

APPENDIX 2

CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT

Frequently Asked Questions and supplementary information in response to consultation feedback on post 16 transport policy changes.

Summary of Questions

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Supplementary information in response to consultation feedback on post 16 transport policy changes

Summary of questions

11. Which sites will no longer be included for post 16 transport purposes?
12. My son has medical needs – will transport be provided when he reaches 16 years of age and wishes to continue full time education?
13. My daughter is in Year 11 at St Richard Gwyn – will she receive free transport to attend the 6th form there?

14. I will not be able to afford to send my son to 6th form if transport is not provided.

15. The proposal for post 16 transport is unfair as those living 1 or 2 miles away will have to walk or pay for transport.

16. Students should be able to choose any school.

1. What are the proposed changes?

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.

2. Why are the changes required?

The Council recognises the value and role of post 16 providers and a faith based education. The policy review has identified changes intended to produce a fair, equitable and sustainable transport policy.

3. Is Flintshire the only local authority proposing such changes?

No. An increasing number of Councils have or are in the process of reviewing their home to school transport policies.

4. Who will be affected?

Those students accessing the following services may be affected by the proposals:

Denominational transport

Students who attend their nearest denominational school are currently eligible for free transport. Under the proposals, those students whose admission is based on faith grounds and can provide evidence will be provided with free transport. For students who are unable to provide such evidence, free transport will not be provided.

Post 16 transport

Currently Flintshire Council provides free transport to students resident in the County, living over 3 miles from the nearest educational establishment offering the courses they wish to study. It is proposed that this part of the policy remains unchanged. However, under the proposals, free transport will be provided to designated sites only – these have been listed in section 1 above.

5. When would the proposed changes be implemented?

The proposed implementation date for changes to denominational transport is September 2014 for new admissions, so this would be phased in for new entrants as they start primary or secondary school (ie Reception or Year 7). For post 16 transport, it is proposed that the changes are implemented for new post 16 admissions from September 2013. For students who started their courses in September 2012, free transport will continue to be provided until the end of the academic year 2014.

6. Who is being consulted with on the proposed changes?

This is an open consultation and everybody is welcome to comment on the proposals.

All the consultation material is available on the Council's website.

The Council has specifically consulted with the following groups:

- Headteachers of all Flintshire primary and secondary schools
- The Diocesan authorities
- Colleges

- Parents of Year 5 and Year 11 pupils
- Councillors
- Neighbouring authorities
- Transport providers
- Young people

7. If the proposals are agreed, what would the Council continue to provide?

Councils are required to provide free transport for eligible pupils under certain circumstances:

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

Transport will also be provided on the following grounds:

- 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.
- where 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
- where a learner who 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.

8. What steps has the Council taken to ensure the proposals are fair?

The Council is keen to understand the impact these proposals may have on families and young people. An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and this has helped us to see what the impact might be. An equality monitoring section forms part of the questionnaire to collect relevant information and will continue to help the Council identify any issues.

9. How can I get involved with the consultation or find out more?

In order for us to understand better how these proposals would affect you, please forward your views 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

10. What happens next?

Once the consultation period closes on 12 April, a complete analysis of the responses will be prepared by the Council for a report that will be considered by the Flintshire County Council Cabinet at a meeting on 23 April 2013. At this meeting, the Cabinet will consider whether to:

- Proceed with the proposals
- Proceed with any amendments to the proposals as a result of the consultation feedback, or
- Not to proceed with the proposals.

Supplementary information in response to consultation feedback on post 16 transport policy changes.

11. Which sites will no longer be included for post 16 transport purposes?

Under the original proposals, transport would no longer be provided to educational sites in Conwy, Cheshire West and Chester, Cheshire East, Lancashire and Yale College, Wrexham. As a result of the consultation and the implications of no longer providing transport to Yale were reconsidered and Cabinet is being recommended to continue transport to this site where it is the nearest provider.

12. My son has medical needs – will transport be provided when he reaches 16 years of age and wishes to continue full time education?

Yes, any pupil currently receiving transport on medical grounds will continue to be entitled under this provision.

13. My daughter is in Year 11 at St Richard Gwyn – will she receive free transport to attend the 6th form there?

Yes, if this is the nearest suitable provider and over 3 miles from home.

14. I will not be able to afford to send my son to 6th form if transport is not provided.

The local authority will continue to provide transport to the nearest suitable provider of a course if it is over 3 miles from home. It is not currently a requirement for the local authority to transport to alternative providers.

The Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is also available to help with education costs for families on low income. Students can be awarded up to £30 per week, depending on household income (£23,078 or less per annum) and the number of dependent children.

15. The proposal for post 16 transport is unfair as those living 1 or 2 miles away will have to walk or pay for transport.

This is also the case under the existing policy.

16. Students should be able to choose any school.

Students will continue to be able to choose where they wish to study and the local authority supports access to post 16 education by providing transport to the nearest suitable provider of a course if it is above 3 miles.