	Number of responses	Percentage
Appears a complicated process / time consuming / concerns about application process	28	23%
All education transport should be provided / funded by KCC / it's their responsibility	27	22%
Unfair / discriminatory for families / those with SEND	25	20%
Making education inaccessible / young people will miss out / changes will affect attendance	19	15%
Establishments do not have the funds for this / already have a tight budget	19	15%
Young people cannot access public transport / travel independently	16	13%
Young people are entitled to an education	16	13%
Concerns with assessment / monitoring criteria / what are exceptional circumstances?	14	11%
Parents / carers affected / change working hours / give up work / can't be in two places at once	12	10%
A bursary is discretionary / not guaranteed / establishments choose to fund or not	12	10%
Schools attended by those with SEN are often further away / are few & far between / little choice where to send young people	11	9%
Difficulty in arranging alternative transport	10	8%
Agree with bursary / good idea	8	6%
Personal Transport Budget / bursary is not appropriate / would not work / would be insufficient	7	6%
	Number of responses	Percentage

Establishments are not on public transport routes / not accessible by public transport	7	6%
Bursary would be insufficient / not cover costs	7	6%
Families cannot afford to pay for transport / bursary will not cover costs	6	5%
If claiming retrospectively, cannot afford to fund it in the first place	6	5%
Affect young people in the long term / future / detrimental in the long term	6	5%
KCC should not be funding transport	6	5%
Cannot apply a one-size fits all approach / all young people are different / have different needs	5	4%
Safety issues / safeguarding / vulnerable at risk when travelling	4	3%
KCC abandoning / neglecting young people	4	3%
No access to own transport / cannot drive	4	3%
Happy to contribute to cost of transport	4	3%
Personal Transport Budget would be preferable	3	2%

Example verbatim, in consultees' own words, about it being a complicated process / time consuming / concerns about application process can be found below:

“Overly bureaucratic hurdles just to delay, deny and dismiss applications. Please don’t introduce more difficulties for our most vulnerable children. They cannot access much if anything in life please don’t take their right to attend school from them.” (Parent / carer)

“These are all unnecessary, taxing and discriminatory hoops for an individual with learning disabilities to go through. It is degrading and insulting for parents and students to have to continually, Year in Year, prove their need. Many of these students have lifelong conditions that unfortunately will not change for the better when assessed this year or next.” (Parent / carer)

“This is further administrative burden on families with young people who have additional needs, as well as on those learning providers. I can foresee this additional layer of bureaucracy could slow down the process of ensuring young people with SEND have the appropriate means of support to get to their place of learning.” (Parent / carer)

“Why add another layer for parents to have to go through? Why should learning providers have to be involved? This is unfair and time consuming. Who funds the bursary? Why should there be even more paperwork to fill out? These students have needs that are currently being met so there is no need to change the system. Perhaps savings should be made elsewhere in KCC and money allocated where the need is.” (Parent / carer)

“This could work for those who can understand the long term benefits, but many of our SEND students will not be able to grasp the idea that they get a Discretionary budget that needs to last for a term.” (Education professional)

Example verbatim, in consultees' own words, about children / young people not being able to access public transport / travel independently and making education inaccessible can be found below:

“I believe SEN students should be supported until they finish their schooling. My daughter would not be able to access public transport independently with confidence and would need to change school as there is no public transport available. This is not an option for her.” (Parent / carer)

“If the learner has no bus route or is unable to use the bus then this would just damage their chance of getting the education they need some learners require a longer time to achieve the goals but can't get to the college because KCC has dumped them in the trash pile. With out vital transport i.e. taxi and travel training 19+ are basically left to rot and therefore can't reach their potential and have no choice but to claim benefits. Taking this away isn't helping anyone other than KCC pockets.” (Parent / carer)

“I do not believe this is morally right or fair to students with disabilities, they often have to travel a further distance to access a suitable provision. This means that in the cases where their provisions are further it could be over £20 per journey, meaning that their bursary would diminish within weeks. This would also hinder access to the other things provided using the vulnerable bursary. Them then having to apply for PTB would mean further time out of education waiting on transport.” (Education professional)

Example verbatim, in consultees' own words, about being unfair / discriminatory to families / those with SEND can be found below:

“It puts young adults with SEN at a severe disadvantage. Many children with SEN qualify for enhanced mobility within PIP. For whatever reasons, they are unable to travel alone and, unlike their peers, unable to access public transport alone. This means a parent would need to choose between their young person attending further education or working, since SEN provision is rarely local. Many young people with SEN require more education to reach the same level as their peers. This policy denies them that and forces them to finish their education at 19. Those young people with SEN, who are in receipt of the enhanced mobility of PIP, deserve the same opportunities as everyone else. This policy says KCC believes otherwise.” (Parent / carer)

“This is very much a conciliatory device and as we all know EHCP's are now very hard fought & difficult to come by. So my concern is that this will put young people with special needs at a huge disadvantage, particularly as funding from KCC is so tight. I fear those who need it most, won't be "considered" for support.” (Education professional)

“I do not believe this is morally right or fair to students with disabilities, they often have to travel a further distance to access a suitable provision. This means that in the cases where their provisions are further it could be over £20 per journey, meaning that their bursary would diminish within weeks. This would also hinder access to the other things provided using the vulnerable bursary. Them then having to apply for PTB would mean further time out of education waiting on transport.” (Education professional)

Example verbatim, in consultees' own words, about establishments not having the funds for this / already have a tight budget can be found below:

“Colleges do not the means to pay for this transport from their budgets. Paying for this transport will remove funding from other students within the organisation.” (Parent / carer)

“How are schools going to come up with a bursary? They are underfunded as it is, and this will further disincentivise them to take on students with additional needs. Families with SEN children are statistically less well-off and less able to arrange and provide transport.”
(Parent / carer)

“This assumes that learning providers have surplus bursaries available - they do not. In 25/26 the DFE have awarded the same cash figure for bursaries as 24/25 - therefore a real terms cut when factoring in inflation. It is disingenuous to promote that learning providers will be able to assist without any discussion with learning providers as to whether that is the case. In assisting certain learners then others will go without. It is a completely flawed strategy directing potential learners to a Bursary System that currently has demand that significantly exceeds 100% of the funding available.” (Education professional)

“My organisation is not able to provide sufficient funding through bursaries, which means some students will not be able to continue with their education. If these students have EHCPs and we are named, this could lead to changes of placement being requested.”
(Education professional)

Whilst not explicitly referenced within the question for feedback, example verbatim, in consultees' own words, about replacing transport provision with bursaries can be found below:

“We are trying to ensure that skills are achieved to enable our child to enter the workforce rather than requiring a lifetime of care. It seems short-sighted to limit the ability to get to/from the educational establishments which will enable future work (thus saving KCC long term care costs). PTB are not a viable alternative and leaves each parent trying to negotiate with a taxi company without any economies of scale. This will lead to increased road traffic and seems a backward step.” (Parent / carer)

“The difficulty of finding and providing transport cannot just be offset by a monetary allowance.” (Parent / carer)

“This is complicating a system that currently works , as my son only receives personal independence payment and isn't on benefits , he probably wouldn't be accepted for a bursary as most bursaries require benefits to judge availability, I as his parent am on benefits but we wouldn't be able to get the bursary and without it he'd not be able to get to college . I wouldn't know how to arrange transport for him even with the money , so the fact the education dept sorts this out is much better for us and means my son can attend college where he is happiest and thriving, take that away and it would have a detrimental effect on his life.” (Parent / carer)

“I completely disagree to removing transport for post 19 provision, except in exceptional circumstances. The financial amounts suggested would not be sufficient to pay for transport - this means a parent/carers would be responsible. This is often not possible, meaning you are discriminating against the learner that is legally entitled to stay in education until the age of 25 if appropriate. Removing transport would make this impossible for many learners, which is wholly unacceptable. It is well documented in SEND law that SEND learners require more time to learn and this policy would effectively take this opportunity away for many learners. The policy also states when deciding on travel support, a qualification at the same level would not usually be considered and it would need to see strong progress towards a clearly defined qualification or potential career. I

believe this is unlawful and is not a requirement to stay in education - there is clear case law refuting this statement: Buckinghamshire CC v SJ [2016] UKUT 0254 (AAC) "I reject any suggestion that the attainment of qualifications is an essential element of education. For many of those to whom the 2014 Act and Regulations apply, attaining any qualifications at all is not an option. That does not mean that they do not require, or would not benefit from, special educational provision" and 15ZA(8) of the Education Act 1996 states training including "vocational, social, physical and recreational training", which may not have a qualification attached and is measurable progress being subjective. I feel your policy is going to have a detrimental impact on many young people, forcing them to stop education when they have the ability and capacity to make progress in education and training. I believe this to be discriminatory and potentially unlawful." (Parent / carer)

"With regard to adult learners, why do they need to apply for bursaries first? Only offering mileage payments is unfair and possibly unlawful considering that Contact charity confirm that parents cannot be required to transport an adult child. Section 508F of the Education Act 1996, referenced in the DfE guidance on page 19 states that adult learners should have transport provided by the local authority and that this should be provided free of charge. Mileage payments, like PTBs, may be unacceptable options, especially as young people of this age want to be independent from parents and parents will be out of pocket making long, most of the day round trips, where they need to stop and buy a drink as it isn't recommended that they drive for hours without a break." (Parent / carer)

"The proposal to replace direct transport provision with a mileage payment assumes that all students have access to a vehicle or a family member who can transport them. This is not always the case, particularly for learners with disabilities who may require specialist transport arrangements. Public transport is often inaccessible or impractical for these students due to mobility issues, the need for supervision, or the location of their education provider. Shifting the responsibility to individual learning providers and families introduces unnecessary complexity and uncertainty, making it harder for vulnerable learners to access their education. Instead of reducing support, KCC should ensure that all students with SEND and EHCPs have reliable, guaranteed transport options that do not depend on the discretionary decisions of different institutions. I urge KCC to reconsider this proposal and maintain a direct, structured approach to transport support for adult learners who need it." (Parent / carer)

Example verbatim, in consultees' own words, from those agreeing with the proposal can be found below:

"If it is all organised promptly it could work however people may not have the money up front to fund their travel and keep their receipts to claim money back at a later date." (Parent / carer)

"This is a better option. Many young people do not apply for the bursary or start it and then do not provide the required evidence. This would help to push them to access the bursary funding that is potentially allocated for them." (Responded in another capacity)

"For most families I believe this will work well. My only concern is as before that my son has high support needs." (Parent / carer)

“All forms of funding need to be explored. KCC will end up going bankrupt if not. If this happens there will be even less services and support for young people who need it.”

(Responded in another capacity)

Any other comments or alternative suggestions on proposed Post 16 Transport Policy statement

Consultees were given the opportunity to provide any other comments or alternative suggestions in their own words on the proposed Post 16 Transport Policy Statement for 2026-27. The comments have been reviewed and grouped into themes consistent with the process reported in the 'Points to Note' section. Just under four in ten of consultees (38%) provided a comment to this question.

30% of consultees answering referenced that all education transport should be provided / funded by KCC. Other comments highlighted that the statement's contents being unfair / discriminatory to those with SEND (15% of consultees answering), young people are entitled to an education / right to maximise opportunities (14%) and proposals will affect the most vulnerable / remove support from those who need it (13%).

If you have any other comments or alternative suggestions on the proposed Post 16 Transport Policy Statement for 2026-27, please provide them in the box below.

Base: all consultees providing a response (84)

	Number of responses	Percentage
All education transport should be provided / funded by KCC	25	30%
Unfair / discriminatory to those with SEND / all have different needs	13	15%
Young people are entitled to an education / right to maximise opportunities in life	12	14%
Most vulnerable will be affected by this / removing support from those who need it	11	13%
Making education inaccessible	11	13%
KCC just want to save money / stop cutting funding	10	12%
Parents / carers affected / change working hours / give up work / can't be in two places at once	10	12%
Cannot access public transport / travel independently / travel training would not work	10	12%
Other suggestion about process / funding (use of minibuses / taxis, individual assessments)	10	12%
KCC should save money elsewhere / not waste money	9	11%
Criticism of consultation / further clarification needed	9	11%
Detrimental in the long term / affect their future	8	10%
Bursary would be insufficient / not cover costs	8	10%
Safety issues / safeguarding / vulnerable at risk when travelling	7	8%
KCC's responsibility / should not all be the family/carers / KCC have better resources	6	7%
Provide minibuses to establishments to collect young people en route	5	6%
What are exceptional circumstances? Definition required	5	6%
Personal Transport Budget / bursary are insufficient to cover travel costs / £600 contribution is too much	5	6%

	Number of responses	Percentage
Young people qualifying for Personal Independence Payment / have an EHCP should continue to receive funded transport	5	6%
Should be on a case by case basis	4	5%
Happy to contribute to cost of transport if KCC organise it	4	5%
Special schools are few and far between / little choice where to send young people / lack of public transport to them	3	4%
Legally obligated to be in education until 19	3	4%

Example verbatim, in consultees' own words, about the statement's contents being unfair / discriminatory to those with SEND, young people being entitled to an education / right to maximise opportunities and affecting the most vulnerable can be found below:

“Whilst I appreciate KCC is having to look at budget cuts it seems very easy to pick on disabled people ; they are an easy target. Most parents with disabled children have already been through so much with budget cuts closing play groups respite etc ; you only have to look in the news to see some people are at breaking point with even some suicides ; stopping these young adults from accessing education by cutting transport is a disgrace and KCC should look elsewhere to make cuts.” (Parent / carer)

“It is hard enough for our children to cope with a day of college without adding in additional stress before they even get there. The taxi is not ideal, still causes stress when drivers change or drivers' text while driving, or aggressive to other road users but at least it means she is in education. I have no idea how many children with EHCPs and their families would be happy with a PTB or how many colleges would fund transport for post 19. I can only speak for my child and without a taxi she would struggle.” (Parent / carer)

“Bear in mind the number of parents who will have to give up work just to get their children to their education providers. If these children can't get to college, they also won't be able to work in future, meaning they will not be earning and will have to rely on benefits. They will be unfairly disadvantaged again, because of their disability, not given the chance to thrive and be self-supporting. It is absolutely not a well thought plan to stop access to education for older learners with SEND as it reduces their life chances and means parents also won't get a break and will need to be full time carers if their adult children can't get to school/college.” (Parent / carer)

“Giving access to those students of Sixth form age to the buses they were able to use from Y7 to 11 in rural areas is vital. We have had students unable to get to use because they no longer have transport, making them a greater risk of being NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).” (Education professional)

“This is clearly a cost cutting exercise but you MUST put safety first and the higher education of our young people first. Most of these SEND students are only in higher education because they have the transport to get here. If it is left to our parents and carers to organise, many of whom are SEND and vulnerable themselves, these young people will drop out of college and lose all of the many benefits that higher education offers. This must not be allowed to happen but it will if you push forward with this idea. Please don't.”
(Education professional)

Response to Equality Impact Assessment

Consultees were asked to provide their views on KCC's equality analysis in their own words. The comments have been reviewed and grouped into themes consistent with the process reported in the 'Points to Note' section.

Only 28% of consultees provided a response to this question and 40% of the comments provided did not specifically relate to the EqlA.

Amongst those answering, there is some concern that the statement is discriminatory towards:

- Families of young people (19% of consultees answering)
- All protected characteristics / vulnerable (18%)
- Those with SEND (13%)
- Physical disabled / wheelchair users (11%)

3% of consultees answering made reference to the EqlA being adequate.

We welcome your views on our EqlA for the draft 2026-27 Post 16 Transport Policy Statement and if you think there is anything else we could do to lessen the impacts on learners and their families. Please write your comments/suggestions in the box below

Base: all consultees providing a response (62)

	Number of responses	Percentage
Discriminatory towards families of young people	12	19%
Discriminatory towards all protected characteristics / vulnerable	11	18%
Discriminatory to young people / those aged 16+	8	13%
Discriminatory to those with SEND	8	13%
Discriminatory to those physically disabled / wheelchair users	7	11%
Other comments related to EqlA	7	11%
Discriminatory based on income levels	4	6%
EqlA seems inadequate	3	5%
EqlA seems adequate	2	3%
No comment / nothing to add	2	3%
Comments unrelated to EqlA	25	40%

Example verbatim, in consultees' own words, about potential discrimination can be found below:

“As always on paper you look like you're being inclusive but you really really aren't!!! This is going to affect all of the family not just said child! What about the mental toll on the parent or the parent losing their job or having to put off going back to work due to all the changes proposed!!.” (Parent / carer)

“Since KCC have neglected to detail what constitutes 'exceptional circumstances' it is impossible to say what the full impact would be on those young people with SEN. As it

stands it fails them in every way possible. There is no way to lessen this impact other than to rethink the entire proposal.” (Parent / carer)

“Young people who qualify for the enhanced mobility element of Personal Independence Payment (unable to plan or undertake journeys safely alone) should qualify for provision of transport without the threat or fear of having to jump through hoops to receive it. To take this away by saying it will be considered in “exceptional circumstances” fails SEND children and their families. We all appreciate KCC needs to save money but this cut is not the way to do it.” (Parent / carer)

“You recognise the PTB would not enable transport to school, you can see the difficulties for families already struggling and the fact it is likely to impact many learners remaining in education - the only way the impact can be lessened is to provide transport. Yet again the most vulnerable in society are being targeted, with their outcomes being limited.” (Parent / carer)

“As identified it is going to negatively impact on the education of many learners due to families potentially being unable to transport their child. This will either mean them remaining at home or potentially going into adult social care (a massively under resourced and inappropriate place for young people).” (Education professional)

“As it says in your own document, those with protected characteristics will be effected. This is not morally just. The right thing to do would be to provide funding for minibuses so that the cost of taxis is reduced and those with SEND can still access their education.” (Education profession)

Section 1 – About You

Before you tell us your views on the draft Post 16 Transport Policy Statements for 2025-26 and 2026-27, we would like to ask you some questions about you. This information will help us to understand your views in more depth.

Q1. Are you a parent/carer of children/young people in education (by education we mean attending nursery, school, college or other further learning)?

Select **one** option.

☐
☐

Yes

No (**go to Q2**)

Q1a. Please tell us the first 5 characters of your postcode:

Please do not reveal your whole postcode. We use this to help us to analyse our data. It will not be used to identify who you are.

Q1b. Please select the age groups that apply to your children/young people:

Select **all** that apply.

☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐
☐

Early Years (0-4 years) – **go to Q1e**

Reception (4-5 years) – **go to Q1e**

Years 1-6 (Primary aged 5-11) – **go to Q1e**

Years 7-11 (Secondary aged 11-16) – **go to Q1c**

Years 12-13 (Post-16 aged 16-18) - **go to Q1c**

Later than Year 13, but started current course/qualification before 19th birthday
– **go to Q1c**

Age 19-25 (started current course/qualification after 19th birthday) - **go to Q1c**

Q1c. If your children/young people attend a school or further education establishment, please select which type from the list below. Otherwise, please go to Q1d.

*Select **all** that apply.*

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Special school in Kent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Special school outside of Kent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mainstream school in Kent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mainstream school outside of Kent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Grammar school in Kent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Grammar school outside of Kent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | College in Kent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | College outside of Kent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Kent Independent education provider |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other, please say which one: |

--

Q1d. Do your children/young people currently use a KCC Travel Saver pass?

This is the travel card subsidised by KCC that gives access to the public bus network.

*Select **all** that apply.*

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes, KCC Travel Saver (years 7-11) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes, KCC 16+ Travel Saver (years 12-14) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | No |

Q1e. Do any of your children/young people receive KCC organised transport?

*Select **one** option.*

<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, 1 child
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, 2 children
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, 3 or more children

Q1f. Do any of your children/young people have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities?

*Select **all that apply**.*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes, without an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

Please now go to Section 2.

Q2. Are you a student aged 16 to 19, or up to 25 if you have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)?

Select **one** option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No (go to Q3)

Q2a. If you attend a school or further education establishment, please select which type from the list below. Otherwise, please go to Q2b.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Special school in Kent
<input type="checkbox"/>	Special school outside of Kent
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mainstream school in Kent
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mainstream school outside of Kent
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grammar school in Kent
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grammar school outside of Kent
<input type="checkbox"/>	College in Kent
<input type="checkbox"/>	College outside of Kent
<input type="checkbox"/>	Kent Independent education provider
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please say which one:

--

Q2b. Please tell us the first 5 characters of your postcode:

--

Please do not reveal your whole postcode. If you're not sure or don't want to tell us, you can leave the box blank. We use this to help us to analyse our data. It will not be used to identify who you are.

Q2c. Please select the age group you are in:

Select **one** option.

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Years 12-13 (Post-16 aged 16-18)

Later than Year 13, but started current course/qualification before 19th birthday

Age 19-25 (started current course/qualification after 19th birthday)

Q2d. Do you have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities? Select *one* option.

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Yes, with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

Yes, without an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

No

I'm not sure

Q2e. Do you currently use the Kent 16+ Travel Saver pass? Select *one* option.

This is the travel card subsidised by KCC that gives access to the public bus network.

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Yes

No

Q2f. Do you use KCC organised transport?

Select *one* option.

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Yes

No

I'm not sure

Please now go to Section 2.

Q3. If you are not a parent/carers or student, please select from the following options:

<input type="checkbox"/>

Transport professional. Please select from the following:

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- ☐ Taxi operator
- ☐ Minibus operator
- ☐ Bus operator
- ☐ Other, please tell us more:

☐ Education professional in Kent. Please select from the following:

- ☐ Special school Head / teacher or another representative
- ☐ Mainstream school Head / teacher or another representative
- ☐ Grammar school Head / teacher or another representative
- ☐ College Head / teacher or another representative
- ☐ Kent Independent education provider
- ☐ Other, please tell us more:

☐ Education professional outside of Kent. Please select from the following:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Special school Head / teacher or another representative
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mainstream school Head / teacher or another representative
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grammar school Head / teacher or another representative
<input type="checkbox"/>	College Head / teacher or another representative
<input type="checkbox"/>	Independent education provider
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please tell us more:

☐

Responding in another capacity. Please let us know in the box below:

Q3a. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please tell us the name of your organisation in the box below:

Q3b. Please tell us the first 5 characters of your postcode:

Please do not reveal your whole postcode. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please provide your organisations postcode. We use this to help us to analyse our data. It will not be used to identify who you are.

Section 2 – Post 16 Transport Policy Statements

The draft 2025-26 Post 16 Transport Policy Statement

No changes are being proposed for the 2025-26 Post 16 Transport Policy Statement, however, KCC is legally required to consult every year. Page 10 of the consultation document provides a summary of the draft Statement. The consultation document and full draft Statement are available from the consultation webpage www.kent.gov.uk/post16consultation.

There will be the opportunity to provide your feedback on the Statement for 2026-27 in the next question.

Q4. If you have any comments on the draft Post 16 Transport Policy Statement for 2025-26, please provide them in the box below.

If you don't have any comments, please move on to the next question. Please do not include any personal information within your response.

The draft 2026-27 Post 16 Transport Policy Statement

Proposal 1: We are proposing to provide a Personal Transport Budget (PTB) to learners who qualify for additional support from KCC, to facilitate their travel to their place of education, rather than the forms of support we currently offer. We are proposing that a PTB will be KCC's standard offer of additional support. A KCC organised vehicle will only be provided in exceptional circumstances.

What is a Personal Transport Budget (PTB)?

A PTB is a payment designed to support parents and young people in making their own personal arrangements to get to and from school, college or a training provider. Applicants are not limited in how they make use of the PTB to support travel, with the exception that funds cannot be used to purchase an alternative KCC pass or scheme for the young person, as these are already subsidised by KCC. While most learners currently receive no direct support from KCC to access their place of learning, this PTB payment acknowledges the additional challenges that some learners face in maintaining their educational or vocational responsibilities. This means that KCC will still be providing them with a greater level of support.

PTB payments are made on the basis of the straight-line distance between the applicants home and their main educational establishment or training provider in the following Bands (minus an initial contribution in line with the full cost of the K16+TS pass, including with appropriate adjustment to the rates for low income applicants who are unable to secure direct bursary support from their provider, for the academic year that the application is being made):

	Annual Fund	Total Annual Fund minus contribution (e.g. £600). This is the amount the applicant would receive.	Total Annual Fund minus low income contribution (e.g. £300). This is the amount the applicant would receive if they meet the low income criteria.
Band 1	£2,000	£1,400	£1,700
Band 2	£3,000	£2,400	£2,700
Band 3	£5,000	£4,400	£4,700

The nature of any exceptional arrangements for the provision of transport (rather than a PTB) will be highly dependent on individual circumstances. The proposed 2026/27

Transport Policy Statement therefore omits previous general guidance relating to KCC-organised transport. The policy outlines how requests for exceptional consideration will be managed.

Current arrangements for those aged 16-18, and 19 (if the course started before the learner's 19th birthday):

Where a learner of sixth-form age can demonstrate that a Kent 16+ Travel Saver, 16-19 Bursary, Care to Learn, Active Travel, Independent Travel Training or Vacant Seat Payment Scheme is not sufficient to facilitate their access to their place of education, KCC will consider making alternative arrangements. These include a Personal Transport Budget, a mileage payment or provision of a vehicle organised and paid for by KCC, all subject to a contribution of up to the total cost of a Kent 16+ Travel Saver (currently £600).

Proposed changes:

Where a learner of sixth-form age can demonstrate that a Kent 16+ Travel Saver, 16-19 Bursary, Care to Learn, Active Travel, Independent Travel Training or Vacant Seat Payment Scheme is not sufficient to facilitate their access to their place of education, KCC will consider making alternative arrangements. In most instances this will be a Personal Transport Budget. In exceptional circumstances, KCC may consider provision of a vehicle organised and paid for by KCC. Both offers are subject to a contribution of up to the total cost of a Kent 16+Travel Saver (currently £600).

Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to provide a Personal Transport Budget to most learners who qualify for additional support from KCC, to facilitate their travel to their place of education? (A Personal Transport Budget would be offered instead of the provision of transport, unless there are exceptional circumstances.)

Please select **one** option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

Q5a. Please add any comments you have on this proposal in the box below. Please do not include any personal information within your response.

Proposal 2: To expect students aged 19+ to initially apply for a discretionary bursary from their learning provider to facilitate their travel requirements to and from their school or college, before approaching KCC for any additional support, which would be provided as a mileage payment for most pupils.

Where KCC assesses that support provided to students via the government's 16 to 19 Bursary Fund (which has discretionary support for learners older than 19) is insufficient to facilitate a student's attendance at school, college or training, consideration will be given to a potential further mileage payment in the form of a Cash Allowance. Payments would be made at 45p per mile, paid in arrears, following confirmation of attendance and submission of appropriate fuel receipts.

Payments will be subject to recoupment of an initial contribution in line with the total cost of the Kent 16+ Travel Saver pass (with appropriate adjustments to the rates for low income applicants) for the academic year that the application is being made. The Kent 16+ Travel Saver cost is subject to change annually and can be found on our [website](#)¹.

In exceptional circumstances, KCC will continue to consider providing transport support by way of a KCC provided vehicle. The policy outlines how these requests will be managed.

Current arrangements for adult learners (those aged 19+ who started their course after their 19th birthday:

Where adult learners with SEND (including those with an EHCP) can demonstrate that they continue to require support to access their place of education, KCC will consider making alternative arrangements. These include a Personal Transport Budget, a mileage payment, or provision of a vehicle organised and paid for by KCC.

For the purposes of deciding whether to make transport arrangements, KCC would not consider it necessary, other than in exceptional circumstances, for a young adult learner to attend an additional Further Education course at the same level or equivalent where the learner had previously attended and completed a course at an establishment within the Further Education sector.

Proposed change:

Where adult learners with SEND (including those with an EHCP) can demonstrate that they continue to require support to access their place of education following a formal request to their provider for a 16-19 Bursary, KCC will consider making alternative arrangements. In most instances this will be a mileage payment paid termly, subject to a contribution of up to the total cost of a Kent 16+ Travel Saver (currently £600). In exceptional circumstances, KCC may consider provision of a vehicle organised and paid for by KCC.

For the purposes of deciding whether to provide transport support, KCC would not consider it necessary, other than in exceptional circumstances, for a young adult learner to attend an additional Further Education course at the same level or equivalent where the learner had previously attended and completed a course at an establishment within the Further Education sector.

Q6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the expectation that students aged 19+ apply for a discretionary bursary from their learning provider to facilitate their travel to and from their school or college? (This would be instead of the provision of transport, unless there are exceptional circumstances.)

*Please select **one** option.*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tend to disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

Q6a. Please add any comments you have on this proposal in the box below. Please do not include any personal information within your response.

Q7. If you have any other comments or alternative suggestions on the proposed Post 16 Transport Policy Statement for 2026-27, please provide them in the box below.

Please do not include any personal information within your response.

Equality Analysis

We have prepared an initial Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for the draft 2026-27 Post 16 Transport Policy Statement.

An EqIA is a tool to assess the potential impact any proposals could have on the protected characteristics: age, disability, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and carer's responsibilities.

On page 22 of the consultation document, we have summarised the potential impacts and mitigations. The consultation document and full EqlA is available at www.kent.gov.uk/post16consultation or on request.

Q8. We welcome your views on our EqlA for the draft 2026-27 Post 16 Transport Policy Statement and if you think there is anything else we could do to lessen the impacts on learners and their families. Please write your comments/suggestions in the box below. Please do not include any personal information within your response.

Section 3 – More About You

We want to make sure that everyone is treated fairly and equally, and that no one gets left out. That's why we are asking you these equality monitoring questions. This information really helps us to understand how different people could be affected by our proposals, but if you would rather not answer any of these questions, you don't have to.

It is not necessary to answer these questions if you are responding on behalf of an organisation. If you are responding on behalf of someone else, please answer using their details.

Q9. What is your sex?

A question about gender identity will follow. Please select one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Female
<input type="checkbox"/>	Male
<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say

Q10. Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

Please select one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	
<input type="checkbox"/>	No, please tell us your gender identity:	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say	

Q11. Which of these age groups applies to you?

Please select one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Under 16	<input type="checkbox"/>	16-17	<input type="checkbox"/>	18-20	<input type="checkbox"/>	21-25	<input type="checkbox"/>	26-30
<input type="checkbox"/>	31-35	<input type="checkbox"/>	36-40	<input type="checkbox"/>	41-45	<input type="checkbox"/>	46-50	<input type="checkbox"/>	51-55
<input type="checkbox"/>	56-60	<input type="checkbox"/>	61-65	<input type="checkbox"/>	66-70	<input type="checkbox"/>	71-75	<input type="checkbox"/>	76-80
<input type="checkbox"/>	81-85	<input type="checkbox"/>	86-90	<input type="checkbox"/>	91-95	<input type="checkbox"/>	Over 95	<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say

Q12. Do you have a disability, health condition, physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities?
Please select one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say

Q12a. If you answered 'Yes' to Q12, please tell us if any of the following disabilities or health conditions apply to you.
You may have more than one, so please select all that apply. If none of these applies to you, please select 'A different disability or health condition' and give brief details.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sensory (hearing, sight or both)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Longstanding illness or health condition, such as cancer, HIV/AIDS, heart disease, diabetes or epilepsy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mental health condition
<input type="checkbox"/>	Learning disability
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neurodivergent, such as ADHD, autism, dyslexia and dyspraxia
<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say
<input type="checkbox"/>	A different disability or health condition

If you have selected 'A different disability or health condition', please tell us:

Q13. What is your religion or belief?

Please select one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	No religion or belief	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Atheist	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Christian	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Buddhist	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hindu	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Jewish	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Muslim	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sikh	
<input type="checkbox"/>	A different religion or belief, please tell us:	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say	

Q14. Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

Please select one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Heterosexual/Straight	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bisexual	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gay or Lesbian	
<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer to define my own sexuality, please tell us:	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say	

A Carer is someone who gives unpaid care or help to anyone because they have a long-term physical or mental health condition or illness, or problem related to old age. Both children and adults can be Carers.

Q15. Are you a Carer?
Please select one option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say

Q16. What is your ethnic group?
Please select one option.

White

<input type="checkbox"/>	English, Scottish, Welsh, Northern Irish or British
<input type="checkbox"/>	Irish
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gypsy or Irish Traveller
<input type="checkbox"/>	Roma
<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other White background, please tell us:

Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups

<input type="checkbox"/>	White and Black Caribbean
<input type="checkbox"/>	White and Black African
<input type="checkbox"/>	White and Asian

☐

Any other Mixed or Multiple background, please tell us:

Asian or Asian British

☐

Indian

☐

Pakistani

☐

Bangladeshi

☐

Chinese

☐

Any other Asian background, please tell us:

Black, Black British, Caribbean or African

☐

Caribbean

☐

African background, write in below

☐

Any other Black, Black British, or Caribbean background, please write in below:

Another ethnic group

☐

Arab

☐

Roma

☐

Any other ethnic group, please tell us:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire; your feedback is important to us. All feedback received will be reviewed and considered in the development of our policies.

We will report back on the feedback we receive, but details of individual responses will remain anonymous, and we will keep your personal details confidential.

Closing date for responses: midnight 23 March 2025

CONSULTATION FEEDBACK DRAFT RESPONSES

The formal responses to the consultation have been independently analysed. The table below draws out the themes from the consultation feedback as identified by the independent analysis, ordered by frequency of response with the most repeated themes at the top. Also provided in the table below is the draft response to the feedback themes, reflecting officers' consideration and assessment of each theme.

The first section relates to feedback on proposals to provide a Personal Transport Budget to most learners who qualify for additional support

The second section relates to feedback on the expectation that students aged 19+ would initially apply for a discretionary bursary from their learning provider to facilitate travel before seeking support from Kent County Council (KCC). Where KCC decides to provide support beyond that provided by the learning provider, in most instances this would be in the form of a mileage payment.

The third section relates to additional general feedback respondents provided through via the consultation.

The draft KCC responses are provided for consideration by the Cabinet Member.

Section 1: Provision of a Personal Transport Budget to most learners who qualify for additional support

Consultation feedback theme	Draft KCC response
Parents / carers would be affected / change working hours / give up work / can't be in two places at once	<p>The Equality Impact Assessment associated with this consultation acknowledges that proposals are likely to introduce new factors that learners and their families need to consider when deciding how to progress their education at sixth form age. Additionally the Equality Impact Assessment acknowledges that families may need to change their routines to incorporate additional or longer journeys, and that this may negatively impact work or other commitments. The Equality Impact Assessment explains a number of ways in which the impacts of the policy would be mitigated.</p> <p>There is no legal entitlement to attend a specific school without first considering how one might attend. It is already common practice in Kent for mainstream pupils and their families to have to manage the legal requirement to remain in education or training, without direct support from KCC to attend any learning establishment of their preference, although we acknowledge that this may be more complex or difficult in the case of individuals with additional needs. KCC will continue to provide additional</p>

	<p>support to these individuals. The proposed policy allows for alternatives to PTB considered in exceptional circumstances, in addition to an independent appeals process that allows applications to make direct requests to Members of KCC's Transport Regulation Committee Appeals Panel</p> <p>KCC is consulting a full academic year before proposed changes may be implemented to allow learners and families to select education options that can be accessed with the proposed level of support.</p>
Children / young people cannot access public transport / travel independently	<p>KCC's proposed scheme includes the opportunity for bespoke travel training, to support those learners who are able to develop the necessary skills to make use of public transport.</p> <p>Where independent travel is not possible, KCC's Personal Transport Budget offer does not limit use of provided funds to specific types of transport. In nearly all cases, learners would receive higher than the usual mileage rate of 45 pence per mile and exceptional circumstances and appeals processes remain available to allow individual circumstances to be considered. Similarly, funds can be used to engage other third parties to support an individual learners travel needs.</p>
Makes education inaccessible / young people will miss out / changes will affect attendance	<p>The Equality Impact Assessment associated with this consultation acknowledges that proposals are likely to introduce new factors that learners and their families need to consider when deciding how to progress their education at sixth form age and that, for some individuals, attendance may be impacted.</p> <p>The Equality Impact Assessment explains a number of ways in which the impacts of the policy would be mitigated. However, as a result of the feedback received during the consultation, KCC have undertaken a more detailed analysis of existing pupil travel patterns. The Cabinet report and EqIA have been updated to provide a more granular analysis of the likely impact on those who have to travel further, as they are more likely to be negatively affected. This analysis identified that adult learners are more likely to be negatively impacted by these changes than learners of sixth form age, as they are more likely to have more</p>

	<p>complex transport arrangements to begin with. This analysis does also suggest that in most instances, learners who received a smaller level of support after historic policy changes continued to remain in education, although a small minority did cease to engage.</p> <p>However, for the reasons outlined in the remainder of this analysis, it is not suggests that any further changes should be made to the proposed policy.</p> <p>There is no legal entitlement to attend a specific school without first considering how one might attend. It is already common practice in Kent for mainstream pupils and their families to have to manage the legal requirement to remain in education or training, without direct support from KCC to attend any learning establishment of their preference, although we acknowledge that this may be more complex or difficult in the case of individuals with additional needs. KCC will continue to provide additional support to these individuals. The proposed policy allows for alternatives to PTB considered in exceptional circumstances, in addition to an independent appeals process that allows applications to make direct requests to Members of KCC's Transport Regulation Committee Appeals Panel</p> <p>KCC is consulting a full academic year before proposed changes may be implemented to allow learners and families to select education options that can be accessed with the proposed level of support.</p>
Families cannot afford to pay for transport / Personal Transport Budget will not cover costs	<p>While KCC has historically provided a high level of transport support for some learners of sixth form age and adult learners, (particularly those with SEND and or EHCPs) there is no default legal entitlement to free school transport.</p> <p>The consultation outlined the reasons why KCC does not consider it possible to continue to provide historic levels of support. We acknowledge that the support provided by KCC would be lower than the average cost of transport currently provided, which means that learners would</p>

	<p>be unable to replicated current arrangements solely with the PTB. We acknowledge that this may impact families financially, and that in some cases the impacts may be significant. However, learners with higher levels of need will continue to receive a greater level of support than others if proposals are implemented. In exceptional circumstances, KCC will also consider making additional arrangements.</p>
<p>All education transport should be provided / funded by KCC</p>	<p>While national legislation requires learners of sixth form age to remain in education or training, statutory entitlement to free school transport is not extended to these same learners. Councils are not provided dedicated funds to support transport for these learners. This means that national legislation and funding does not support an expectation that all learners should be provided fully funded transport support. KCC has to assess what it is necessary to provide and must balance a range of factors and considerations in doing so.</p>
<p>Special schools are often further away / are few & far between / little choice where to send young people</p>	<p>The proposed PTB scheme provides increased levels of funding to pupils that need to travel further to their place of learning.</p> <p>While the pre-consultation EqlA identified that this impact was more likely to occur if proposals were implemented, as a result of the feedback received during the consultation, KCC have undertaken a more detailed analysis of existing pupil travel patterns, allowing a more granular analysis of the likely impact on those who have to travel further, as they are more likely to be negatively affected.</p> <p>This analysis suggests that the majority of learners travel fewer than 15 miles to their place of learning, but that more adult learners travel further than learners of sixth form age.</p> <p>However, balancing these impacts with the aims and objectives of the proposals, it is not considered that any further changes should be made to the proposed policy.</p>
<p>Concerns with assessment / monitoring criteria / what are exceptional circumstances?</p>	<p>Exceptional circumstances, by their nature, are not subject to categorisation or pre-defined criteria. KCC will consider requests for exceptional consideration on a case-by-case basis. The proposed policy makes clear that it is expected that the vast majority of pupils will be provided a</p>

	<p>Personal Transport Budget where they are identified as qualifying for increased levels of support.</p> <p>All policy related decisions are subject to independent Member appeal and Local Government and Social Care oversight.</p>
Young person suffers with anxiety / mental health / changes could exacerbate issues / need a routine	<p>The Equality Impact Assessment associated with this consultation acknowledges that affected learners are more likely to present challenges related to anxiety, mental health and/or difficulties in managing change.</p> <p>KCC is consulting a full academic year before proposed changes may be implemented to allow learners and families a longer period to prepare.</p>
Unfair / discriminatory for families / those with SEND	<p>The proposals would continue to provide learners with SEND with a significantly higher level of support than those without. Most learners of sixth form age are provided no direct support by KCC to engage in ongoing education or training. In exceptional cases KCC will also consider making alternative arrangements. KCC is required to balance a number of considerations in deciding what support it is necessary to provide. As explained in the Equality Impact Assessment, KCC does not consider that the proposals are discriminatory.</p>
Young people are entitled to an education	<p>While national legislation requires learners of sixth form age to remain in education or training, statutory entitlement to free school transport is not extended to these same learners. Councils are not provided dedicated funds to support transport for these learners.</p> <p>The proposals continue to provide elevated levels of support to learners with higher levels of need, ensuring all are supported to remain in education.</p>
Safety issues / safeguarding / vulnerable at risk when travelling	<p>Proposals include access to independent travel training for learners, to help them navigate public based transport options. However, KCC's Personal Transport Budget offer does not limit use of provided funds to specific types of transport. Funds can be used to engage other third parties to support an individual learner's travel needs. Registered Transport Employers are required by law to ensure that employees</p>

	<p>complete an Enhanced DBS check, ensuring safe engagement with the public. The policy does allow for exceptional circumstances to be considered, alongside Member based appeals, which could allow for individual mitigations to help overcome these difficulties.</p> <p>The pre-consultation EqIA identified that pupils may have more limited transport arrangements as a result of increased complexity, but has been updated following this feedback to reflect that additional factors such as this may also limit education opportunities.</p> <p>However, balancing these potential impacts with the aims and objectives of the proposals, it is not suggests that any further changes should be made to the proposed policy.</p>
Difficulty in arranging alternative transport	<p>Personal Transport Budget guidance provides support to help learners and their families to consider alternative ways to organise transport.</p> <p>KCC also provides online tools that support learners and their families when considering school travel planning.</p>
KCC has more resources / better at co-ordinating / optimising vehicle capacity / routes	<p>While KCC has developed strong working practices that support the delivery of transport at a large scale, it is not provided direct funding to provide school transport to learners of sixth form age and there is no statutory entitlement to free transport support. While KCC has provided a higher level of support to this point, the consultation outlines why it has been necessary to reconsider what future level of support may be appropriate.</p> <p>Following consultation feedback, the proposed policy now includes the option for schools to work in conjunction with KCC to provide transport to their own learners. KCC will share experience and expertise to ensure these arrangements are robust.</p>
Public transport is poor / poor availability / timings / long journey times / expensive	<p>KCC does not run the public bus network, but many learners of sixth form age elect to use it to support their transport needs. However, KCC's Personal Transport Budget offer does not limit use of provided funds to specific types of transport. In nearly all cases, learners would receive higher than the usual mileage rate of 45 pence per mile and appeals and exceptional circumstances processes remain available to allow individual</p>

	<p>circumstances to be considered. Similarly, funds can be used to engage other third parties to support an individual learner's travel needs.</p>
<p>Cannot apply a one-size fits all approach / all young people are different / have different needs</p>	<p>The proposed policy statement provides a range of transport support options that are targeted to ensure support for learners with a full spectrum of need. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direction to provider led 16 to 19 Bursary Fund • Subsidised travel cards for Young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) • Active Travel Strategy • Vacant Seat Payment Scheme • Care to Learn • Alternative Support for those learners requiring additional assistance <p>In addition, KCC's Personal Transport Budget offer does not limit use of provided funds to specific types of transport. Funds can be used to engage other third parties to support an individual learner's travel needs.</p> <p>Where exceptional need is identified, the proposed policy allows for consideration of a KCC provided vehicle. The policy also continues to provide an opportunity for learner to appeal to an independent panel where they feel that the provided support remains insufficient.</p>
<p>Receiving a Personal Transport Budget should be a choice rather than a mandate</p>	<p>KCC's previous transport policy statement allowed learners to elect to receive a PTB where it was preferable and financially viable to the council. Nearly 1 in 6 SEN learners make use of a PTB as a result. Unfortunately, the consultation outlines why it has been necessary to consider changing this to a mandatory scheme.</p>
<p>No access to own transport / cannot drive</p>	<p>The Equality Impact Assessment associated with this consultation acknowledges that proposals are likely to introduce new factors that learners and their families need to consider when deciding how to progress their education at sixth form age.</p> <p>There is no legal entitlement to attend a specific school without first considering how one might attend. It is already common practice in Kent for mainstream pupils and their families to have to manage the legal requirement to remain in education or</p>

	<p>training, without direct support from KCC to attend any learning establishment of their preference.</p> <p>KCC is consulting a full academic year before proposed changes may be implemented to allow learners and families to select education options that can be accessed with the proposed level of support.</p>
Agree with Personal Transport Budget / good idea	KCC is very proud of its PTB scheme, which currently supports around 1500 learners to successfully gain access to their place of learning, The proposals would ensure that learners with higher need continue to receive an enhanced level of support from KCC.
Legally obligated to be in education until 19	While national legislation requires learners of sixth form age to remain in education or training, statutory entitlement to free school transport is not extended to these same learners. Councils are not provided dedicated funds to support transport for these learners. This means that national legislation and funding does not support an expectation that all learners should be provided fully funded transport support. KCC has to assess what it is necessary to provide and must balance a range of factors and considerations in doing so.
PTB is not appropriate / would not work / would be insufficient	<p>The proposed policy statement provides a range of transport support options that are targeted to ensure support for learners with a full spectrum of need. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direction to provider led 16 to 19 Bursary Fund • Subsidised travel cards for Young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) • Active Travel Strategy • Vacant Seat Payment Scheme • Care to Learn • Alternative Support for those learners requiring additional assistance <p>Where exceptional need is identified, the proposed policy allows for consideration of a KCC provided vehicle. The policy also continues to provide an opportunity for learner to appeal to an independent panel where they feel that the provided support remains insufficient.</p>
Lead to an increase in traffic on the roads	It is acknowledged that proposed changes could lead to an increase in the volume of traffic at key times. KCC estimates that the

	<p>proposals could result in a range of somewhere between 328 and 1310 additional vehicles across the county. KCC, however, considers that this is tolerable in light of the aims and objectives of the changes.</p> <p>The re-introduction of school led transport opportunities allows an opportunity for some of this impact to be mitigated.</p>
Young people qualifying for Personal Independence Payments/ have an EHCP should continue to receive funded transport	<p>While national legislation requires learners of sixth form age to remain in education or training, statutory entitlement to free school transport is not extended to these same learners. Councils are not provided dedicated funds to support transport for these learners. This means that national legislation and funding does not support an expectation that learners should be provided fully funded transport support, even if they have an EHCP or receive Personal Independence Payments. KCC has to assess what it is necessary to provide and must balance a range of factors and considerations in doing so.</p>
Those with physical disabilities face further challenges / add complications	<p>The Equality Impact Assessment associated with this consultation acknowledges that proposals are likely to introduce new factors that learners and their families need to consider when deciding how to progress their education at sixth form age, and that learners with physical requirements that are currently supported by vehicles may have difficulty in securing similar alternatives. The Equality Impact Assessment also noted that public transport options may be less suitable in such cases.</p> <p>KCC is consulting a full academic year before proposed changes may be implemented to allow learners and families to select education options that can be accessed with the proposed level of support.</p>
Potential difficulty in budgeting if in receipt of Personal Transport Budget	<p>PTB funding is provided on a monthly instalment basis, limiting the need for long term budgeting for recipients. Attendance will also be monitored and payments withheld where transport is not being provided.</p>
Parents / families should contribute to cost of transport	<p>Since 2024/25 academic year, all learners of sixth form age have been expected to provide some contribution to the transport support they receive. However, the</p>

	proposed policy statement still acknowledges that some learners, particularly those with SEND and or EHCPs require a higher level of support.
Establishments are not on public transport routes / not accessible by public transport	Following consultation responses from the education sector, the policy proposals have been adjusted to allow the development of bespoke, school-led transport alternatives to a PTB. This will allow establishments, including those that are less-accessible, to work in conjunction with KCC to maintain accessible links for students.
Concerned that money will not be used for its intended use	PTB funding is provided on a monthly instalment basis, limiting the need for long term budgeting for recipients. Attendance will also be monitored and payments withheld where transport is not being provided.
Live rurally so journeys are even more complicated	Proposed PTB scheme provides increased levels of funding to pupils that need to travel further to their place of learning. This will help mitigate the longer journeys that some rural families may experience.
Agree with Personal Transport Budget if it covers costs / can be used by family members / carers	KCC's Personal Transport Budget offer does not limit use of provided funds to specific types of transport. In nearly all cases, learners would receive higher than the usual mileage rate of 45 pence per mile and appeals processes remain available to allow individual circumstances to be considered. Similarly, funds can be used to engage other third parties to support an individual learners travel needs.
KCC should not be funding transport	While KCC is not directly funded to provide transport, it does have a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport or other support that the authority considers it necessary to make to facilitate the attendance of all learners of sixth form age receiving education or training.
Complicated process / time consuming / concerns about application process	Learners of sixth form age are already required to apply for transport on an annual basis. The proposed changes will not have any negative impact on the application process or the time it takes to process them.
Travel training would not work	Proposed policy statement provides a range of transport support options that are targeted to ensure support for learners with a full spectrum of need. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direction to provider led 16 to 19 Bursary Fund

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsidised travel cards for Young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) • Active Travel Strategy • Vacant Seat Payment Scheme • Care to Learn • Alternative Support for those learners requiring additional assistance <p>Where exceptional need is identified, the proposed policy allows for consideration of a KCC provided vehicle. The policy also continues to provide an opportunity for learner to appeal to an independent panel where they feel that the provided support remains insufficient.</p> <p>While travel training may not be appropriate to all learners, the proposed changes would allow travel training to be provided to suitable learners at an earlier stage in their education, providing them important life skills more quickly.</p>
Understand it's expensive for KCC / there are budget restrictions	N/A
Would welcome a train pass	<p>In the event a learner of sixth form age qualifies for additional support, they are not limited in how PTB funds are used, including type of vehicle and accompanying support.</p> <p>Learners may also apply for the National Rail 16-17 Saver which offers similar levels of savings to KCC's 16+Travel Saver bus pass.</p> <p>KCC has engaged with different transport providers a number of times previously, but train companies have been unwilling to provide lower cost passes.</p>

Section 2: Expectation students aged 19+ would initially apply for a discretionary bursary from their learning provider to facilitate travel before seeking support from Kent County Council (KCC). Where KCC decides to provide support beyond that provided by the learning provider, in most instances this would be in the form of a mileage payment.

Consultation feedback theme	Draft KCC response
Appears a complicated process / time consuming / concerns about application process	Learners of sixth form age and post 19 learners are already required to apply for transport on an annual basis. The proposed changes will not have any negative impact

	<p>on the application process or the time it takes to process them.</p> <p>However, it is acknowledged that it will require additional organisation to engage with learning providers before submitting an application to Kent County Council.</p> <p>Most learners in this category will have an EHCP, which means that they should have their following year's educational arrangements finalised at least 5 months before the start of the new academic year, which will provide a greater opportunity to complete these process. This will assist learners in initially applying for support via the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund.</p>
All education transport should be provided / funded by KCC / it's their responsibility	<p>KCC is not legally obliged to provide the level of support which it currently provides to post-19 learners. KCC has to assess what arrangements it is necessary to provide, and must balance a range of factors in making that assessment.</p> <p>National legislation and funding does not support an expectation that all learners should be provided fully funded transport support.</p>
Unfair / discriminatory for families / those with SEND	<p>The Equality Impact Assessment associated with this consultation acknowledges that proposals are likely to introduce new factors that learners and their families need to consider when deciding how to progress their education at sixth form age, and that they are likely to adversely impact some individuals with SEND. However, the proposals would in general (and subject to any support provided via a 16-19 bursary) continue to provide adult learners with SEND with a higher level of support than those without. In exceptional cases KCC will also consider making alternative arrangements. KCC is required to balance a number of considerations in deciding what support it is necessary to provide. As explained in the Equality Impact Assessment, KCC does not consider that the proposals are discriminatory.</p> <p>KCC is consulting a full academic year before proposed changes may be implemented to allow learners and families to select education options that can be accessed with the proposed level of support.</p>

	<p>Local authorities have a duty to encourage, enable and assist young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) to participate in education and training, up to the age of 25 but are not required to provide the level of support that KCC currently provides. Councils are also not provided dedicated funds to support transport for these learners.</p> <p>The proposals continue to provide elevated levels of support to learners with higher levels of need, ensuring all are supported to remain in education.</p> <p>However, as a result of the feedback received during the consultation, KCC have undertaken a more detailed analysis of existing pupil travel patterns. The Cabinet report and EqlA have been updated to provide a more granular analysis of the likely impact on those who have to travel further, as they are more likely to be negatively affected. This analysis identified that adult learners are more likely to be negatively impacted by these changes than learners of sixth form age, as they are more likely to have more complex transport arrangements to begin with. This analysis does also suggest that in most instances, learners who received a smaller level of support after historic policy changes continued to remain in education, although a small minority did cease to engage.</p> <p>The Equality Impact Assessment acknowledges that attendance may be impacted for some individuals, and sets out a number of ways in which the impacts of the policy would be mitigated.</p>
Making education inaccessible / young people will miss out / changes will affect attendance	
Establishments do not have the funds for this / already have a tight budget	<p>The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund is made available to learning providers by central government with the express intention of allowing them to provide financial support to help students overcome the specific financial barriers they face remaining in education, including but not limited to travel to and from school or college.</p> <p>This scheme's central funding indicates that government considers this sufficient to provide an appropriate level of support to</p>

	<p>adult learners across a range of financial needs.</p> <p>By contrast KCC is provided no direct funding for school transport for learners of sixth form age or adult learners. There is also no statutory entitlement to free transport support for these learners. While KCC has provided a higher level of support to this point, the consultation outlines why it has been necessary to reconsider what future level of support may be appropriate.</p> <p>KCC will take the outcome of an application for support via the 16-19 Bursary Fund into account in determining whether to provide additional support. This includes taking into account the fact that an application has been unsuccessful and that the individual has therefore not been able to secure support via alternative means.</p>
Young people cannot access public transport / travel independently	<p>KCC's proposed scheme includes the opportunity for bespoke travel training, to support those learners who are able to develop the necessary skills to make use of public transport.</p> <p>Where independent travel is not possible, the Bursary fund does not limit use of provided funds to specific types of transport. Where KCC assesses that any support provided to students via the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund is insufficient, learners would receive the mileage rate of 45 pence per mile. Exceptional circumstances will also be considered, and appeals processes remain available. Similarly, funds can be used to engage other third parties to support an individual learner's travel needs.</p>
Young people are entitled to an education	<p>KCC is not legally obliged to provide the level of support which it currently provides to post-19 learners. KCC has to assess what arrangements it is necessary to provide, and must balance a range of factors in making that assessment.</p> <p>National legislation and funding does not support an expectation that all learners should be provided fully funded transport support.</p>
Concerns with assessment / monitoring criteria / what are exceptional circumstances?	<p>Exceptional circumstances, by their nature, are not subject to categorisation or pre-defined criteria. KCC will consider requests for exceptional consideration on a case-by-case basis. The proposed policy makes clear that applicants should apply for</p>

	<p>support via the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund before approaching KCC for any additional support and that, in the vast majority of cases, additional support will be by way of a mileage payment.</p> <p>Policy wording has been clarified to make clear that progression for adult learners will not be directly linked to a certain qualification or career outcome.</p> <p>All policy related decisions are subject to independent Member appeal and Local Government and Social Care oversight.</p>
<p>Parents / carers affected / change working hours / give up work / can't be in two places at once</p>	<p>The Equality Impact Assessment associated with this consultation acknowledges that proposals are likely to introduce new factors that learners and their families need to consider when deciding how to progress their education at sixth form age. Additionally the Equality Impact Assessment acknowledges that families may need to change their routines to incorporate additional or longer journeys, and that this may negatively impact work or other commitments. The Equality Impact Assessment explained a number of ways in which the impacts of the policy would be mitigated.</p> <p>There is no legal entitlement to attend a specific learning provider without first considering how one might attend. It is already common practice in Kent for mainstream pupils and their families to have to manage the legal requirement to remain in education or training, without direct support from KCC to attend any learning establishment of their preference, although we acknowledge that this may be more complex or difficult in the case of individuals with additional needs. KCC will continue to provide additional support to these individuals, subject to appropriate support being provided by way of the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund.</p> <p>KCC is consulting a full academic year before proposed changes may be implemented to allow learners and families to select education options that can be accessed with the proposed level of support.</p>
<p>A bursary is discretionary / not guaranteed / establishments choose to fund or not</p>	<p>As there is no statutory entitlement to transport support for adult learners, funding</p>

	<p>is only ever provided if there is demonstrable need.</p> <p>The government funded 16 to 19 Bursary is intended to support adult learners with SEND including EHCPs to continue to engage with education. There is therefore an expectation funding will be provided where a clear need can be evidenced. In the event providers do not provide support via the 16 to 19 Bursary, adult learners can then apply to Kent County Council for consideration.</p>
<p>Special schools are often further away / are few & far between / little choice where to send young people</p>	<p>The Equality Impact Assessment associated with this consultation acknowledges that proposals are likely to introduce new factors that learners and their families need to consider when deciding how to progress their education at sixth form age.</p> <p>There is no legal entitlement to attend a specific learning provider without first considering how one might attend.</p> <p>As mileage payments are made on the basis of specific journeys, those with longer journeys will receive a higher level of support.</p> <p>As a result of the feedback received during the consultation, KCC have undertaken a more detailed analysis of existing pupil travel patterns, allowing a more granular analysis of the likely impact on those who have to travel further, as they are more likely to be negatively affected. This analysis suggests that the majority of learners travel fewer than 15 miles to their place of learning, but that more adult learners travel further than learners of sixth form age.</p> <p>However, balancing these impacts with the aims and objectives of the proposals, it is not considered that any further changes should be made to the proposed policy. KCC is consulting a full academic year before proposed changes may be implemented to allow learners and families to select education options that can be accessed with the proposed level of support.</p>
<p>Difficulty in arranging alternative transport</p>	<p>KCC provides online tools that support learners and their families when considering school travel planning</p>

Agree with bursary / good idea	N/A
Bursary is not appropriate / would not work / would be insufficient	<p>The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund is made available to learning providers by central government with the express intention of allowing them to provide financial support to help students overcome the specific financial barriers they face remaining in education, including but not limited to travel to and from school or college.</p> <p>In the event that any support provided to learners via the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund is insufficient to facilitate a person's attendance at their place or education or training, they can apply to KCC which will consider whether additional support is necessary.</p> <p>Additionally, where exceptional need is identified, the proposed policy allows for consideration of a KCC provided vehicle. The policy also continues to provide an opportunity for learner to appeal to an independent panel where they feel that the provided support remains insufficient.</p>
Establishments are not on public transport routes / not accessible by public transport	<p>As outlined in the main Cabinet paper, Post 16 learning providers engaged via the consultation process to suggest adjustments that would allow schools to offer an alternative to KCC provided support. The policy proposals have therefore been adjusted to allow the development of bespoke, school-led transport alternatives. This will allow less-accessible establishments to work in conjunction with KCC to maintain accessible links for students.</p> <p>Support provided by KCC is not limited to use on public transport, so any available funds could be allocated to other transport solutions.</p>
Families cannot afford to pay for transport / bursary will not cover costs	<p>The 16 to 19 Bursary Fund is made available to learning providers by central government with the express intention of allowing them to provide financial support to help students overcome the specific financial barriers they face remaining in education, including but not limited to travel to and from school or college.</p> <p>In the event that any support provided to learners via the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund is insufficient to facilitate a person's attendance at their place or education or</p>

	<p>training, they can apply to KCC which will consider whether additional support is necessary.</p> <p>However, balancing the likely impacts on those affected with the aims and objectives of the proposal, it is not considered that any further changes should be made to the proposed policy. Learners will receive mileage payments, so longer journeys will result in a higher level of support from KCC. In addition, those learners travelling further are more likely to receive support from the 16 to 19 Bursary.</p> <p>Where exceptional need is identified, the proposed policy allows for consideration of a KCC provided vehicle. The policy also continues to provide an opportunity for learner to appeal to an independent panel where they feel that the provided support remains insufficient.</p>
If claiming retrospectively, cannot afford to fund it in the first place	<p>Mileage payments will be made termly following the provision of fuel receipts. We acknowledge that learners may face additional financial challenge while awaiting repayment.</p> <p>Learners facing this level of financial challenge are more likely to qualify for the 16 to 19 Bursary, which means that funds will be made available, which may help mitigate this issue.</p> <p>Where exceptional need is identified, the proposed policy allows for consideration of alternative forms of support. The policy also continues to provide an opportunity for learner to appeal to an independent panel where they feel that the provided support remains insufficient.</p>
Affect young people in the long term / future / detrimental in the long term	<p>The Equality Impact Assessment associated with this consultation acknowledges that proposals are likely to introduce new factors that learners and their families need to consider when deciding how to progress their education at sixth form age. The Equality Impact Assessment also acknowledges the different ways in which individuals may be affected by the proposals. However, KCC must assess what support it is necessary to provide and balance a range of factors and considerations in doing so.</p> <p>KCC is consulting a full academic year before proposed changes may be</p>

	<p>implemented to allow learners and families to select education options that can be accessed with the proposed level of support.</p> <p>Adult learners with SEND including those with EHCPs will in general continue to receive a higher level of support than those without</p>
KCC should not be funding transport	<p>While KCC is not directly funded to provide transport, it does have a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport or other support that the authority considers it necessary to make to facilitate the attendance of individuals within this cohort. KCC also has general duties to encourage, enable and assist young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) to participate in education and training, up to the age of 25.</p>
Cannot apply a one-size fits all approach / all young people are different / have different needs	<p>The proposed policy statement provides a range of transport support options that are targeted to ensure support for learners with a full spectrum of need. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direction to provider led 16 to 19 Bursary Fund • Active Travel Strategy • Care to Learn, for young parents under 20. • Alternative Support for those learners requiring additional assistance <p>Similarly, as mileage payments are made on the basis of specific journeys, those with longer journeys will receive a higher level of support.</p> <p>Where exceptional need is identified, the proposed policy allows for consideration of a KCC provided vehicle. The policy also continues to provide an opportunity for learner to appeal to an independent panel where they feel that the provided support remains insufficient.</p>
Safety issues / safeguarding / vulnerable at risk when travelling	<p>Proposals include access to independent travel training for learners, to help them navigate public based transport options. However, the 16-19 Bursary Fund does not limit use of provided funds to specific types of transport. Funds can be used to engage other third parties to support an individual learners travel needs.</p>

KCC abandoning / neglecting young people	<p>KCC is not abandoning or neglecting young people, although it has carefully considered, and acknowledges, the impacts of the changes.</p> <p>KCC is not legally obliged to provide the level of support which it currently provides to post-19 learners. KCC has to assess what arrangements it is necessary to provide, and must balance a range of factors in making that assessment. KCC will continue to provide additional support in the form of a mileage payment to those adult learners who qualify, and subject to the learner applying in the first instance for support via the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund.</p>
No access to own transport / cannot drive	<p>The Equality Impact Assessment associated with this consultation acknowledges that proposals are likely to introduce new factors that learners and their families need to consider when deciding how to progress their education at sixth form age.</p> <p>There is no legal entitlement to attend a specific learning provider without first considering how one might attend.</p> <p>Any funding received from the 16 to 19 Bursary or KCC provided payment could be put towards alternative travel arrangements, including third party providers.</p> <p>KCC is consulting a full academic year before proposed changes may be implemented to allow learners and families to select education options that can be accessed with the proposed level of support.</p>
Happy to contribute to cost of transport	N/A
Personal Transport Budget would be preferable	<p>Where exceptional need is identified, the proposed policy allows for consideration of alternative forms of support. The policy also continues to provide an opportunity for learner to appeal to an independent panel where they feel that the provided support remains insufficient.</p>

Section 3: General feedback

Consultation feedback theme	Draft KCC response
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All education transport should be provided / funded by KCC	We have responded to this element of consultation feedback, in respect of both cohorts affected by the changes, above
Unfair / discriminatory to those with SEND / all have different needs	We have responded to this element of consultation feedback, in respect of both cohorts affected by the changes, above
Young people are entitled to an education / right to maximise opportunities in life	We have responded to this element of consultation feedback, in respect of both cohorts affected by the changes, above
Most vulnerable will be affected by this / removing support from those who need it	We have responded to this element of consultation feedback, in respect of both cohorts affected by the changes, above
Making education inaccessible	We have responded to this element of consultation feedback, in respect of both cohorts affected by the changes, above
KCC just want to save money / stop cutting funding	<p>The consultation outlines the detrimental impact if KCC continues to provide transport support to learners of sixth form age and adult learners.</p> <p>No council wishes to reduce a level of provision that constituents have become accustomed to, especially where it provides beneficial support to increase educational opportunities. However, it is vital that any offer is sustainable.</p> <p>KCC is not provided direct funding for this area of transport support. This means the only alternative to proposals would be to either reduce funding support in other areas of the council or increase council tax.</p> <p>The consultation document also explained the other factors, beyond purely financial considerations, which informed KCC's development of the proposals.</p>
Parents / carers affected / change working hours / give up work / can't be in two places at once	We have responded to this element of consultation feedback, in respect of both cohorts affected by the changes, above
Cannot access public transport / travel independently / travel training would not work	We have responded to this element of consultation feedback, in respect of both cohorts affected by the changes, above
KCC should save money elsewhere / not waste money	<p>The Cabinet paper outlines that KCC has been required to find almost £1 Billion in savings since 2011. These savings are a requirement of the reduced funding councils have received from central Government during that period.</p> <p>KCC has protected investment in Post 16 transport during this period, however, the consultation outlines why this is no longer sustainable, and the negative consequences for all residents if it were to continue.</p>

Detrimental in the long term / affect their future	We have responded to this element of consultation feedback, in respect of both cohorts affected by the changes, above
Bursary would be insufficient / not cover costs	We have responded to this element of consultation feedback, in respect of both cohorts affected by the changes, above
Safety issues / safeguarding / vulnerable at risk when travelling	We have responded to this element of consultation feedback, in respect of both cohorts affected by the changes, above
KCC's responsibility / should not all be the family/carers / KCC have better resources	We have responded to this element of consultation feedback, in respect of both cohorts affected by the changes, above
Provide minibuses to establishments to collect young people en route	Following consultation responses from the education sector, policy proposals have been adjusted to allow the development of bespoke, school-led transport alternatives to a PTB/Bursary. This will allow less-accessible establishments to work in conjunction with KCC to maintain accessible links for students and will likely result in them using KCC provided funding to secure their own minibuses, or facilitate the wider use of existing vehicles.
What are exceptional circumstances? Definition required	Exceptional circumstances, by their nature, are not subject to categorisation or pre-defined criteria. Proposed policy makes clear that it is expected that most pupils will be provided a Personal Transport Budget where they are identified as benefiting from increased levels of support. All policy related decisions are subject to independent Member appeal and Local Government and Social Care oversight.
PTB / bursary are insufficient to cover travel costs / £600 contribution is too much	We have responded to this element of consultation feedback, in respect of both cohorts affected by the changes, above
Young people qualifying for PIP / have an EHCP should continue to receive funded transport	We have responded to this element of consultation feedback, in respect of both cohorts affected by the changes, above
Should be on a case by case basis	The proposed policy will consider learners on a case by case basis
Happy to contribute to cost of transport if KCC organise it	While KCC has provided a higher level of support to this point, the consultation outlines why it has been necessary to reconsider what future level of support may be appropriate. The Cabinet paper outlines how increasing the contribution cost was considered, but found to be less suitable overall than the proposed changes.
Special schools are few & far between / little choice where to send young people / lack of public transport to them	We have responded to this element of consultation feedback, in respect of both cohorts affected by the changes, above

Legally obligated to be in education until 19	We have responded to this element of consultation feedback, in respect of both cohorts affected by the changes, above
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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Beverley Fordham, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills

DECISION NO:

25/00045

For publication *[Do not include information which is exempt from publication under schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972]*

Key decision: YES

Key decision criteria. The decision will:

- a) *be significant in terms of its effects on a significant proportion of the community living or working within two or more electoral divisions – which will include those decisions that involve:*
- the adoption or significant amendment of major strategies or frameworks;*
 - significant service developments, significant service reductions, or significant changes in the way that services are delivered, whether County-wide or in a particular locality.*

Subject Matter / Title of Decision: Post 16 Transport Policy Statement including Post 19 for 2026/27

Decision: As Cabinet Member for Education and Skills I agree to:

1. Approve the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement including Post 19 for 2026/27, and the activity required to deliver future implementation.
2. Delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education to take other necessary actions, including but not limited to entering into relevant contracts or other legal agreements, including Service Level agreements (SLAs), and ensure sufficient administrative capacity, as necessary to implement this decision.

Reason(s) for decision:

Background

KCC has a duty to consider what support it is necessary to provide to facilitate each young person's attendance. Historically, KCC has offered more direct support for some Post 16 learners, particularly those with SEND including EHCPs. This meant that their transport has remained very similar after they turn 16, even though there is no legal requirement to provide that level of support. This offer has never been universal, with only a small proportion of learners getting this additional level of support. Most learners of sixth form age, including the majority of those with SEND including EHCPs are currently expected to make their own arrangements.

However, since 2018, Kent has seen over an 80% increase in the number of children aged 16 and above with an EHCP. The provision of transport for this group is inevitably more complex, which means that it usually requires more resources to fulfil. KCC is not provided with dedicated funds for Post 16 transport, which means that any additional offer that KCC makes must come from its general funds, namely the Council Tax that it collects from local residents and government grants. As a result, we need to ensure that our policy and transport services are both appropriate to meet the specific travel needs of learners and are sustainable now and in the future.

KCC held a public consultation between 27 January and 23 March 2025 to outline its proposed transport policy for 2026/27.

The key drivers for the proposed changes are as follows: promoting independence; rebalancing KCC's offer to learners of sixth form age and adult learners; and financial sustainability. These were explained in more detail in related consultation materials and the cabinet paper that will accompany this decision.

The structure of KCC's standard offer of support to both learners of sixth form age and adult learners is proposed to remain unchanged for 2026/27. KCC is also not proposing to alter the criteria it will apply in determining which learners receive support. This means the same learners will be identified for additional support under the proposed policy.

However, there is no legal definition of what level of support should be provided to these learners where KCC considers that alternative support should be provided. The consultation proposed the following changes to how Kent would provide alternative support to these learners

Proposed 2026-27 changes for Learners of Sixth Form Age

The proposed policy would make Personal Transport Budgets (PTBs) KCC's default offer to learners who qualify for additional support, to facilitate their travel to their place of education. This means a KCC organised vehicle would only be provided in exceptional circumstances, rather than to the majority of pupils that qualify for additional support, as is currently the practice.

Proposed 2026-27 changes for Adult Learners

The proposed policy would make two main changes to the support provided to adult learners, as follows:

- Adult Learners would be expected to apply for support via the Government funded 16 to 19 Bursary Fund from their learning provider before approaching KCC for any additional support. The 16 to 19 Bursary fund is national funding provided to learning providers to support a range of needs including transport.
- Where KCC assesses that any support provided to students via the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund is insufficient to facilitate a student's attendance at school, college or training, consideration would be given to support in the form of a mileage payment. KCC would offer a mileage payment, as standard. Under the proposed policy, KCC would generally no longer make transport arrangements for individuals to whom it provides support. KCC would only consider providing transport in exceptional circumstances.

It is also recommended that the Assistant Director for Fair Access and SEN Processes works in conjunction with learning providers to develop and fund cost effective bespoke school led transport options that increase transport options for learners. This requires delegated authority to the Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education, to enter into relevant contracts or other legal agreements, including Service Level agreements (SLAs), and ensure sufficient administrative capacity, as necessary to implement this decision.

Equality Implications

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed to assess the potential impact these proposals could have on individuals with protected characteristics, which has been published alongside the consultation document and can be found on the consultation webpage.

KCC's EqIA assesses that the proposed changes would negatively impact those with the protected characteristics of age, disability, sex and race. It sets out proposed mitigating actions in respect of each of those characteristics. The EqIA also assesses the potential impacts on the proposals on the

three equality needs: eliminating discrimination; promoting equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations between different protected groups.

Financial Implications

The Home to School Transport net budget is £97.7m for 2025-26. There are no specific grants for home to school transport and the Council are expected to fund their responsibilities through the General Fund (Council Tax and other wider council funding) or where applicable, parental contributions. This budget covers mainstream, post 16 and SEN transport for eligible children aged up to 25.

The Council currently spends approximately £10m per annum on Post 16 transport to schools and further education providers. Estimated total cost reductions from this proposal on home to school transport could be up to £6m per year (when fully implemented). This would include savings of approximately £4m a year based on around 900 learners of sixth form age receiving support by way of a PTB rather than transport arranged by KCC; and approximately £2m a year based on around 600 adult learners receiving support by way of a bursary from their education provider, or mileage payments rather than transport arranged by KCC.

It is recognised that in some individual cases, the proposed reduction in support may give rise to a need to access other KCC services, such as children's or adult social care. However, this would have to be assessed on an individual basis. Of the 1,500 young people currently eligible for post 16 transport, 335 are open to either children's or adult social care (around 20% of the cohort). An initial analysis of the impact of changes to the Post 16 policy (introduction to charging and restriction of post 19 transport eligibility) from September 2025, indicated an additional cost to social care of around £70,000 per annum affecting around 10 young people, in addition to £240k of alternative transport arrangements (outlined in section 6.14). This is less than 1% of the total cohort. The total estimated annual saving to home to school transport from the September 2025 post 16 changes was £1.4m. Therefore these extra costs equate to around 20% of the saving. Therefore, it is recommended a combined risk annual contingency of £1.3m (20%) is also provided to mitigate against additional costs in other parts of the council and where continued provision of transport may be agreed for those with exceptional circumstances. If the contingency is fully utilised this will reduce the estimated annual saving from £6m to £4.7m. The contingency is only an estimate and the final savings may be more or less depending on individual circumstances including the proportion of individuals who receive support via college bursary funding and whom KCC will no longer support.

Legal Implications

The requirements placed on a local authority are defined in the Education Act 1996 (as amended), Education and Skills Act 2008, Education and Inspections Act 2006, Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 and the Equality Act 2010.

Local authorities do not have a general obligation to provide council tax funded or subsidised post 16 travel support but do have a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport or other support that the authority considers it necessary to make to facilitate the attendance of all persons of sixth form age receiving education or training.

The policy statement also sets out the duties on the LA to consider requests for transport support. KCC is required to enable access to education and will consider applications for support where a Kent 16+ Travel Saver pass is not suitable. Where support is agreed, the policy makes clear that learners will initially be assessed for Travel Training and alternative transport arrangements will only be provided where this training is not appropriate. Where additional support is refused learners can appeal to the Transport Regulation Committee Appeal Panel.

Local authorities also have a duty to encourage, enable and assist young people with Special

Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) to participate in education and training, up to the age of 25.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

A public consultation was held between 27 January and 23 March 2025

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

Increase the current contribution required from Post 16 learners:

In order to meet the financial challenges set out above, KCC could increase the level of contribution that applicants are asked to make towards each young person's transport arrangements.

There are currently 6,625 families across Kent that make use of a K16+ Travel Saver, compared to 1,497 families that are provided subsidised KCC transport. This means the total number of learners of sixth form age receiving some level of transport support from KCC is 8,122. To achieve the same level of impact as the proposed change, if KCC continued to require equivalent contributions from those who do and do not receive additional support, KCC would be required to increase the overall cost of both the K16+ Travel Saver and contribution by approximately £760 per learner. When considering that the current cost of a K16+ Travel Saver and contribution is £600, this would raise to £1,360 per annum per learner.

KCC also considered an alternative approach of limiting the contribution increases to those families that receive a higher level of support, as this would protect the ongoing viability of the K16+ Travel Saver pass. However, if KCC took this approach, the contribution would need to increase around £4,250 per person to an annual fee of £4,850, or around £1,600 per term. If KCC were to offer a lower contribution level to low income families, this amount would rise further for other learners. The average cost of transport for learners of sixth form age receiving additional support is £8,200, so this would still reflect an average subsidy of around 40% per learner. However, this would be the equivalent of over an eight-fold increase in the level of parental contribution.

As a PTB proactively provides families with additional funds to support the arrangements made for learners of sixth form age to attend education or training, officers consider that this would be preferable to the significant contribution necessary to maintain the current system and make an equivalent contribution to financial sustainability. We explained this to the public as part of the consultation and consultees were able to express their views.

Maintain current level of support:

KCC is facing considerable financial challenges across the majority of its portfolio. KCC could only continue to provide the current level of transport subsidy to this cohort of sixth form aged and young adult learners if savings were made elsewhere within the council.

The Council has set out the size of the financial challenge and the breadth of service areas that have been considered and will be expected to deliver savings in the Council document "[Securing Kent's Future](#)" agreed at Cabinet in October 2023. This document updated, the Council's ambitions in light of the changed financial landscape and the significance of adults & children's social care delivery within the Council's budget, by prioritizing "the delivery of the new models of care and support" objective within the "[Framing Kent's Future](#)" Strategic Statement. This has created an expectation that council services across all directorates must prioritize delivering this objective as a collective enterprise. This does not mean that the other objectives in "Framing Kent's Future" are not still important but the scope of these may have to be scaled back with policy ambitions in other areas becoming more limited. The provision of Post 16 Transport is connected to the Kent's objectives for "levelling up and infrastructure for communities". The proposals outlined in this report meet

objectives 2 & 3 of the Securing Kent's Future document relating to Service Transformation (delivering savings from identified opportunity areas to set a sustainable budget and MTFP) and Policy Choices & Scope of Council ambitions (evaluation of statutory minimum requirements & review of discretionary spending). Other service areas are already being expected to deliver their own savings, with the agreed Medium Term Financial Plan setting out the expectation of delivering around £160m of savings across the Council over the next 3 years. Maintaining the current level of support would also not contribute to achieving the other objectives explained above.

The consultation provided respondents with an opportunity to comment on these discounted options and present alternative suggestions. Consultation responses are addressed in Section 6 of the Cabinet Paper.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

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signed

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date

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Equality Impact Assessment



Section A

1. Name of Activity (EQIA Title):

Post 16 Transport Policy Consultation

2. Directorate

Children, Young People & Education (CYPE)

3. Responsible Service/Division

Education and SEND

Accountability and Responsibility

4. Officer completing EQIA

Note: This should be the name of the officer who will be submitting the EQIA onto the App.

Krystle Davies – Transport Eligibility Operations Manager

5. Head of Service

Note: This should be the Head of Service who will be approving your submitted EQIA.

Craig Chapman - Assistant Director Fair Access and (Interim) SEN Processes

6. Director of Service

Note: This should be the name of your responsible director.

Christine McInnes – Director of Education and SEN, CYPE

The type of Activity you are undertaking

7. What type of activity are you undertaking?

Service Change – *operational changes in the way we deliver the service to people.* Answer Yes/No

Yes/No

NO

Service Redesign – *restructure, new operating model or changes to ways of working.* Answer Yes/No

Yes/No

NO

Project/Programme – *includes limited delivery of change activity, including partnership projects, external funding projects and capital projects.* Answer Yes/No

NO

Commissioning/Procurement – *means commissioning activity which requires commercial judgement.* Answer Yes/No

NO

Strategy /Policy – *includes review, refresh or creating a new document.* Answer Yes/No

Yes

Other – Please add details of any other activity type here.

8. Aims and Objectives and Equality Recommendations – Note: You will be asked to give a brief description of the aims and objectives of your activity in this section of the App, along with the Equality recommendations. You may use this section to also add any context you feel may be required.

This Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been developed in conjunction with proposals that address how KCC may provide transport support to learners of sixth-form age and young adults

from September 2026. These proposals were subject to a consultation that took place between 27 January and 23 March 2025. The [consultation document can be found on the web page](#). Following this consultation, this EqlA was updated in conjunction with the development of Cabinet Papers that will support the formal decision making process by elected Members of Kent County Council. Key points are replicated here in summary, and links to more detailed explanations are referenced where appropriate. Where this EqlA was updated as a result of consultation feedback and additional Officer analysis, this will be highlighted in the relevant section below.

Current Offer

Section 1 of the Cabinet Paper outlines the features of KCC's current transport policy statement for learners of sixth-form age and adult learners. KCC and others offer a range of different types of support including:

- Kent 16+ Travel Saver (K16+TS)
- Access to 16 to 19 Bursary Fund
- Dedicated support for Young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)
- Active Travel options
- Vacant Seats Payment Scheme
- Care to Learn
- Travel Training
- Personal Transport Budgets
- Mileage Payments
- Access to a vehicle organised and paid for by KCC

Learners of sixth form age and adult learners can apply to KCC if they consider they require additional support in accessing learning. These applications are then assessed in line with criteria within the policy, KCC may then decide to provide additional support and will then identify the most appropriate option from the list above.

All support options are currently subject to a contribution of an equivalent cost to the Kent Travel Saver.

Proposed changes:

Section 3 of the Cabinet Paper outlines the changes that KCC proposed. As KCC is required to consult on this transport policy statement annually, it was necessary to consult on both the 2025/26 and 2026/27 policy at the same time.

Proposed 2025/26 changes

KCC did not propose to make any substantive changes to the 2025-26 Post 16 Transport Policy Statement. The policy clarified some wording relating to how contributions and refunds are made, to better explain these processes. It also included some limited new wording to explain KCC's current approach more clearly. Because no substantive changes were proposed it was not anticipated that there were any particular further impacts on protected groups.

Proposed 2026/27 changes

Proposed 2026/27 changes for individuals of sixth form age

KCC proposed to provide a Personal Transport Budget (PTB) to learners who qualify for additional support from KCC, to facilitate their travel to their place of education, rather than the forms of support we currently offer. KCC proposed that a PTB would be its standard offer of additional support. A KCC organised vehicle would only be provided in exceptional circumstances.

Kent's PTB scheme has been operating for over 10 years and is already an established feature of our transport policy. Payments are made on the basis of the straight-line distance between the applicant's home and their main educational establishment or training provider in the Bands set out in the table below. An initial contribution is required which is equivalent to the full cost of the K16+ Travel Saver pass, including with appropriate adjustment to the rates for low income applicants, for the academic year that the application is being made.

The K16+TS cost is subject to change annually and can be found [here](#). However, it is currently up to £600 per annum. While actual PTB funding levels will be confirmed when K16+TS costs are finalised in June/July 2026, the following table gives an indication based on current costs. The amounts set out are the proposed amounts for 2026/27 and are subject to change:

	Annual Fund	Total Annual Fund minus contribution (eg £600)	Total Annual Fund minus low income contribution (eg £300)
Band 1 – Less than 5 miles	£2,000	£1,400	£1,700
Band 2 – Between 5 and 10 miles	£3,000	£2,400	£2,700
Band 3 – Over 10 miles	£5,000	£4,400	£4,700

Proposed 2026/27 changes for Adult Learners

KCC proposed to make two main changes to the support provided to adult learners, as follows:

- Firstly, KCC proposed to set out in the 2026/27 Transport Policy Statement an expectation that students aged 19+ apply for support via the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund from their learning provider before approaching KCC for any additional support. Applicants would be expected to provide evidence that they have sought support via the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund when submitting an application for support to KCC.
- Secondly, where KCC assesses that any support provided to students via the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund is insufficient to facilitate a student's attendance at school, college or training, consideration would be given to support in the form of a mileage payment. KCC proposed to offer a mileage payment, as standard. Under the proposed policy, KCC would generally no longer

make transport arrangements for individuals to whom it provides support. KCC would only consider providing transport in exceptional circumstances.

Summary of Proposed Changes for Learners of Sixth-Form Age and Adult Learners

Age range	Current arrangements	Proposed changes
16-18 and 19 (if the course stated before the learner's 19 th birthday)	Where a learner of sixth-form age can demonstrate that a Kent 16+ Travel Saver, 16-19 Bursary, Care to Learn, Active Travel, Independent Travel Training or Vacant Seat Payment Scheme is not sufficient to facilitate their access to their place of education, KCC will consider making alternative arrangements. These include a Personal Transport Budget, a mileage payment or provision of a vehicle organised and paid for by KCC, all subject to a contribution of up to the total cost of a Kent 16+Travel Saver (currently £600).	Where a learner of sixth-form age can demonstrate that a Kent 16+ Travel Saver, 16-19 Bursary, Care to Learn, Active Travel, Independent Travel Training or Vacant Seat Payment Scheme is not sufficient to facilitate their access to their place of education, KCC will consider making alternative arrangements. In most instances this will be a Personal Transport Budget. In exceptional circumstances, KCC may consider provision of a vehicle organised and paid for by KCC. Both offers are subject to a contribution of up to the total cost of a Kent 16+Travel Saver (currently £600).
Adult Learners	Where adult learners with SEND (including those with an EHCP) can demonstrate that they continue to require support to access their place of education, KCC will consider making alternative arrangements. These include a Personal Transport Budget, a mileage payment, or provision of a vehicle	Where adult learners with SEND (including those with an EHCP) can demonstrate that they continue to require support to access their place of education following a formal request to their provider for a 16-19 Bursary, KCC will consider making alternative arrangements. In most instances this will be a mileage payment paid termly, subject to a contribution of up to the

	<p>organised and paid for by KCC,</p> <p>For the purposes of deciding whether to make transport arrangements, KCC would not consider it necessary, other than in exceptional circumstances, for a young adult learner to attend an additional Further Education course at the same level or equivalent where the learner had previously attended and completed a course at an establishment within the Further Education sector.</p>	<p>total cost of a Kent 16+ Travel Saver (currently £600). In exceptional circumstances, KCC may consider provision of a vehicle organised and paid for by KCC.</p> <p>For the purposes of deciding whether to provide transport support, KCC would not consider it necessary, other than in exceptional circumstances, for a young adult learner to attend an additional Further Education course at the same level or equivalent where the learner had previously attended and completed a course at an establishment within the Further Education sector.</p>
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Rationale for changes:

Section 2 of the Cabinet Report explains the rationale for proposing these changes, but they can be summarised as follows:

Promoting Independence – KCC will be able to reallocate staffing capacity related to travel training to an earlier point in learners' education, providing vital independence skills sooner

Rebalancing Kent's offer to learners of sixth-form age and adult learners – the proposed changes would address the significant disparity between levels of expenditure on those with and without additional needs for support, which has increased in recent years, while continuing to ensure that learners with the highest need get additional support.

Sustainability of KCC resources – KCC faces a considerable financial challenge. These changes will address the doubling of cost associated with transport for learners of sixth-form age and adult learners since 2018. It is estimated that the proposals will save KCC in the region of £6.0m annually.

This EqlA is intended to help KCC have 'due regard' to the three equality needs set out in section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010. These are: eliminating discrimination; promoting equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations between different protected groups. This EqlA has been conducted with these three equality needs in mind.

Identified Impacts:

Section 5 of the Cabinet Report sets out KCC's initial assessment of potential impacts of these changes. Section 6 of the Cabinet Report outlines how this assessment developed as a result of consultation feedback. Both sections should be read in conjunction with the individual demographic assessments below to gain a full understanding of this assessment. As KCC is required to consult on its Post 16 Transport Policy Statement on an annual basis, it should be noted that this EqlA will remain relevant for future consultation purposes and will be updated in the event new themes are identified.

Pre-consultation analysis of impact for 2025-26

Officers do not consider that any equality impacts arise from its proposed changes for 2025-26, which are not substantive and simply clarify KCC's current processes and policy approach.

Post-consultation analysis of impact for 2025-26

Officers did not identify any additional themes or impacts during the consultation process. Pre-consultation analysis therefore remains unchanged and members should consider this as final when reaching a final policy decision.

Pre-consultation analysis of impact for 2026-27

. Impacts should be considered as affecting both pupils of sixth-form age and adult learners, unless specifically stated. Similarly, impacts are likely to be of greater significance for adult learners, compared to learners of sixth-form age, given that mileage payments are in most instances lower than an equivalent PTB payment. In summary, the main impacts would be as follows:

- The support provided by KCC would be lower than the average cost of transport currently provided. This means it is unlikely that learners would be able to replicate current arrangements solely with the PTB or mileage payment provided
- It is expected that making arrangements for learners to gain access to their place of learning would be more complex than current arrangements, requiring families to play a more active role in deciding the best options given their circumstances. This may negatively impact school attendance where alternative arrangements are not made in similar timescales to KCC provided options. However, there is also some potential that these changes may encourage more efficient opportunities that would otherwise have not been considered.
- Families may need to change their routines to incorporate additional or longer journeys. This may negatively impact work or other commitments that have been possible where KCC took a greater hand in getting their child to their place of learning.
- Learners' transport arrangements may take longer, or they may have to travel further, especially if they may use of public transport instead of more direct options.
- There is some potential that learners may have a reduced access to select schools of their preference. This may have a negative impact on equality of opportunity. However, KCC provided support could still facilitate access to establishments that would otherwise not be accessible.
- In instances where families do not feel they can make, or cannot make, alternative arrangements, changes to transport could result in a learner ceasing to remain in education. When KCC introduced a mandatory contribution for Post 16 transport and adjusted the offer to Adult Learners for the 2024-25 academic year, the overall cohort size

reduced by around 8%, although annual variations could account for some of this disparity. This may also have a negative impact on equality of opportunity.

- The proposals are likely to have a negative impact on the fostering of good relations. KCC has provided a generous offer to learners of sixth-form age and adult learners for many years and it is to be expected that any change will be difficult to accept. The consultation document explained why these changes were provisionally considered necessary.

Post-consultation Impact for 2026/27

As with pre-consultation analysis, impacts should be considered as affecting both pupils of sixth-form age and adult learners, unless specifically stated. Similarly, impacts are likely to be of greater significance for adult learners, compared to learners of sixth-form age, given that mileage payments are in most instances lower than an equivalent PTB payment. More detailed analysis of these findings can be found in the relevant sections below. In summary, the main additional impacts identified during and after the consultation include:

- Post-consultation analysis shows that adult learners travel slightly further on average than learners of sixth form age. This suggests a potential for adult learners to have slightly more complex travel arrangements than learners of sixth form age, which in turn means that they are more likely to be negatively impacted by proposed changes. This could negatively impact attendance, school preference options and complexity of travel arrangements more for this group.
- While it was previously identified that pupils may have to travel longer, or undertake more complex travel arrangements as a result of the proposed changes, consultation analysis highlighted that these pupils are already potentially more likely to undertake longer journeys as a result of the reduced school options available to them, particularly those attending specialist provision. This is likely to compound the impact on those affected by the proposals.
- Consultees highlighted that both groups of learners may face increased safeguarding risks. This could be as a result of travelling in new ways, adapting to change, or the increased chance of engaging with unknown third parties during daily journeys.
- Pupils travelling further distances will be affected differently, due to the differences between the offer available to learners of sixth form age and adult learners.
- Adult learners will face a more complex application process, as they may be required to interact with two organisations to receive the full level of travel support.
- Further analysis of the responding consultation cohort shows that the largest proportion of respondents who disagreed with proposals were aged 41-55, which falls into expected working age ranges. These are likely parents who have conflicting working and child care responsibilities. However, older respondents, who could be grandparents or carers with either formal or informal parental responsibility, may also be negatively affected.
- Negative impacts from proposed changes are more likely to affect families where parents/carers also have SEND.

Insofar this EqIA assesses that protected groups may be placed at a particular disadvantage, officers consider that the proposals are objectively justified so as not to give rise to discrimination. This is because the proposals are pursuing the legitimate aims of promoting independence, rebalancing KCC's approach to this area of transport and financial sustainability to ensure KCC can continue to provide support to all learners, which would otherwise be jeopardised if its current

approach continued. In addition, while most individuals within the relevant two cohorts will have any additional support assessed and provided in different ways, officers consider that this is justified, including in light of the general expectation of growing independence as learners age and mature. Officers additionally consider the proposals are a proportionate means of achieving KCC's objectives, including in light of the mitigations set out in the EqIA below.

Section B – Evidence

9. Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity? *Answer: Yes/No*

Yes

10. Is it possible to get the data in a timely and cost-effective way? *Answer: Yes/No*

Yes

11. Is there national evidence/data that you can use? *Answer: Yes/No*

Yes

12. Have you consulted with Stakeholders?

Answer: Yes/No

Stakeholders are those who have a stake or interest in your project which could be residents, service users, staff, members, statutory and other organisations, VCSE partners etc.

Yes

13. Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

Please give details in the box provided. This may be details of those you have already involved, consulted and engaged with or who you intend to do so with in the future. If the answer to question 12 is 'No', please explain why.

Public consultation took place between 27 January and 23 March 2025

Stakeholders included:

- Parents and guardians of mainstream and SEND pupils
- Pupils
- Schools and further education providers, including governing bodies
- Bus Operators
- District and Borough Councils
- Parish and Town Councils
- Kent PACT
- Parent carer forums
- Information, Advice and Support Kent (IASK)

As part of the public consultation stakeholders were invited to provide their views on this EqIA. This EqIA has been updated to take account of the views of consultees and stakeholders, with additions clearly identified within appropriately titled sections.

14. Has there been a previous equality analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years? *Answer: Yes/No*

Yes – Post 16 Transport Policy Statement including Post 19 - Public Consultation January-March 2023

15. Do you have evidence/data that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?

Answer: Yes/No

Yes, we have data regarding the students impacted from the previous policy change in September 2024, monitoring is continuing as the policy imbeds further. Following the consultation, route analyses were completed for learners of sixth form age and adult learners, to deepen the understanding of the likely impact on each cohort, as well as respond to new themes that were identified. These are outlined in the relevant section below.

Uploading Evidence/Data/related information into the App

Note: At this point, you will be asked to upload the evidence/ data and related information that you feel should sit alongside the EQIA that can help understand the potential impact of your activity. Please ensure that you have this information to upload as the Equality analysis cannot be sent for approval without this.

The summary of HTS Cohorts data is available as [an appendix on the webpage](#).

An independent consultation analysis has been undertaken and is provided as an appendix to the Cabinet paper related to these proposals. This includes summaries of the demographic breakdown of respondents to the consultation. Where relevant, sections below have been updated with themes derived from this data.

Section C – Impact

16. Who may be impacted by the activity? Select all that apply.

Service users/clients - *Answer: Yes/No*

Yes

Residents/Communities/Citizens - *Answer: Yes/No*

Yes

Staff/Volunteers - *Answer: Yes/No*

Yes

17. Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing? Answer: Yes/No

Yes

18. Please give details of Positive Impacts

The policy would ensure:

- Provision of support for learners of sixth-form age and young adult learners remains and offers a range of options to allow continued access to education or training
- Learners of sixth-form age and young adult learners can continue to access education and training provision that may otherwise be inaccessible without KCC provided support.
- Changes would make sure that support can be targeted to those with the highest need in a sustainable manner that does not negatively impact the council's ability to meet its wider statutory duties and provide other services
- Ensures that KCC can continue to provide timely access to a KCC organised vehicle for learners with a statutory entitlement to free school transport (namely those of compulsory school age).
- Independent Travel Training supports young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to engage in activities which support outcomes associated with growing independence and can be provided at an earlier point in each child's education as a result of the changes.

The Council recognises that Independent Travel Training has the following immediate benefits for

the student:

- Enables the students to be more independent and use his or her own initiative
- Improves self-confidence
- Enables students to access positive social, educational and professional development activities
- Reduces the student's reliance on family, friends and professionals and builds resilience.
- Helps to improve social skills and maintain relationships
- Can have physical health benefits where the student walks all or part of the way.
- To prepare children for adulthood it is expected that where appropriate, the majority of young people beyond the age of 16 will travel independently to their place of education.

Negative Impacts and Mitigating Actions

The questions in this section help to think through positive and negative impacts for people affected by your activity. Please use the Evidence you have referred to in Section B and explain the data as part of your answer.

19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age

a. Are there negative impacts for Age? Answer: Yes/No

(If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).

Yes

b. Details of Negative Impacts for Age

Proposals are based on diminishing legal entitlement to free or subsidised transport to education or training that occurs as a learner transitions to Post 16 education and beyond. As such, age presents the most significant factor to these proposals, as younger learners are not included.

While the number of pupils requiring support changes annually, as a result of normal shifting pupil demographics, there are currently the following number of learners receiving transport support by KCC which would be different if they were considered against the proposed policy:

850 Learners of sixth-form age

621 Adult learners (i.e. those aged 19-25)

Under the proposed policy, all 850 learners of sixth form age would continue to receive direct support from KCC. However, this would range from £1,400-£4,700 of direct funding dependent on their personal circumstances. In most instances these learners of sixth-form age currently are provided access to a vehicle that is organised and paid for by KCC, following a contribution ranging from £300-£600 per annum.

As KCC's proposals would expect the 621 adult learners to seek support from their provider's 16-19 Bursary fund before requesting support from KCC, it is likely that most would be negatively affected by the proposals, as most currently receive access to a vehicle that is organised and paid for by KCC and a mileage payment is unlikely to offer a similar level of support. However, in reaching the decision to require learners to first request this support, KCC was mindful that this government provided fund is identified and intended to support learners in this manner. By contrast, KCC receives no direct funding to provide support to young adult learner's transport arrangements. KCC therefore considers it appropriate for learners to seek access to these dedicated funds and for it to be cognisant of these application outcomes before further funding is provided. KCC would only decline to provide a young adult learner with additional support if these applications evidence that further support is not necessary.

Impacts listed below should be considered as affecting both pupils of sixth-form age and adult learners, unless specifically stated. Similarly, impacts are likely to be of greater significance for adult learners, compared to learners of sixth-form age, given that mileage payments are in most instances lower than an equivalent PTB payment.

In summary, the main anticipated impacts on individuals from these two age groups would be as follows:

- The support provided by KCC would be lower than the average cost of transport currently provided. This means it is unlikely that learners would be able to replicate current arrangements solely with the PTB or mileage payment provided
- It is expected that making arrangements for learners to gain access to their place of learning would be more complex than current arrangements, requiring families to play a more active role in deciding the best options given their circumstances. This may negatively impact school attendance where alternative arrangements are not made in similar timescales to KCC provided options. However, there is also some potential that these changes may encourage more efficient opportunities that would otherwise have not been considered.
- Families may need to change their routines to incorporate additional or longer journeys. This may negatively impact work or other commitments that have been possible where KCC took a greater hand in getting their child to their place of learning.
- Learners' transport arrangements may take longer, or they may have to travel further, especially if they may use of public transport instead of more direct options.
- There is some potential that learners may have a reduced access to select schools of their preference, however, KCC provided support could still facilitate access to establishments that would otherwise not be accessible.
- In instances where families do not feel they can, or cannot, make alternative arrangements, changes to transport could result in a learner ceasing to remain in education. When KCC introduced a mandatory contribution for Post 16 transport and adjusted the offer to Adult Learners for the 2024-25 academic year, the overall cohort size reduced by around 8%, although annual variations could account for some of this disparity.

Post-consultation analysis

KCC continued to monitor and analyse potential impacts on learners on the basis of their age, including on the basis of consultation responses. Further potential impacts include:

- While it was previously identified that pupils' attendance may be negatively impacted as a result of proposed changes, Officers sought to better understand how this may impact individual learners. As learners may balance any number of factors when deciding whether to continue into further stages of education, it is not possible to fully predict how the proposed changes may impact this decision making process. However, it can be assumed that those learners who are travelling further are more likely to find continued education less viable in the event the level of transport support changes, as the increased distance will likely increase the complexity of alternative arrangements. It is acknowledged that this may not be universal, as some pupils travelling longer distances may have access to more simple options, or conversely, shorter distances may still provide unique challenge, but on balance longer journeys are likely to be more challenging to learners accustomed to KCC provided vehicles.

While more granular analysis in one mile sections are included in the appendices, an overview of grouped journeys for learners of sixth form age and for adult learners shows the following:

Learners of sixth form age currently provided KCC transport support		Adult Learners currently provided KCC transport support	
Distance	Percentage of travelling Cohort	Distance	Percentage of travelling Cohort
0-5 Miles	20.60%	0-5 Miles	14.46%
5-10 Miles	27.41%	5-10 Miles	26.16%
10-15 Miles	20.17%	10-15 Miles	19.45%
15-20 Miles	16.48%	15-20 Miles	23.41%
20-25 Miles	8.10%	20-25 Miles	6.88%
25-30 Miles	2.70%	25-30 Miles	4.65%
30-35 Miles	1.42%	30-35 Miles	2.41%
35-40 Miles	0.85%	35-40 Miles	0.52%
40+ Miles	2.27%	40+ Miles	2.07%

This analysis suggests that adult learners are slightly more likely to be negatively impacted by these changes, as around 30% of learners of sixth form age travel over 15 miles to their place of learning, compared to around 40% for adult learners.

- In an effort to better understand the potential impact on learner attendance and potential cost-shunt to other KCC departments, Officers identified the behaviours of pupils who ceased to receive direct transport support following the policy revisions consulted on in 2023 and implemented in 2025. These changes introduced a new qualifying criteria for Adult Learners, which ceased provision of transport to most learners in the event they repeated a course of the same level or similar to one which they had completed previously. KCC saw a reduction in applications for this year group of roughly 8% following these changes, although this cannot necessarily be directly attributed to the changes themselves, as cohort sizes do fluctuate each year. These pupils ceased to be entitled to any support rather than the offered level of support changing, which was likely a more disruptive adjustment to those proposed in this policy. As such, it is not anticipated that these proposed changes are likely to have a larger impact than those analysed below.

621 adult learners were provided transport support under the new policy. However, Officers identified 24 adult learners who were refused transport following those changes. An analysis of these learners allows us to identify how policy changes impacted their decision to continue to engage in education, which can inform our expectations around new proposals. Of the total refused cohort, five of these adult learners requested equivalent transport from social care, of which, four were agreed at an annual cost of £100,105. Five adult learners requested direct payments to support alternative arrangements including funding personal assistants and/or their own transport arrangements. Social care agreed to all five of these requests at an annual cost of £140,011. Two of the 24 learners took the decision to move to alternative learning providers that they could more easily access. One learner made the decision to cease their education as a result of the lack of transport support. The remaining learners continued to access their place of learning in spite of the policy changes.

Officers consider that as proposed changes are not as significant as the introduction of new qualifying criteria, it is not unreasonable to expect a similar profile of impact under the new proposed policy. However, as it is not possible to accurately predict future behaviour of a cohort of pupils that may change considerably between now and the implementation of this proposed policy, Officers will keep under review the impacts of the changes once they are implemented

- Similarly, the analysis above provides additional contextual information to consider how increased travel complexity may impact learners. In particular, families are more likely to be unable, or feel unable, to support with travel arrangements the longer the young person's journey to the learning provider or place of training.
- It is also relevant to consider how the proposed funding arrangements will support learners in the two different age cohorts. For learners of sixth form age, consideration should be given to the impact on longer journeys on those learners receiving the highest level PTB. The longer the journey that individual learners face, the more strained that those finite funds will become. However, when considering adult learners, thought should be given to the fact that mileage payments will increase in parallel with journeys, even if initial funding levels are likely to start lower as they are based on a per mile payment. The uncapped and distance specific nature of the mileage payment scheme will mitigate some of the impact of adult learners traveling further.
- Adult learners will face a more complex application process, as they may be required to interact with two organisations to receive the full level of travel support.
- While it was previously identified that pupils may have to travel longer, or undertake more complex travel arrangements as a result of the proposed changes, consultation analysis highlighted that these pupils are already potentially more likely to undertake longer journeys as a result of the reduced school options available to them, particularly those attending specialist provision. This is likely to compound the impact on those affected by the proposals.
- Consultees highlighted that both groups of learners may face increased safeguarding risks. This could be as a result of travelling in new ways, adapting to change, or the increased chance of engaging with unknown third parties during daily journeys.
- Pupils travelling further distances will be affected differently, due to the differences between the offer available to learners of sixth form age and adult learners.
- The pre-consultation analysis identified that families could be negatively affected by more complex travel arrangements in a number of ways. Further analysis of the responding consultation cohort shows that the largest proportion of respondents who disagreed with proposals were aged 41-55, which falls into expected working age ranges. These are likely parents who have conflicting working and child care responsibilities. However, older respondents, who could be grandparents or carers with either formal or informal parental responsibility, may also be negatively affected.

c. Mitigating Actions for Age

It is not possible to entirely mitigate the impact of this change for all the affected young people and their families/carers. However the following elements would minimise the impact as much as possible while allowing the policy to achieve its objectives:

All applicants will have an opportunity to submit a formal request to the Assistant Direct – Fair Access for exceptional arrangements beyond those outlined within the policy's defined offer. Applicants will not be limited in what alternative arrangements they can request consideration for. This means there is potential for suitable arrangements to all applicants that can evidence

exceptional need. It is anticipated however that the vast majority of those receiving additional support from KCC will receive a PTB/mileage payment.

In all instances, including those where a formal request for exceptional arrangements is not agreed, applicants will retain the right of independent appeal to KCC's Transport Regulation Committee Appeals Panel. This provides an opportunity for Member of that panel to make their own exceptional decisions regarding individual's transport arrangements.

KCC is consulting roughly 18 months before the proposals may be implemented, to allow families to consider the implications on their future plans. This will allow learners to make plans for these stages of education with a full understanding of the level of support that will be available.

Where adult learners are not eligible for support as a result of having received support from the 16-19 Bursary Fund, the latter support will be in place, as an alternative to KCC provided support. Where support is not provided from the 16-19 Bursary Fund, KCC will consider whether there is sufficient evidence to provide its own support, in the form of a mileage payment.

A Communications Plan will ensure parents/carers and learners understand the changes and are therefore able to plan accordingly.

Earlier provision of travel training by KCC will reduce the number of pupils that continue to require support in later stages of their education.

While proposals would reduce the level of support that learners could receive when compared to historic policies, they would continue to receive a greater level of support compared to other students of a similar age.

Post-consultation mitigations

KCC continued to monitor and analyse potential impacts on learners and their families/carers on the basis of their age. Further potential mitigations include the following:

- It was identified that adult learners are more likely to travel further to their place of education than learners of sixth form age. Government provided 16 to 19 Bursary is in place to provide support to both groups of learners to overcome barriers to education. It is therefore more likely that adult learners travelling further would be able to secure additional support to reduce the impact of this difference, as their longer journeys are more likely to be seen to require support from providers.
- Where KCC provides a mileage payment for adult learners, it will be based on their physical journey to their place of learning, without distance caps. As such, those travelling further are likely to receive a greater level of support from KCC.
- As has previously identified, the policy continues to provide further support options for learners with exceptional circumstances, as well as access to an independent Member based appeals process, which will mitigate against those cases where KCC's standard offer of additional financial support continues to remain insufficient to meet that learner's unique needs.
- While adult learners may be required to navigate a more complex application process, should they need to seek support from both KCC and their place of learning, most learners

should receive their education setting information a least 5 months before the start of the new academic year, increasing the available time for these tasks to be completed.

It should be noted that KCC fulfilled 58.4% of Post 16 Phase Transfer decisions by the statutory deadline in 2025, which will impact the time available to learners to subsequently apply. However, around 2 months later, this had risen to over 80%. While future delivery is currently unknown, KCC's current delivery can be considered against its historic delivery, to give an indication of how likely it is to improve before the new policy could be implemented in 2027. In 2023, KCC made fewer than 25% of decisions by required timescales, with this number increasing to 36.7% in 2024. It therefore remains probable that numbers should continue to improve as wider SEN reforms embed.

- The proposed policy has been amended post-consultation to allow for KCC to work with settings to deliver bespoke, school led transport options for pupils and students on their roll. This will enable schools to organise the transport necessary for their learners, and it is anticipated that take-up of this type of arrangement by providers is more likely in rural or less accessible locations, whose pupils and students are likely to be more affected by KCC's proposals.

d. Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Age

Craig Chapman Assistant Director Fair Access and (Interim) SEN Processes

20. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability

a. Are there negative impacts for Disability? Answer: Yes/No

(If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).

Yes

b. Details of Negative Impacts for Disability

The majority of the young people that currently receive additional support under KCC's existing policy would have a disability and would therefore fall under this protected characteristic.

While the number of pupils requiring support changes annually, as a result of normal shifting pupil demographics, there are currently the following number of learners receiving transport support provided by KCC which would be different if they were considered against the proposed policy:

- 850 Learners of sixth-form age. 833 of these have an EHCP. 2 individuals receive SEN support but no EHCP. 13 individuals for whom KCC arranges transport do not have an EHCP or receive SEN support. The fact that an individual has an EHCP does not mean that they have a disability but this is likely to be true in the majority of cases.
- 621 Adult learners. 604 of these have an EHCP. 14 individuals for whom KCC arranges transport do not have an EHCP or a special educational need. 3 individuals' SEN/EHCP status could not be identified within existing datasets, which suggest they too are unlikely to have either.

Under the proposed policy, all 850 learners of sixth form age would continue to receive direct support from KCC. However, this would range from £1,400-£4,700 of direct funding dependent on their personal circumstances. In most instances these learners of sixth-form age currently are provided access to a vehicle that is organised and paid for by KCC, following a contribution ranging from £300-£600 per annum.

As KCC's proposals would expect the 621 adult learners to seek support from their provider's 16-19 Bursary fund before requesting support from KCC, it is likely that most would be negatively

affected by the proposals, as most currently receive access to a vehicle that is organised and paid for by KCC and a mileage payment is unlikely to offer a similar level of support. However, in reaching the decision to require learners to first request this support, KCC was mindful that this government provided fund is identified and intended to support learners in this manner. By contrast, KCC receives no direct funding to provide support to young adult learner's transport arrangements. KCC therefore considers it appropriate for learners to seek access to these dedicated funds and for it to be cognisant of these application outcomes before further funding is provided. KCC would only decline to provide a young adult learner with additional support if these applications evidence that further support is not necessary.

Impacts listed below should be considered as affecting both pupils of sixth-form age and adult learners, unless specifically stated. Similarly, impacts are likely to be of greater significance for adult learners, compared to learners of sixth-form age, given that mileage payments are in most instances lower than an equivalent PTB payment.

In summary, the main anticipated impacts on disabled individuals who currently receive support in the form of transport arrangements would be as follows:

- The support provided by KCC would be lower than the average cost of transport currently provided. This means it is unlikely that learners would be able to replicate current arrangements solely with the PTB or mileage payment provided. Pupils with disabilities may be less able to adjust to changes in existing transport, or require a longer period of preparation to do so.
- It is expected that making arrangements for learners to gain access to their place of learning would be more complex than current arrangements, requiring families to play a more active role in deciding the best options given their circumstances. This may negatively impact school attendance where alternative arrangements are not made in similar timescales to KCC provided options. However, there is also some potential that these changes may encourage more efficient opportunities that would otherwise have not been considered.
- Managing these more complex arrangements may be more challenging for families with affected learners with disabilities, as it is likely that their base transport requirements are already more complex than those for learners without disabilities. Impacts will vary for each individual learner, including based on the nature of their specific difficulties. However, transitioning to different arrangements can be a source of difficulty for some learners as a result of their need. Some pupils may require additional support to understand how and why their transport arrangements are change, or may struggle to manage this changes in spite of this support. Learners with physical requirements that are current supported by provided vehicles may have difficulty in securing similar alternatives. Families will have strategies in place to support other transportation needs outside of education, but the application of these methods may be complicated by the next identified impact.
- Families may need to change their routines to incorporate additional or longer journeys. This may negatively impact work or other commitments that have been possible where KCC took a greater hand in getting their child to their place of learning.
- Learners' transport arrangements may take longer, or they may have to travel further, especially if they may use of public transport instead of more direct options. Dependent on each learner's disabilities, there may be a greater negative impact due to these changes. It may also be possible that public transport options are less suitable.
- There is some potential that learners may have a reduced access to select schools of their preference. However, KCC provided support could still facilitate access to establishments that would otherwise not be accessible.

- In instances where families do not feel or cannot make alternative arrangements, changes to transport could result in a learner ceasing to remain in education. The proposed policy ensures that pupils that start courses before their 19th birthday will continue to be provided support until this has been completed. This identifies that learners with SEND may require additional time to complete Post 16 course. Beyond this point, while learners may chose to continue to remain in education, there is no statutory expectation that transport should continue to be provided, although KCC's proposed policy will still ensure that support is provided to those whose disability would otherwise create a barrier. When KCC introduced a mandatory contribution for Post 16 transport and adjusted the offer to Adult Learners for the 2024-25 academic year, the overall cohort size reduced by around 8%, although annual variations could account for some of this disparity.

Post-consultation analysis

KCC continued to monitor and analyse potential impacts on learners on the basis of their disability. Further potential impacts include:

- While it was previously identified that pupils may have to travel longer, or undertake more complex travel arrangements as a result of proposed changes, consultation analysis highlighted that these pupils are already potentially more likely to undertake longer journeys as a result of the reduced school options available to them, particularly those attending specialist provision. This is likely to compound the impact on those affected by the proposals.

While more granular analysis in one mile sections are included in the appendices, an overview of grouped journeys for learners of sixth form age and for adult learners shows the following:

Learners of sixth form age currently provided KCC transport support		Adult Learners currently provided KCC transport support	
Distance	Percentage of travelling Cohort	Distance	Percentage of travelling Cohort
0-5 Miles	20.60%	0-5 Miles	14.46%
5-10 Miles	27.41%	5-10 Miles	26.16%
10-15 Miles	20.17%	10-15 Miles	19.45%
15-20 Miles	16.48%	15-20 Miles	23.41%
20-25 Miles	8.10%	20-25 Miles	6.88%
25-30 Miles	2.70%	25-30 Miles	4.65%
30-35 Miles	1.42%	30-35 Miles	2.41%
35-40 Miles	0.85%	35-40 Miles	0.52%
40+ Miles	2.27%	40+ Miles	2.07%

This outlines that nearly 70% of learners of sixth form age and just over 60% of adult learners travel between 0 and 15 miles to reach their learning establishment. As KCC does not provide transport support to learners without SEND, there is no comparable dataset on which to compare these travel patterns with mainstream learners. The fact that mainstream learners receive no direct support from KCC other than access to a discounted Kent 16+ Travel Saver reflects the fact that learners with disabilities are supported to higher level than those without.

- In an effort to better understand the potential impact on learner attendance and potential cost-shunt to other KCC departments, Officers identified the behaviours of pupils who ceased to receive direct transport support following the policy revisions consulted on in 2023 and implemented in 2025. These changes introduced a new qualifying criteria for Adult Learners, which ceased provision of transport to most learners in the event they repeated a course of the same level or similar to one which they had completed previously. KCC saw a reduction in applications for this year group of roughly 8% following these changes, although this cannot necessarily be directly attributed to the changes themselves, as cohort sizes do fluctuate each year. These pupils ceased to be entitled to any support rather than the offered level of support changing, which was likely a more disruptive adjustment to those proposed in this policy. As such, it is not anticipated that these proposed changes are likely to have a larger impact than those analysed below.

621 adult learners were provided transport support under the new policy. However, Officers identified 24 adult learners who were refused transport following those changes. An analysis of these learners allows us to identify how policy changes impacted their decision to continue to engage in education, which can inform our expectations around new proposals. Of the total refused cohort, five of these adult learners requested equivalent transport from social care, of which, four were agreed at an annual cost of £100,105. Five adult learners requested direct payments to support alternative arrangements including funding personal assistants and/or their own transport arrangements. Social care agreed to all five of these requests at an annual cost of £140,011. Two of the 24 learners took the decision to move to alternative learning providers that they could more easily access. One learner made the decision to cease their education as a result of the lack of transport support. The remaining learners continued to access their place of learning in spite of the policy changes.

Officers consider that as proposed changes are not as significant as the introduction of new qualifying criteria, it is not unreasonable to expect a similar profile of impact under the new proposed policy. However, as it is not possible to accurately predict future behaviour of a cohort of pupils that may change considerably between now and the implementation of this proposed policy, Officers will keep under review the impacts of the changes once they are implemented

- Consultees highlighted that both groups of learners may face increased safeguarding risks. This could be as a result of travelling in new ways, adapting to change, or the increased chance of engaging with unknown third parties during daily journeys.
- Adult learners will face a more complex application process, as they may be required to interact with two organisations to receive the full level of travel support. This may be more challenging for individuals with disabilities, including learning disabilities.
- Negative impacts from proposed changes are more likely to affect families where parents/carers also have SEND.

c. Mitigating Actions for Disability

It is not possible to entirely mitigate the impact of this change for all the affected young people and their families/carers. However the following elements will minimise the impact as much as possible:

KCC will continue to have regard to an applicant's SEND, or the fact that an applicant has EHCP, in considering whether it is necessary to provide additional support.

All applicants will have an opportunity to submit a formal request to the Assistant Direct – Fair Access for exceptional arrangements beyond those outlined within the policy's defined offer. Applicants will not be limited in what alternative arrangements they can request consideration for. This means there is potential for suitable arrangements to all applicants that can evidence exceptional need. It is anticipated however that the vast majority of those receiving additional support from KCC will receive a PTB/mileage payment.

In all instances, including those where a formal request for exceptional arrangements is not agreed, applicants will retain the right of independent appeal to KCC's Transport Regulation Committee Appeals Panel. This provides an opportunity for Member of that panel to make their own exceptional decisions regarding individual's transport arrangements.

KCC is consulting roughly 18 months before the proposals may be implemented, to allow families to consider the implications on their future plans. This will allow learners to make plans for these stages of education with a full understanding of the level of support that will be available.

A Communications Plan will ensure parents/carers and learners understand the changes and are therefore able to plan accordingly.

Earlier provision of travel training by KCC will reduce the number of pupils that continue to require support in later stages of their education. This is particularly important for those with disabilities which may affect an individual's ability to transition to different travel arrangements as it increases the timescale in which adjustments can be made

While proposals would reduce the level of additional support that learners could receive when compared to historic policies, they would continue to receive a significantly greater level of support compared to other students of a similar age.

Post-consultation mitigations

KCC continued to monitor and analyse potential impacts on learners and their families/carers on the basis of their disability. Further potential mitigations include the following:

- While concerns were raised around the transition from KCC provided transport providers and associated DBS checks, all registered providers of third party transport are required to ensure that their employees receive Enhanced DBS checks, minimising this perceived risk.
- As has previously identified, the policy continues to provide further support options for learners with exceptional circumstances, as well as access to an independent Member based appeals process, which will mitigate against those cases where KCC's standard offer of additional financial support continues to remain insufficient to meet that learner's unique needs.
- While adult learners may be required to navigate a more complex application process, should they need to seek support from both KCC and their place of learning, most learners should receive their education setting information a least 5 months before the start of the new academic year, increasing the available time for these tasks to be completed.

It should be noted that KCC fulfilled 58.4% of Post 16 Phase Transfer decisions by the statutory deadline in 2025, which will impact the time available to learners to subsequently apply. However, around 2 months later, this had risen to over 80%. While future delivery is currently unknown, KCC's current delivery can be considered against its historic delivery, to give an indication of how likely it is to improve before the new policy could be implemented in 2027. In 2023, KCC made fewer than 25% of decisions by required timescales, with this number increasing to 36.7% in 2024. It therefore remains probable that numbers should continue to improve as wider SEN reforms embed.

- The proposed policy has been amended post-consultation to allow for KCC to work with settings to deliver bespoke, school led transport options for pupils and students on their roll. This will enable schools to organise the transport necessary for their learners, and it is anticipated that take-up of this type of arrangement by providers is more likely in rural or less accessible locations, whose pupils and students are likely to be more affected by KCC's proposals.

d. Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Disability

Assistant Director Fair Access and (Interim) SEN Processes

21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex

a. Are there negative impacts for Sex? Answer: Yes/No

(If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).

No

b. Details of Negative Impacts for Sex

Our analysis indicates that a greater proportion of the identified student base are males. 66.5% of the 850 learners of sixth-form age for whom KCC currently makes transport arrangements and 64.1% of the 621 young adult learners for whom KCC currently makes transport arrangements are male. It is important to consider this against the whole cohort of pupils that are more likely to receive additional support under the current policy, namely those with an EHCP. Within these age ranges, 71% are male. As such, this is indicative of the demographics of the wider cohort rather than it suggesting that males are more likely to require specific transport arrangements.

While a larger proportion of the cohort are males, there is no data to suggest that individual males are more likely to be affected by the changes than individual female travellers.

Post-Consultation analysis

While males represented the majority of respondents to the consultation (49%) in line with pre-consultation themes, a significant proportion declined to provide KCC with their sex (36%). No specific sex based themes were identified in consultation or EqlA responses. As such, there is no further analysis in this section.

c. Mitigating Actions for Sex

N/A

d. Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Sex

22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender

a. Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender? Answer: Yes/No

(If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).

KCC has no current expectation that learners within this demographic are more or less likely to be affected by proposals.
b. Details of Negative Impacts for Gender identity/transgender
N/A
c. Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
N/A
d. Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Gender identity/transgender
N/A
23. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Race
a. Are there negative impacts for Race? Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).
No
b. Details of Negative Impacts for Race
<p>Our analysis indicates that a greater proportion of the identified student base are from white or white British backgrounds. Analysis was targeted to cases where KCC had recorded ethnicity. 83.9% of the 850 learners of sixth-form age for whom KCC currently makes transport arrangements and 80.3% of the 621 young adult learners for whom KCC currently makes transport arrangements are from white or white British backgrounds. It is important to consider this against the whole cohort of pupils that are more likely to receive additional support under the current policy, namely those with an EHCP. Within these age ranges, 80.1% are from white and white British backgrounds. As such, this is indicative of the demographics of the wider cohort rather than it suggesting that males are more likely to require specific transport arrangements.</p> <p>While a larger proportion of the cohort are white or white British, there is no data to suggest that individual learners within these categories are more likely to be affected by the changes than individual travellers of other ethnic backgrounds. Cohorts of pupils with other ethnicities are too small in sample size to complete a statistically significant analysis.</p> <p>Post-Consultation analysis</p> <p>While respondents with White English, Scottish, Welsh, Northern Irish or British backgrounds represented the majority of replies to the consultation (60%) in line with pre-consultation themes, a significant proportion declined to provide KCC with their ethnicity (39%). No specific ethnicity based themes were identified in consultation or EqlA responses. As such, there is no further analysis in this section.</p>
c. Mitigating Actions for Race
N/A
d. Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Race
Assistant Director Fair Access and (Interim) SEN Processes
24. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
a. Are there negative impacts for Religion and Belief? Answer: Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).
Yes
b. Details of Negative Impacts for Religion and belief
The existing and future both policy allow for consideration as to whether reasons relating to religion or belief mean that use of the Kent 16+ Travel Saver pass is not practicable for individual learners. In these circumstances, officers can consider to provide additional support. While this

criterion will not change, the nature of support will reflect the new default offer of a PTB or mileage payment, other than in exceptional circumstances.

KCC does not currently provide any pupils support under this criterion, as a result of a lack of requests for consideration. However, this may change at any point, so an analysis of potential future impact has still been completed.

In summary, the main anticipated impacts are:

- The support provided by KCC would be lower than the average cost of transport currently provided. This means any future support may be lower than under the currently policy. However, as no learners current qualify for support, this impact would be limited to new travellers, who would still receive support from KCC in addition to that which a learner without a clear religious or belief based could expect.
- It is expected that making arrangements for learners to gain access to their place of learning would be more complex than current arrangements, requiring families to play a more active role in deciding the best options given their circumstances. This may negatively impact school attendance where alternative arrangements are not made in similar timescales to KCC provided options. However, there is also some potential that these changes may encourage more efficient opportunities that would otherwise have not been considered.
- Families may need to change their routines to incorporate additional or longer journeys. This may negatively impact work or other commitments that have been possible where KCC took a greater hand in getting their child to their place of learning.
- Learners' transport arrangements may take longer, or they may have to travel further, especially if they may use of public transport instead of more direct options. Dependent on each learner's disabilities, there may be a greater negative impact due to these changes. It may also be possible that public transport options are less suitable.
- There is some potential that learners may have a reduced access to select schools of their preference. However, KCC provided support could still facilitate access to establishments that would otherwise not be accessible.

c. Mitigating Actions for Religion and belief

It is not possible to entirely mitigate the impact of this change for all the affected young people and their families/carers. However the following elements will minimise the impact as much as possible:

KCC will continue to have regard to an applicant's religion or beliefs in considering whether it is necessary to provide additional support.

All applicants will have an opportunity to submit a formal request to the Assistant Direct – Fair Access for exceptional arrangements beyond those outlined within the policy's defined offer. Applicants will not be limited in what alternative arrangements they can request consideration for. This means there is potential for suitable arrangements to all applicants that can evidence exceptional need. It is anticipated however that the vast majority of those receiving additional support from KCC will receive a PTB/mileage payment.

In all instances, including those where a formal request for exceptional arrangements is not agreed, applicants will retain the right of independent appeal to KCC's Transport Regulation Committee Appeals Panel. This provides an opportunity for Member of that panel to make their own exceptional decisions regarding individual's transport arrangements.

KCC is consulting roughly 18 months before the proposals may be implemented, to allow families to consider the implications on their future plans. This will allow learners to make plans for these stages of education with a full understanding of the level of support that will be available.

A Communications Plan will ensure parents/carers and learners understand the changes and are therefore able to plan accordingly.

While proposals would reduce the level of additional support that learners could receive when compared to historic policies, they would continue to receive a significantly greater level of support compared to other students of a similar age.

d. Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Religion and belief

Assistant Director Fair Access and (Interim) SEN Processes

25. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation

a. Are there negative impacts for sexual orientation. Answer:

Yes/No (If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).

Based on data collected during the consultation, KCC has no current expectation that learners within this demographic are more or less likely to be affected by proposals.

b. Details of Negative Impacts for Sexual Orientation

N/A

c. Mitigating Actions for Sexual Orientation

N/A

d. Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Sexual Orientation

N/A

26. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity

a. Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity? Answer: Yes/No

(If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).

Based on data collected during the consultation, KCC has no current expectation that learners within this demographic are more or less likely to be affected by proposals.

b. Details of Negative Impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity

N/A

c. Mitigating Actions for Pregnancy and Maternity

N/A

d. Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Pregnancy and Maternity

N/A

27. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for marriage and civil partnerships

a. Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships? Answer:

Yes/No

(If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).

Based on data collected during the consultation, KCC has no current expectation that learners within this demographic are more or less likely to be affected by proposals.

b. Details of Negative Impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships

N/A

c. Mitigating Actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships

N/A

d. Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions - Marriage and Civil Partnerships

N/A
28. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
a. Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities? Answer: Yes/No <i>(If yes, please also complete sections b, c, and d).</i>
Based on data collected during the consultation, KCC has no current expectation that learners within this demographic are more or less likely to be affected by proposals.
b. Details of Negative Impacts for Carer's Responsibilities
N/A
c. Mitigating Actions for Carer's responsibilities
N/A

From: **Chris Palmer, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services**

Sarah Hammond, Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education

To: **Children's Young People and Education Cabinet Committee – 15 July 2024**

Subject: **Children's Social Care Prevention Grant 2025/2026 (Families First)**

Key Decision: Overall service value exceeds £1m and affects more than two Electoral Divisions.

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: None

Future Pathway of report: None

Electoral Division: All

Summary:

This report sets out the reasoning for accepting the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), approving the development of the required Families First model in Kent to comply with anticipated legislation and Families First programme guidance principles and delegating the detailed service design and acceptance of future years' grants to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education.

A successful Families First programme in Kent will deliver a fully integrated, family-centred system of support for children aged 0-18 or 0–25 for children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) in line with the outcomes outlined in the National Children's Social Care Framework. Built on strong multi-agency collaboration and shared accountability, the programme will ensure that families receive and access the right help at the right time from trusted practitioners who understand their story and provide consistent guidance throughout their journey.

Recommendation(s):

The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to **CONSIDER** and **ENDORSE**, or **MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS** to the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services on the proposed decision as set out in the Proposed Record of Decision (PROD).

1. Introduction

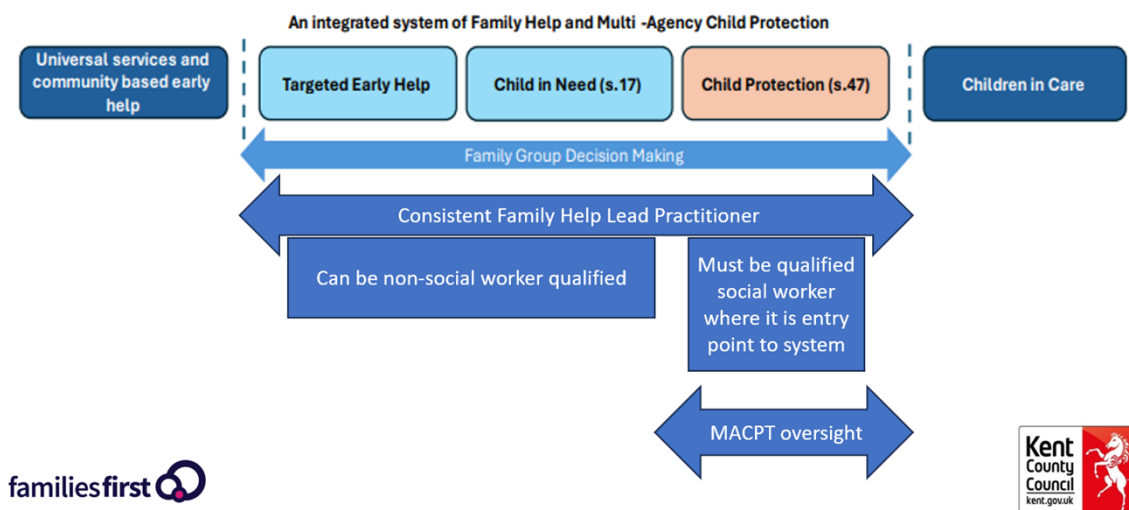
- 1.1 The national government has launched the Families First Partnership (FFP) programme, initially backed by over £500 million of funding for the 2025/26 financial year, including £253m of new ring-fenced funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) known as the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant. This investment is intended to support local authorities and their partners to design and implement end-to-end system reform focused on providing effective early help, family support and child protection services.
- 1.2 This transformation will ensure services are responsive to individual needs and inclusive of the wider support network, with meetings held in accessible and family-preferred venues. Statutory services will become a trusted system that has the best interest of the child at the centre of its work. The stigma often associated with statutory services will be replaced by trust, with families perceiving services as support rather than threat. Family Hubs will serve as an inclusive and accessible community anchors, offering integrated universal and targeted services ensuring smoother transitions as needs change.
- 1.3 The programme will require a shift in our workforce, with roles evolving to empower and equip alternatively qualified practitioners to assess and respond to the needs of children and families. The introduction of Family Help Lead Practitioners would mark a move away from rigid role definitions, instead recognising and valuing a diverse range of skills and experiences. This approach aims to reduce staff turnover, strengthen relationships with families, and enhance the effectiveness of multi-agency collaboration. Kent's strong foundation of partnership working and shared commitment to reform provides a solid platform for change. Any transformation must be co-designed with children, families, and partner agencies, ensuring that the voices of children and families are central to the process. By engaging early and listening throughout, we will shift the system towards prevention, consistency, and improved outcomes, ensuring families stay together, thrive, and feel supported.
- 1.4 The key future changes to the delivery of Children's Services involved in implementing a new Families First Model are expected to be mandated through the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, which is currently progressing through Parliament. To date, no amendments have been made to the proposed changes to the delivery of children's services outlined in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill. All Local Authorities will be required to implement these reforms and are working with the Department for Education on their proposed delivery plans. Formally accepting the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant for 2025/2026, and delegating authority to the Director of Children's Services to allocate the funding, aligns with Priority 4: New Models of Care and Support in Framing Kent's Future – Our Council Strategy 2022–2026, as well as the Securing Kent's Future – Budget Recovery Strategy, which aims to alleviate financial pressures.

2. Key Considerations

- 2.1 The Children's Social Care Prevention Grant 2025/2026 can be used to sustain and enhance existing prevention services for children and families, while also supporting the transformation and implementation of the Families First model. The grant is ring-fenced and the grant money will be spent across the same strands of activity as set out by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG):
- Transformation activity
 - Workforce
 - Service delivery
 - Partner agency funding
- 2.2 The Government's commitment to the Families First model has been reconfirmed by the Chancellor's statement to Parliament, which included £555 million over the next 2 years from the Transformation Fund for 2026-27 and 2027-28 for children's social care reform. £523 million provided for the Families First Programme in 2025-26 will continue in each year of the Spending Review period (£523m each year from 2026-27 – 2028-29). There is no indication of how this grant will be split between Local Authorities.
- 2.3 This stage of the process relates to confirming acceptance of the grant and associated conditions, including committing to working towards designing a Kent Families First model and supporting the required transformation activity to move to this when finalised in future years. Approval of the final model will be subject to future governance activity.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Families First Partnership programme was developed in response to recommendations from: The Independent Review of Children's Social Care, and The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's report on child protection in England. These reforms bring a significant shift and refocus on how we help, protect and support children and families.
- 3.2 The infographic below indicates the areas of change required through the national reform to the delivery of Children Service in England.



3.3 Families First Partnership programme's objective was to design and implement a new, end-to-end system for children's social care reform, focusing on four key areas:

- Strengthening multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.
- Establishing targeted, multi-disciplinary Family Help services for children and families eligible for, or receiving targeted early help and/or Child in Need services.
- Introducing expert-led, dedicated Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPTs), including lead child protection practitioners and an expanded parental support offer.
- Providing practical and financial support for family networks throughout the reformed system.

3.4 A successful Families First programme in Kent will deliver:

- A fully integrated, family-centred system of support
- Strong multi-agency collaboration and shared accountability
- Families receiving and accessing the right help at the right time from trusted practitioners who understand their story, coordinating support and providing consistent presence throughout their journey
- Financial sustainability, ensuring that resources are used efficiently to deliver long-term value and improved outcomes

4. Options considered and dismissed, and associated risk

- 4.1 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) have already confirmed the Council's Children's Social Care Prevention Grant allocation for 2025/2026. Kent County Council could refuse this funding and return the money to central government.
- 4.2 The implementation of the new Families First Model is currently being debated in Parliament, through the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, and is expected to become a legal requirement in the coming months.

Therefore, refusing this funding would mean any costs associated with implementation of the requirements set out in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill would have to be met solely by the Council's existing budget, creating a financial pressure.

- 4.3 Considering the Council's current financial pressures, the utilisation of this grant presents a timely and appropriate opportunity to support service transformation and improve outcomes for children and families.
- 4.4 Providing that Kent County Council has spent the grant in accordance with the specified conditions, there is no indication that the Government intends to seek reimbursement in the event of a delay or non-approval of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) have confirmed Kent County Council will receive the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant for 2025-26 totalling £6,759,810. The funding was identified in Appendix F within the Medium Term Financial Plan, agreed by County Council in February 2025.
- 5.2 In May 2025, the Government has confirmed this is a ring-fenced grant and issued the associated terms and conditions. The grant determination was for 2025-26 only, with no details regarding how much will be allocated to KCC over the next 2 years. Failure to adhere to the grant conditions and directing the money towards other areas could result in repaying this funding to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).
- 5.3 The funding terms and conditions include scope for the deployment of 2025/26 funding to support existing service activity (such as Early Help provision) where it aligns with the Families First Programme. Accordingly, this decision confirms the relevant funding allocations alongside the spend on future model design and transformation preparations.

6. Legal implications

- 6.1 The Director of Children's Services (DCS) at Kent County Council has statutory duties outlined in Section 18 of the Children Act 2004. These duties involve ensuring the delivery of local authority social care functions for children and young people. This includes, but is not limited to, providing services that meet the needs of all children, youth, including the most vulnerable, and their families.
- 6.2 Acceptance of any grant money does mean that Kent County Council is obligated to comply with the delivery requirements, terms and conditions that accompany the funding. Review of the deliverability and legal considerations will be undertaken and referenced at the point of decision.

7. Equalities implications

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed. At this stage there are no anticipated adverse impacts that are associated with the acceptance of the Families First grant money given the expectation that any future operations and activity will be designed to complement, develop and build on established family support services.

8. Data Protection Implications

- 8.1 A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) is not required for the acceptance spent of the Families First grant money.

9. Other corporate implications

- 9.1 There are no corporate implications linked with accepting the funding.

10. Governance

- 10.1 The Key Decision provides clear strategic direction on the planned approach by the Council – working towards developing an appropriate Families First approach. The decision provides authority for Officers to undertake the required development and design activity during 2025/26, in advance of future decision-making to confirm the Kent Families First Model. The decision also provides delegation to accept and deploy funding provided in future years, providing it is given on the same or very similar terms.
- 10.2 As a condition of the grant requirements, Kent County Council will be required to submit iterative Delivery Plans to Department for Education. These sit at an operational level and represent evidencing to Department for Education the progress in 2025/26 on the development of the future model. These Plans, under this decision, will be completed and submitted by Officers under delegated authority as part of the decision-implementation and do not represent binding commitments or policy decisions.
- 10.3 Accountability for the service delivery sits with the Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education. Responsibility for the operational delivery sits with the Director for Integrated Children's Services.
- 10.4 The Families First Programme Board is responsible, at the operational and implementation level, for providing Directorate-level oversight, direction and governance to support the successful delivery of the Families First programme. This will be supported by Workstream Operational Management Groups to oversee the operational delivery of Families First workstreams and projects.
- 10.5 A further Key Decision will be taken in early 2026 to approve the Families First implementation plan for Kent County Council.

11. Conclusions

- 11.1 The decision is required to formalise the acceptance and allocation of the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant, which has already been announced by The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. This funding provides a critical opportunity to implement the Families First transformation model, allowing Kent County Council to prepare appropriately for with national reforms in this area, which also align with Kent County Council's existing Kent County Council's strategic objectives for children's services. The Government have indicated grant funding will continue for at least the next two years.
- 11.2 Delegating authority for the implementation activity is crucial for effective and timely progression of the programme. During 2025/26 the Service will work to design and develop the future service model, including relevant co-design activity and the principle of recognising and capturing the voice of the child. Future Strategic decisions remain subject to appropriate governance to approve the long term future model for this service in Kent.

12. Recommendation(s):

That the Cabinet Member consider the following proposal:

The Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee is asked to **CONSIDER** and **ENDORSE**, or **MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS** to the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services on the proposed decision as set out in the Proposed Record of Decision (PROD).

13. Background Documents

- 13.1 The [Families First Partnership Programme Guide](#) provides information to support safeguarding partners with the implementation of children's social care reforms, including delivery expectations and areas for local flexibility.
- 13.2 The [Children's Social Care National Framework](#) sets out the purpose, principles and enablers of good practice and the outcomes that should be achieved. The guidance describes what everyone working with families should do and helps everyone come together with a clear vision for how to transform the support that families receive.
- 13.3 [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#): gives every practitioner working in a multi-agency system clarity about what is required of them individually and how they need to work in multi-agency partnerships to deliver effective services, support and help to children and their families.

14. Appendices

Appendix A- PROD

Appendix B- EqIA

15. Contact details

Report Author: Jordan Regan

Director: Ingrid Crisan

Families First Programme Manager

Director of Operational Integrated Children's
Services

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Chris Palmer, Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services

DECISION NUMBER:

25/00047

For publication *[Do not include information which is exempt from publication under schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972]*

Key decision: YES

Key decision criteria. The decision will:

- a) *result in savings or expenditure which is significant having regard to the budget for the service or function (currently defined by the Council as in excess of £1,000,000); or*
- b) *be significant in terms of its effects on a significant proportion of the community living or working within two or more electoral divisions – which will include those decisions that involve:*
 - *the adoption or significant amendment of major strategies or frameworks;*
 - *significant service developments, significant service reductions, or significant changes in the way that services are delivered, whether County-wide or in a particular locality.*

Title of Decision: Children's Social Care Prevention Grant 2025/2026 (Families First)

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services, I agree to:

1. APPROVE the acceptance of the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and deployment of the grant funding in accordance with the grant conditions
2. APPROVE the development of the required Families First model to comply with anticipated legislation and Families First programme guidance principles.
3. Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education , after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services, to review and agree to the required terms and conditions to enter into the necessary grant arrangements.
4. Delegate authority for the detailed service design and operational transformation activity to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education.
5. Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education, after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services, to accept and deploy future years' allocations of the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant , provided funding is given on similar terms.
6. Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education to take other necessary actions, including but not limited to entering into contracts or other legal agreements, as required to implement the decision.

Reason(s) for decision:

The decision is required to formalise the acceptance and allocation of the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant, which has already been confirmed by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and

Local Government. This funding provides a critical opportunity to implement the Families First transformation model, which aligns with national reform priorities and Kent County Council's strategic objectives for children's services. The Government have indicated grant funding will continue for at least the next two years.

Framing Kent's Future:

Formally accepting the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant and delegating authority to the Director for Children Services to spend the grant is in line with Priority 4: New models of care and support in the [Framing Kent's Future - Our Council Strategy 2022-2026](#).

Securing Kent's Future:

By declining the acceptance of the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant for 2025-26 and in future years, Kent County Council will have to identify its own financial resources to support the transformation activity creating more financial pressures for the Council.

Finance Implications:

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government have confirmed Kent County Council will receive the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant for 2025-26 totalling £6,759,810. The funding was identified in the Medium Term Financial Plan, agreed by County Council in February 2025.

Legal Implications:

The changes to how Children Services are delivered will be mandated through the Children Wellbeing and Schools bill which it's making its way through Parliament. The bill will specify various expectations for reform and will mandate every Local Authority to reform children services. Acceptance of any grant money does mean that Kent County Council is obligated to comply with the delivery requirements, terms and conditions that accompany the funding. Review of the deliverability and legal considerations will be undertaken and referenced at the point of decision.

Equalities Implications: An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed and at this stage there are no anticipated adverse impacts that are associated with the acceptance of the Families First grant money given the expectation that any future operations and activity will be designed to complement, develop and build on established family support services.

Data Implications: A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) is not required for the acceptance spent of the Families First grant money.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposed decision will be considered by the Children's, Young People and Education cabinet Committee on 15th July 2025.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government have already confirmed the Council's Children's Social Care Prevention Grant allocation for 2025/2026. The alternative option is to refuse this funding. The implementation of the new Families First Model is currently being debated in Parliament, through the Children Wellbeing and Schools Bill, and is expected to become a legal requirement. Therefore, refusing this funding would mean any costs associated with implementation of this new model would have to be met solely by the Council's existing budget.

Considering the Council's current financial pressures, the utilisation of this grant presents a timely

and appropriate opportunity to support service transformation and improve outcomes for children and families.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

.....
signed

.....
date

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EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

Families First Partnership Programme

Responsible Officer

Jordan Regan DCED INF (Authors: Richenda Polson – DCED INF & Olashile Ojuroye – DCED INF)

Approved by (Note: approval of this EqIA must be completed within the EqIA App)

[Q05 ResponsibleHeadOfService]

Type of Activity

Service Change

No

Service Redesign

Yes

Project/Programme

Programme

Commissioning/Procurement

No

Strategy/Policy

No

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Children Young People and Education

Responsible Service

Integrated Children's Services

Responsible Head of Service

Ingrid Crisan - CY EHPS (Early Help and Preventative Services)

Responsible Director

Sarah Hammond - CY EHPS (Early Help and Preventative Services)

Aims and Objectives

With a focus on strengthening multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and information sharing processes, the Families First Partnership

programme aims to establish targeted, multi-disciplinary Family Help services for children and families eligible for receiving targeted early help and/or Child in Need services. The introduction of expert-led, dedicated Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPTs), including Lead Child Protection Practitioners (LCPPs) and an expanded parental support offer will also reinforce this function within Child Protection processes. The programme also aims to strengthen Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) practices, incorporating the voices of children and families throughout their journey.

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA):

This EQIA is intended to assess the potential impact of our decisions on persons with different protected characteristics. In particular, this EQIA has been prepared to help us to have regard to the need to: (i) eliminate discrimination; (ii) advance equality of opportunity; and (iii) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not, in the exercise of our public functions. These issues are relevant considerations to be taken into account whenever a new policy, function, or system change is being proposed in the exercise of our public functions. This EQIA is also intended to evidence that these considerations have in fact been taken into account, and the weight given to them as part of our decision-making process.

Case for change :

The Families First Partnership programme was developed in response to recommendations from: The Independent Review of Children's Social Care and The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel's report on child protection in England. These reforms bring a significant shift and refocus on how we help, protect and support children and families. The Families First Partnership (FFP) programme has been backed by over £500 million of funding for the 2025/26 financial year. This investment is intended to support local authorities and their partners to design and implement end-to-end system reform focused on providing effective early help, family support and child protection services. Kent County Council's allocation of £6,759,810 from the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant 2025/2026 has already been confirmed from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). This funding provides a critical opportunity to implement the Families First transformation model, which aligns with national reform priorities and KCC's strategic objectives for children's services.

Summary of proposals:

A successful Families First programme in Kent will deliver a fully integrated, family-centred system of support for children aged 0-18 or 0-25 for children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) in line with the National Children's Social Care Framework. Built on strong multi-agency collaboration and shared accountability, the programme will ensure that families receive and access the right help at the right time from trusted practitioners who understand their story and provide consistent guidance throughout their journey. Families will only need to tell their story once. A dedicated Lead Practitioner will remain involved throughout, advocating for the family and coordinating the help they need. Practitioners will use a shared case management system with a single unique identifier, enabling more responsive, personalised, and inclusive services.

This transformation will ensure services are responsive to individual needs and inclusive of the wider support network, with meetings held in accessible and family-preferred venues. Statutory services will become a trusted system that has the best interest of the child at the centre of its work. The stigma often associated with statutory services will be replaced by trust, with families perceiving services as support rather than threat. Family Hubs will serve as an inclusive and accessible community anchors, offering integrated universal and targeted services that span across

early help to social care and youth justice, eliminating silos and ensuring smoother transitions as needs change.

There will be a shift in our workforce, with roles evolving to empower and equip alternatively qualified practitioners to assess and respond to the needs of children and families. The introduction of Family Help Lead Practitioners marks a move away from rigid role definitions, instead recognising and valuing a diverse range of skills and experiences. This approach aims to reduce staff turnover, strengthen relationships with families, and enhance the effectiveness of multi-agency collaboration. Kent's strong foundation of partnership working and shared commitment to reform provides a solid platform for change. This transformation will be co-designed with partners, placing the voices of children and families at the heart of the process. By engaging early and listening throughout, we will shift the system towards prevention, consistency, and improved outcomes, ensuring families stay together, thrive, and feel supported.

The forthcoming changes to the delivery of Children's Services will be mandated through the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, which is currently progressing through Parliament. All Local Authorities will be required to implement these reforms. Formally accepting the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant for 2025/2026, and delegating authority to the Director of Children's Services to allocate the funding, aligns with Priority 4: New Models of Care and Support in Framing Kent's Future – Our Council Strategy 2022–2026, as well as the Securing Kent's Future – Budget Recovery Strategy, which aims to alleviate financial pressures. The funding will support the sustainable and consistent implementation of the adopted Families First model across Kent. It is not anticipated to place additional pressure on existing revenue or capital budgets. Further details will be outlined in the decision report and the accompanying record of decision, which will be published at the time the decision is made.

The Director of Children's Services (DCS) at KCC has statutory duties outlined in Section 18 of the Children Act 2004. These duties involve ensuring the delivery of local authority social care functions for children and young people. This includes, but is not limited to, providing services that meet the needs of all children, youth, including the most vulnerable, and their families.

Summary of Options for Consideration:

Option 1: Do not accept Children's Social Care Prevention Grant 25/26

Should Kent County Council decline the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant for 2025/2026, it would need to identify alternative internal financial resources to support the transformation activity, thereby increasing financial pressure on the Council. If Option 1 is endorsed, the required changes to the delivery of Children Services will need to be funded within internal resources and will create budget pressures for the Council. As a result, there could be a detrimental impact on individuals with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, if services were cut to accommodate the need to fund the transformation activity from existing budgets.

Option 2: Accept the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant 25/26 and deliver the Families First Partnership Programme

The funding will be used to ensure the sustainable and consistent delivery of the adopted Families First model across Kent, in alignment with the national reforms set out on the forthcoming bill. As the programme enters its initial planning phase, the discovery stage will prioritise stakeholder engagement and the co-design of service reforms, ensuring that changes are informed by those with lived experience and professional insight.

The Families First Programme aims to improve access to the right help at the right time. The model aims to foster stronger, more trusting relationships by ensuring continuity with consistent practitioners, reducing the need for families to repeat their stories and creating a more seamless experience.

The programme aims to enhance the safety and protection of children and young people, especially those at risk of significant harm occurring outside the home. Additionally, there is a commitment to support better educational engagement through improved school attendance and earlier identification of need. Overall, this programme contributes to a more balanced children's social care system by shifting the focus from crisis intervention to prevention and early help.

The recommended course of action is to endorse Option 2: to accept the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant for 2025/2026. This option will enable the delivery of the Families First model and support the enhancement and continuous improvement of Children's Social Care Services.

Summary and justification:

It is anticipated that the Families First Partnership Programme will deliver a range of positive impacts, particularly through the enhancement of service delivery. These improvements will be driven by strengthened multi-agency and multi-disciplinary collaboration, greater inclusion of children's and families' voices, and the streamlining of case management systems. The Families First model is designed to reduce inequalities by co-designing future service models with children, young people, families, and partners, ensuring a collaborative and holistic approach to service redesign. The team are committed to developing services that are seamless, inclusive, accessible, and responsive to the needs of all families across Kent.

In light of these anticipated benefits, it is believed the proposals are justified. Any mitigation measures must be balanced against KCC's Best Value Duty, as outlined in Securing Kent's Future, to ensure that activities are sustainable and deliverable beyond the lifespan of the 2025/2026 Children's Social Care Prevention Grant.

Section B – Evidence

Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?

Yes

It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?

Yes

Is there national evidence/data that you can use?

Yes

Have you consulted with stakeholders?

Yes

Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

The Children's Social Care Prevention Grant for 2025/2026 has already been received by KCC from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

In March 2025, Department for Education (DfE) released the updated Guidance document for the Families First Programme. The Families First Programme has prioritised engagement through direct and regular meetings with key stakeholders and core partners across several strategic boards to gather qualitative insights that reflect the current realities and lived experiences of services and communities in Kent.

Since May 2025, the Families First Programme team has participated in key discussions with relevant stakeholders at the Strategic Reset Programme Board, the Early Help Partnership Board, Start for Life and Family Hubs Board, Families First Partnership Board and relevant governance groups supporting the development of the Families First Programme. These meetings and workshops have helped shaped understanding of key priorities and informed programme's direction and next steps.

We will continue to engage and make use of existing networks that represent the voices of children, young people and families across Kent.

Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?

No

Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?

Yes

Section C – Impact

Who may be impacted by the activity?

Service Users/clients

Service users/clients

Staff

Staff/Volunteers

Residents/Communities/Citizens

Residents/communities/citizens

Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?

Yes

Details of Positive Impacts

The programme guidance outlines key elements that are expected to positively impact both service users and the broader children's social care system.

Acceptance of the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant for 2025/2026 is expected to generate positive impacts for service users, communities, and residents, particularly those with protected characteristics, through the following outcomes:

- An opportunity to participate in the co-design of new service models and co-production of a shared vision, ensures the voices of all marginalised groups are incorporated in improved services. Inclusivity is at the core of the proposed Families First Model, fostering trust among groups who many historically feel misunderstood by statutory services.
- Reduction of stigma (particularly against those from racially and ethnically diverse groups) when accessing support through reframing

intervention as ‘family help’. The programme offers a more personalised, strengths based approach and helps lower the fear of punitive statutory involvement.

- Emphasis on co-design ensures that individuals who have diverse needs have an input on how information is created and delivered, ensuring improved accessibility of support, reducing barriers to accessing services particularly for service users who may have struggled to navigate fragmented systems - i.e. those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, language barriers or physical disabilities.
- Early help and children statutory services often disproportionately support women (as primary care givers) and children with disabilities who meet the definition of children in need in the Children Act 1989. The supportive, integrated model may provide earlier relief, practical assistance and emotional support for this group.
- Emphasis on multi-agency and multidisciplinary working allows for more tailored support that considers the intersectionality of characteristics, based on an individual’s engagement with various services (e.g. disability, single-parents, ethnic minority, parenthood), enabling needs to be addressed holistically.
- The creation of Family Help Lead Practitioners (FHLPs) ensures greater consistency for families by maintaining a single trusted professional relationship throughout their journey, reducing the need to retell their story.
- Improved navigation through the integrated front door model across agencies ensuring that families receive the right help quickly.

Acceptance of Children’s Social Care Prevention Grant 25/26 funding will have positive impacts for staff with protected characteristics as outlined below:

☞ The programme offers career development opportunities which may particularly benefit staff who experience barriers to career advancement (e.g. women, faith groups etc). This has additional benefits in diversifying, upskilling and strengthening the workforce.

☞ The introduction of a more seamless case management system and single unique identifier creates opportunities for staff to spend less time seeking information or navigating barriers to information sharing, thus potentially benefitting staff who require more flexible working patterns (i.e. parents, those with disabilities or health conditions), enabling them to work more efficiently.

- The programme will positively impact staff by providing clearer roles, stronger multi-agency collaboration, consistent supervision, and access to shared practice frameworks and training, empowering them to deliver more effective, relationship-based support to families

There are no anticipated negative impacts on individuals with protected characteristics from accepting the Children’s Social Care Prevention Grant 25/26 funding, beyond the initial identified risks associated with programme itself. It is suggested however, that a revised EQIA is completed in consideration of negative impacts following the development of a robust programme plan as outlined in Section A.

Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions

19.Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age

Are there negative impacts for age?

No

Details of negative impacts for Age

Not Applicable

Mitigating Actions for Age

Not Applicable

Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age
Not Applicable
20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability
Are there negative impacts for Disability?
No
Details of Negative Impacts for Disability
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Disability
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Disability
Not Applicable
21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex
Are there negative impacts for Sex
No
Details of negative impacts for Sex
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sex
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Sex
Not Applicable
22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
No
Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race
Are there negative impacts for Race
No
Negative impacts for Race
Not Applicable

Mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief
No
Negative impacts for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Not Applicable
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
No
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
No
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Applicable
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
No

Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer’s responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer’s responsibilities
No
Negative impacts for Carer’s responsibilities
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Carer’s responsibilities
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Carer’s responsibilities
Not Applicable

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Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee 2025/26 Work Programme

16 SEPTEMBER 2025

• Performance Monitoring	Standing Item	Katherine Atkinson
• Parkwood Hall	Key	Ian Watts
• LADO Annual Report 2024/25	Annual item	Leemya McKeown
• Private Fostering Annual Report 2024/25	Annual item	Leemya McKeown
• Future of Ofsted Reporting to CYPE CC		Katherine Atkinson
• Broomhill Bank North	Key	Ian Watts
• Work Programme	Standing item	Georgia Humphreys

18 NOVEMBER 2025

• Performance Monitoring	Standing Item	
• KCP Commissioning Plan	Annual item	Ian Watts
• LADO Annual Report 2024/25	Annual item	Nick Abrahams
• School Expansions/Alterations	Annual item	
• Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership Annual Report	Annual item	
• Kent Commissioning Plan Update	Bi-annual report	
• Private Fostering Annual Report	Annual item	
• Complaints and Representations Report	Annual item	
• LADO Annual Report	Annual item	

• Work Programme	Standing item	Georgia Humphreys
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