



CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT

1 March – 12 April 2013

Flintshire County Council
Lifelong Learning Directorate
County Hall
Mold
CH7 6ND

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CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT

Why is the Council Consulting on Changes?

Like all councils, Flintshire County Council is under considerable pressure to make savings on its public spending.

As a result, the Council has had to look at every aspect of its work, especially where it is not compulsory for us to provide services and to consider how they can be delivered more efficiently and cost effectively.

It is proposed that the school transport policy is reviewed and a public consultation is carried out on two discretionary aspects of the policy, namely post 16 transport and transport to denominational schools. The Council recognises the value and role of faith based education and the proposed changes are intended to produce a fair, equitable and sustainable transport policy.

The Current Policy

Generally parents and carers are responsible, in law, for making arrangements for their children's attendance at school. This means that when deciding which school to apply for a place at, they have to decide whether they need transport and then organise provision themselves.

Councils are required, by law, to provide assistance for those pupils who are eligible.

Statutory transport provision

The Council provides free transport for children of compulsory school age (i.e. 5 – 16 years) when

- a child receiving primary education lives over 2 miles from the nearest appropriate school; and
- a child receiving secondary education lives over 3 miles from the nearest appropriate school.

In addition, the Council provides free transport for pupils of compulsory school age where

- a learner is registered at their local school and is unable to walk to school due to a route which the Council has assessed as hazardous;
- a learner is registered at their local school or the most appropriate school to meet their special educational needs and those needs prevent them from achieving independent travel or walking the statutory distance safely accompanied by an adult and
- a learner requires transport on medical grounds and no suitable public transport exists.

The Council also provides additional discretionary assistance where

- a learner attends the nearest Welsh medium school or
- a learner whose parents are in receipt of Income Support or Working Tax credit, resides more than 2.5 miles from the nearest appropriate school.

What are the proposed changes?

The discretionary services that the Council is proposing to change are:

- **Transport to Faith Schools** – free transport is currently provided for pupils to attend their nearest denominational school. The school must be over the statutory walking distance.
- **Post 16 transport** – free transport is currently provided for young people aged 16 years and over, living in Flintshire who are in full time education and who live over 3 miles from the nearest educational establishment offering the courses they wish to study.

The Proposals (Case for Change)

The Council is seeking your views on the following two proposals:

Proposal 1- Transport to denominational schools	From September 2014 , to no longer provide free denominational transport for pupils whose admission is not based on faith grounds. Consultation with individual schools would take place to confirm the admission criteria under which pupils are admitted, starting with new admissions in September 2014. Suitable evidence of adherence to the faith of the school such as a baptismal certificate or a letter from a priest may be requested.
Proposal 2 – Post 16 Transport	From September 2013 , to provide free transport to students aged 16 and under 19, attending a first course of full time study at a school or college. This is subject to meeting the 3 mile distance criteria and also providing the student is attending the nearest educational establishment offering the courses they wish to study. Free transport will be provided to the following sites <u>only</u> : All Secondary School sites within Flintshire Blessed Edward Jones Catholic High School, Chester Catholic High School, Deeside College sites at Connah's Quay, Northop and Llysfasi (for land based courses only), Prestatyn High School, St Brigid's School, Ysgol Glan Clwyd. For clarification, a full list of sites is listed at the end of this document.

The implementation of the proposals may result in dedicated buses to schools/colleges being withdrawn.

What the Council would continue to provide should the proposals be implemented

Transport would continue to be provided for those pupils living over 2 miles (primary) or 3 miles (secondary) for whom the denominational school is their nearest school, in accordance with statutory provision.

What Happens Now?

The following are key dates in the consultation and decision making process.

Consultation Period begins (6 Weeks)	1 March 2013
Consultation Period Ends	12 April 2013
Report to Flintshire County Council's Cabinet for final decision	23 April 2013
Publication of revised policy	May 2013
Implementation of changes	Post 16 -September 2013 Denominational - September 2014

How do I tell you my views?

These changes, if implemented, would be likely to affect many Flintshire County Council families. In order for us to understand better how these proposals would affect you, please forward your views by completing the attached questionnaire.

A frequently asked questions (FAQs) and Equality Impact Assessment form are available on our website to accompany this document. Alternatively, hard copies can be requested by emailing TransportPolicyReview@flintshire.gov.uk

The consultation will take place between 1 March 2013 and 12 April 2013. During this time we would like to hear your views.

You can take part either by:

- Completing the online consultation questionnaire at:

www.flintshire.gov.uk/transportpolicyreview

- Completing a paper copy of the questionnaire and returning it to the address below:

*Transport Policy Review
Lifelong Learning Directorate
Flintshire County Council
County Hall
Mold
CH7 6ND*

- Emailing any comments/forms to;

TransportPolicyReview@flintshire.gov.uk

The Decision

All of the consultation responses will be assessed and put together into a report for the Flintshire County Council Cabinet to consider at its meeting on the 23 April 2013 at County Hall, Mold.

Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this consultation. Your response will be considered in full. We will not be responding directly to your feedback, but we will be producing a summary at the end of the process. This will be available on our website *www.flintshire.gov.uk* by 23 April 2013.

PROPOSED LIST OF SITES TO WHICH TRANSPORT WILL BE PROVIDED FOR POST 16 STUDENTS

CASTELL ALUN HIGH SCHOOL
CONNAH'S QUAY HIGH SCHOOL
ELFED HIGH SCHOOL
FLINT HIGH SCHOOL
HAWARDEN HIGH SCHOOL
HOLYWELL HIGH SCHOOL
JOHN SUMMER'S HIGH SCHOOL
MOLD ALUN HIGH SCHOOL
ST RICHARD GWYN HIGH SCHOOL
YSGOL MAES GARMON
YSGOL MAES HYFRYD

BLESSED EDWARD JONES CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL, RHYL
CHESTER CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL
DEESIDE COLLEGE SITES AT CONNAH'S QUAY, NORTHOP and LLYSFASI (Land Based Courses only)
PRESTATYN HIGH SCHOOL
ST BRIGID'S SCHOOL, DENBIGH
YSGOL GLAN CLWYD, ST ASAPH

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