



**CONSULTATION ON
PROPOSED CHANGES TO
HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT**

Monday 7 January – Sunday 17 March 2013

**Flintshire County Council
Lifelong Learning Directorate
County hall
Mold
CH7 6ND**

education@flintshire.gov.uk

If you require this document in another language or format please contact us

Telephone: (to get it in alternative format)

Email: (to get it in alternative format)

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. The Council has to make significant savings over the next few years.

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.

The Council spends in the region of £6m on home to school transport each year. Providing post 16 travel and travel to faith schools accounts for approximately 20% of the overall expenditure per year. As a consequence, it is proposed that these policies are reviewed and a public consultation is carried out.

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.

There is a **minimum (statutory) provision** the Council must provide as follows:

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.

The Council currently provides **additional discretionary assistance** beyond the minimum required by law.

The Council will continue to provide free transport for pupils of statutory school age when:

- 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;
- 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;

- a learner requires transport on medical grounds and no suitable public transport exists; or
- a learner attends the nearest Welsh medium school.

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

- **Transport to Faith Schools** – free transport is provided for pupils to attend their nearest denominational school. The school must be over the statutory walking distance.
- **Post 16 transport** – free transport is 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.

The Proposals (Case for Change)

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

Proposal 1	To no longer provide free denominational transport for pupils whose admission is not based on faith grounds with effect from September 2013.
Proposal 2	To provide free transport to post 16 students attending a first course of full time study at a school or college, subject to meeting the 3 mile distance criteria and providing the student is attending the nearest educational establishment offering the courses they wish to study. Free transport will be provided to specified local sites only.

The implementation of the proposals may result in dedicated buses to schools/colleges being withdrawn. In these circumstances the Council would help explore and facilitate the possibility of alternative sustainable options.

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

Travel assistance to those who are entitled to it by law, as detailed above.

What support might the Council offer should the proposals be implemented?

- Continue to provide free transport for those students in receipt of a full EMA (Education Maintenance Allowance)/ in receipt of free school meals
- Continue to remind, advise and promote sustainable transport options, including independent travel training, cycling, walking, car sharing and passenger transport options, as an alternative to home to school travel services and work with schools/colleges and parents' groups as appropriate.

What Happens Now?

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

Consultation Period begins (10 Weeks)	7 January 2013
Consultation Period Ends	17 March 2013
Report to Flintshire County Council's Cabinet for final decision	23 April 2013
Publication of revised policy	May 2013
Implementation of changes	September 2013

How do I tell you my views?

Through this consultation we want to stimulate a debate about how parents can use their knowledge to create travel and transport solutions that meet their particular needs but are also financially sustainable.

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 or feeding back to us directly at our drop-in sessions.

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 education@flintshire.gov.uk
- or by phoning the Council on 01352 704187

The consultation will take place between Monday 7 January 2013 and Sunday 17 March 2013. During this time we would like to hear your views.

You can take part either by:

- Completing the online consultation questionnaire at :

**(online address to be confirmed)*

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

**(address to be confirmed)*

- Emailing any comments/forms to;

**(email address to be confirmed)*

Drop in Events

There will be drop-in sessions as required around the County. There will be local authority officers available to answer questions where possible and note any comments you would like to feedback.

**(dates to be confirmed)*

Venue

Date

Time

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 2pm 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 **(website address to be confirmed)* by the end of March 2013.