

NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL DECISION

**DECISION OF: EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT
WITH ADVICE FROM: EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE**



DIRECTORATE: D&E

DECISION NO: 19-20 DE 393

SUBJECT: ADOPTION AND PUBLICATION OF REVISED POST 16 HOME TO SCHOOL
TRANSPORT STATEMENT 2020

KEY DECISION: N/A

REASON:

The policy has been re-drafted from a combined statement to a mainstream and SEND specific policy to reflect national guidance released in 2019 by the DFE. The policy statements remain the same as the outgoing, however the format has been amended to provide clarity and consistency of the compulsory school age policy.

BACKGROUND:

The council is obliged to publish an annual policy statement detailing how it will comply with statutory DFE guidance '*Post-16 transport and travel support to education and training*' revised January 2019. This updated guidance did not change any of the primary legislation.

North Somerset Council has traditionally produced a joint statement with Bristol, B&NES, and prior to 2018 South Gloucester. This is no longer an acceptable approach due to the significantly different approaches adopted to service delivery between the local authorities. As such the new policy documents have captured and reflect our current practices of delivering transport for post 16 students.

For clarity and consistency and to comply with the statutory guidance the council has produced specific statements for students with SEND and one for mainstream students.

DECISION:

To adopt the revised policy statements for SEND and mainstream post 16 students on the 30/05/2020.

REASONS:

The revised policies must be adopted prior to the 31/05/2020 to comply with the DFE statutory guidance, thus ensuring students enrolling or continuing in further education can have enough time to arrange transport at the start of the new academic year.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED:

The council has researched alternative delivery models and policy statements from across a plethora of other English authorities, these have been consulted with our stakeholders who are seeking clarity and evidence of the impacts prior to agreeing the suitability of alternatives.

Increasing cohorts of students with SEND are exerting strain on resources to deliver the ever more complex and individualised transport in a challenging local transport market. The sustainability of our current arrangements is progressively more difficult to maintain.

Alternative methods of delivery are being refined for future years, these could include moving to travel grants and withdrawing direct provision in all but the most complex cases. This has been adopted by a small number of LA's but is subject to an ongoing Judicial review.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The council is committed to delivering a consistent level of service to previous years, as such the council maintains the right to seek contributions towards the subsidised transport it provides, but in practice has managed to avoid applying a charge to date, any proposed charge would need to be published and agreed taking equalities and affordability into account. North Somerset are one of the last LA's to maintain fully subsidised transport for its most vulnerable students.

Costs

The projected costs for the next financial year are;

Entitled students	Total cost	Average Cost per student
39	£109,415	£2805

These are subject to applications from students, which may not be defined until October 2020.

Funding

The current provision is funded from revenue funding allocated to the ITU.

LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS

The revised statements have been verified by NSC legal team, and external agencies to ensure compliance with the statutory provisions in the education act 1996 (as amended)

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

The council emphasize the importance of sustainable forms of travel for all students, this is reflected in the significant volumes of students who utilise walking, cycling and public transport to access post 16 further education. The council supports these measures with a range of policies and funding streams. The policies give specific mention to how to access affordable transport.

CONSULTATION

The policies have been produced in full consultation with our post 16 stakeholder group, with representatives of Parents Carers, and the further education establishments, this has also been circulated to our legal team, and a specialist advocacy group SENTAS.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The current policy was not aligned to the revised statutory guidance, necessitating a new approach to the annual statement, more time is required to look at alternative approaches to the delivery of the service, this policy represents the best balance in the interim giving much needed certainty to those progressing to Further Education.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment? YES

A first stage impact assessment has been conducted and indicated universal positive improvements negating the need for a detailed impact assessment.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

The policy statements support the council’s SEND strategy, by supporting some of our most vulnerable students with access to further education.

APPENDICES

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

SIGNATORIES:

DECISION MAKER(S):

Signed:

Title:

Date:

Signed:

Title:

Date:

WITH ADVICE FROM:

Signed:

Title:

Date:

Signed:

Title:

Date:

Footnote: Details of changes made and agreed by the decision taker since publication of the proposed (pre-signed) decision notice, if applicable:



North Somerset Council Post-16 Mainstream Student Travel Policy Statement 2020 – 2021

1.0 Introduction

Context:

This is one of a suite of North Somerset policies for students applying for travel support.

The policy is based on the [Statutory guidance produced by the Department for Education](#). It sets out the travel assistance North Somerset Council will provide for students of sixth form age within a mainstream setting.

'Sixth form age' refers to those young people who are over 16 years of age but under 19 (who have started a course before their 19th birthday)

There are separate policy documents for Post 16 SEND, mainstream and SEND students of compulsory school age (aged 5-16) which can be found on the Council website [here](#).

Scope:

Local authorities do not have to provide free or subsidised post 16 travel support. However local authorities 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.

All young people carrying on their education post 16 must apply for travel support on an annual basis in all circumstances. Travel support will not be awarded until this process has concluded. Applications for Post 16 travel can be found [here](#)

2.0 Aims & Objectives

The aim(s) of the policy are to outline:

- The different types of support available and who provides it
- How to apply for travel assistance
- How to appeal a transport decision

North Somerset Council continues to support Post 16 further education to ensure that all children and young people have the opportunity to access education, employment, training and essential services across the county. As such, most young people are able to access Post 16 provision without requiring additional transport support.

However, we recognise that the rural nature of some parts of the county can require young people to travel outside of their immediate community to access further education opportunities. This travel policy statement therefore applies to students aged 16-19 who attend their nearest education establishment (or provider) that provides the elected course.

North Somerset Council's objective is to determine how travel support is provided to those aged 16 and above. The council support the Government initiative to promote sustainable travel such as walking, cycling and use of public transport.

3.0 Transport and Travel Assistance

There are a range of options for support available to young people and their carers to support their travel and support and enable their continuing education and training. The following sections provide guidance on what is available:

3.1 Concessionary tickets for young people

Young people (aged 16-21) and students (of any age in full time education) can get up to 30% discount on all bus tickets across West of England (including Bristol, Bath, Weston-super-Mare and Wells) with First Bus. There are also railcards available for discounted train travel for students aged between 16 - 25.

Within this Travel Policy statement examples of other concessionary schemes that are available from bus companies and those provided by schools and colleges are provided.

Students will be expected to purchase concessionary tickets themselves, North Somerset Council do not manage these schemes.

3.2 The 16 – 19-Year-Old Bursary

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

Further information can be found at www.gov.uk/ search for post 16 bursaries.

There are two main types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

A. Vulnerable Groups Bursary.

A vulnerable groups 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

B. Discretionary Bursaries.

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 at 31 August 2020 or
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2020 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2020 and continuing 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 the local authority

3.4 Young Parents/Care to Learn (C2L)

C2L provides funding for childcare to help young parents (defined as those aged under 20) continue in education after the birth of a child. The scheme provides funding for childcare whilst the young parent is engaged in a study programme and is not able to provide care for their child. It can also help the young parent with any additional travel costs involved in taking the child to the childcare provider.

C2L provides funding for childcare whilst young parents are on work placements or industry placements, where these are a defined part of the study programme.

Further information and to apply for the scheme, information can be found [here](#).

4.0 Local Authority Support for Learners

4.1 Who is eligible for support with travel?

The Local Authority will consider travel support for students who meet *all* of the following criteria:

1. **Students are under 19 on 31st August immediately preceding the start of the academic year**
2. Students who attend their nearest education establishment (or provider) that provides the elected course.
3. Students with a current statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP)
4. Students who reside more than 3 miles from the educational base (accompanied as necessary)
5. Students who are studying a full-time course
6. Students who are enrolled on a course which qualifies under the definition of 'Qualifying Education or Training'.

and provide satisfactory evidence to the LA:

7. That the applicants have applied to their school or college for financial assistance (Bursary), with details of the level of support offered.

The Local authority will consider individual applications where medical or physical difficulties, mean they are unable to walk the distance of 3 miles as defined in criteria 4.

Students who are completing a course funded by North Somerset Council (using the high needs top-up funding available for the individual) will continue to receive support until the end of the academic year in which they reach 25 years of age.

5.0 What does Local Authority Support look like?

The nature and mode of travel support will be determined by the Local Authority and will be one that is consistent with the Local Authority's duty to secure value for money. There will be a presumption in favour of shared travel arrangements.

In cases where the Local Authority agrees assistance, it will be for a "main road" type of service, unless otherwise agreed. Parents will be expected to make their own arrangements for transport to a specified pick up point. Transport assistance will not necessarily be for a door to door service.

Any assistance offered will be to the school/college start and finish times, based on one inward and one outward journey each day. Travel assistance will not be tailored to meet individual timetables, i.e. where contract vehicle timetables are not in line with that of the student. In such circumstances parents are expected to make suitable adjustments to travel arrangements.

Where there is no statutory duty to do so, the Authority will not provide a Passenger Assistant where this is a requirement to meet individual need. Where Passenger Assistants are travelling as part of shared travel arrangements, the Authority will consider sharing this resource where the wider needs of the service continue to be met.

Where the journey time is lengthy or requires changes of vehicle as a result of the course chosen by the student, (whilst assistance may still be offered), the parent will be responsible for managing that journey.

6.0. What transport support will the Local Authority provide for mainstream Post 16 learners?

6.1 Vacant Seat Payment Scheme (VSPS)

Where usual methods of travel are not possible due to the distance involved and the absence of suitable public transport alternatives, learners will have the option of purchasing a pass to use on a school bus contracted by the council (subject to a seat being available) under the council's Vacant Seat Scheme.

Priority on school buses contracted by the council will be given to children aged under 16 for whom the council has a statutory duty to provide free travel assistance. Post 16 learners can then purchase passes for seats that have not been allocated, with priority given to those without any alternative way of travelling to the school.

Passes allow the learner to access one journey each way, at the start and end of the school day. As this is not a subsidised scheme, learners will need to pay the full **rate (as published)** for this pass on an annual basis. Details concerning the VSPS scheme together with the application form can be found [here](#).

The council has no influence on the provision or prices of services run by wholly commercial operators, Details of operators can be located within 'Useful contacts' of this policy,

6.2 Special consideration of vulnerable mainstream Post 16 learners:

The council is committed to 'focussing its' limited funds where the need is greatest and where it will make the biggest difference. Discretionary priority will therefore be given to the most vulnerable in the community whose individual circumstances warrant special consideration on top of the usual arrangements made by the council. Discretionary subsidised assistance will only be considered for those learners who can demonstrate that they cannot access any post 16 education without additional financial help from the council. This will include learners who:

- are unable to access education unsupported (i.e. their family income is such that even with the bursary they cannot afford the cost of transport);
- are young parents;
- have exceptional individual circumstances (i.e. for vulnerable or socially excluded young people)

In all cases the learner must be studying on a full-time basis (over 540 guided learning hours for the academic year) and not have a public service provider less than 3 miles from their home address (measured by the shortest available pedestrian route) which they could access.

All discretionary applications will be considered when made in writing and accompanied with the relevant supporting information. Parents, carers and students have the responsibility to disclose any information which may influence the travel support provided.

7.0 Local Authority support in other circumstances

Consideration will be given for students who:

- Have a temporary disability or illness which means they cannot attend education via their usual method
- Have wider family circumstances such as parental disability, which prevents their ability to access education
- Have medical or physical difficulties, which means they are unable to walk the distance of 3 miles (accompanied as necessary)
- Have demonstrated vulnerability or socially exclusion that impacts directly on their ability to study a full-time course.

All discretionary applications will be considered when made in writing and accompanied with the relevant supporting information. Parents, carers and students have the responsibility to fully disclose any information which may influence the travel support provided.

8.0 Applying for Local Authority transport support

To complete an application form, students or their parent/carer will need to create a login via the home to school travel assistance page on the council website:

<http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/schools-learning/financial-support-for-pupils/home-to-school-transport/free-home-school-transport/>

The application will be assessed to determine eligibility and travel provision.

Upon receipt of the application form, the Integrated Transport Unit will normally process the application within **20 working days**. We will inform you in writing of the outcome of your application.

It is the duty of the parent/ carer or student to disclose any information which may influence the travel support we provide. North Somerset will consider discretionary applications on a case by case basis.

9.0 Appeals and Complaints

If a student or parent/carer wishes to raise a complaint regarding an application for travel support, they can do so via the following link:

<https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-council/complaints/complaining-council-services/>

If the council refuses travel assistance or a student/parent/carer is unhappy with the transport arrangements offered, they have the right to appeal the decision. There are two stages to the appeals process:

9.1 Stage one: (Review by Senior Officer)

The parent/carer within 20 working days upon receiving the offer or refusal for travel assistance should submit a written request (by email or post) to the appeals officer within the Integrated Transport Unit for a review of the transport decision. This should detail why the decision should be reviewed and include any information which should be considered alongside the review.

A Senior Officer within the council will have 20 working days (on receiving the parent/carers request) to review the decision in light of the information provided against the home to school travel assistance policy and respond, this will include; whether or not the transport decision has been upheld, why that decision has been reached and the factors taken into account in reaching the decision.

9.2 Stage two: (Appeals Panel)

If a parent/carer feels the stage one appeal has not resolved the matter, an impartial re-consideration of the case can be undertaken through a stage two appeal. A parent/carer should submit written notification that they wish to escalate this to stage two within **20 working days** of receiving the outcome of the stage one appeal.

Within **40 working days** of receiving the parent/carers request for a stage two appeal an independent transport appeal panel will review the case. The composition of the panel is detailed within Appendix 3. The decision of the appeals panel will be sent to the parent/carer **within five working days** of the appeal panel hearing.

9.3 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

If following an appeal, you believe that North Somerset Council has refused help unfairly, made a mistake or not handled your appeal correctly, you may be able to complain to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

For more information please visit <https://www.lgo.org.uk/>

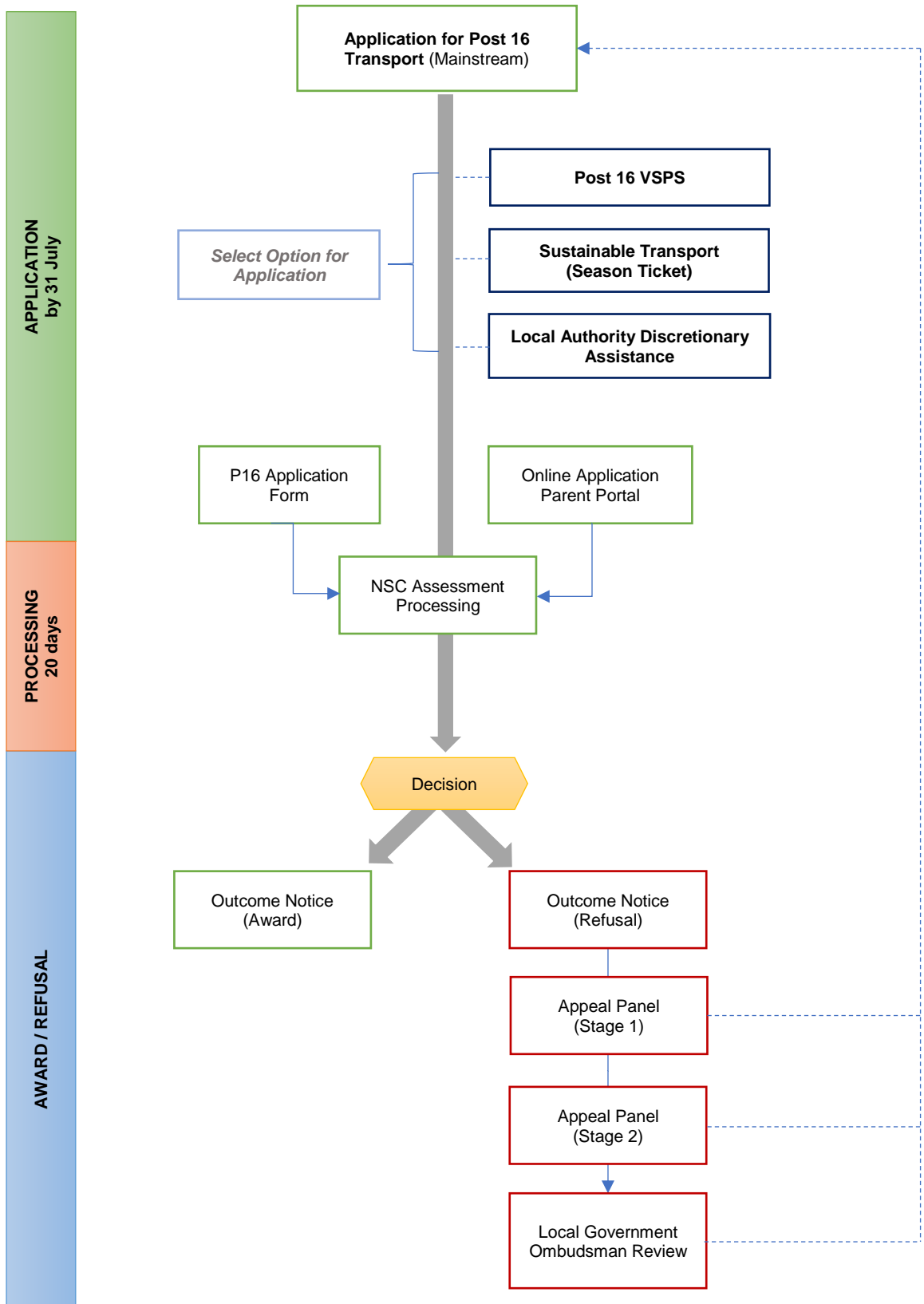
10.0 Useful Contacts Table:

Scheme	User Group	Discount	Times Available	Registration cost	Details
First Bus Concessionary Scheme	16 – 21-year olds (excluding students) which have valid First photo ID pass All students (in full time education) with valid photo ID	Up to 30% off all tickets	Any time of the day	None	Photo ID pass: Free of charge and valid for a year from the date of issue. Can apply via the link below: Valid ID for students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ NUS cards ◦ University ID cards ◦ International Student ID cards https://www.firstgroup.com/bristol-bath-and-west/tickets/ticket-types/young-person-16-21-students
16 – 25 Railcard	16 – 25 or older in full time education	Up to 1/3 on journeys	Can be used on: standard Anytime or Off-Peak trains Standard Class and First-Class Advance tickets	£30 for a year's railcard £70 for a 3-year railcard	For further information on savings and to apply: https://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/
16 – 17 railcards	Valid for students aged 16 up to their 18 th birthday	Up to half price on rail fares	??	£30 per year	
Diamond Travelcard					
The information contained below details how some schools and colleges provide extra transport help. If your school or college is not listed below, please contact them directly for information.					
Baytree School	https://www.baytreeschool.co.uk/parents/#transport				
Ravenswood School	Nothing on the website				
Weston College	https://www.weston.ac.uk/travelling-to-college				

Bridgewater and Taunton College	https://www.btc.ac.uk/students/essential-information/transport/
City of Bristol College	Nothing on website for 'travelling to college'
Bath College	https://www.bathcollege.ac.uk/college-life/getting-to-college
St Brendan's Sixth Form College	https://www.stbrn.ac.uk/info/travelling-to-college/getting-to-college/
South Gloucestershire and Stroud College	http://www.sgscol.ac.uk/subsidisedbus/

11.0 Appendices

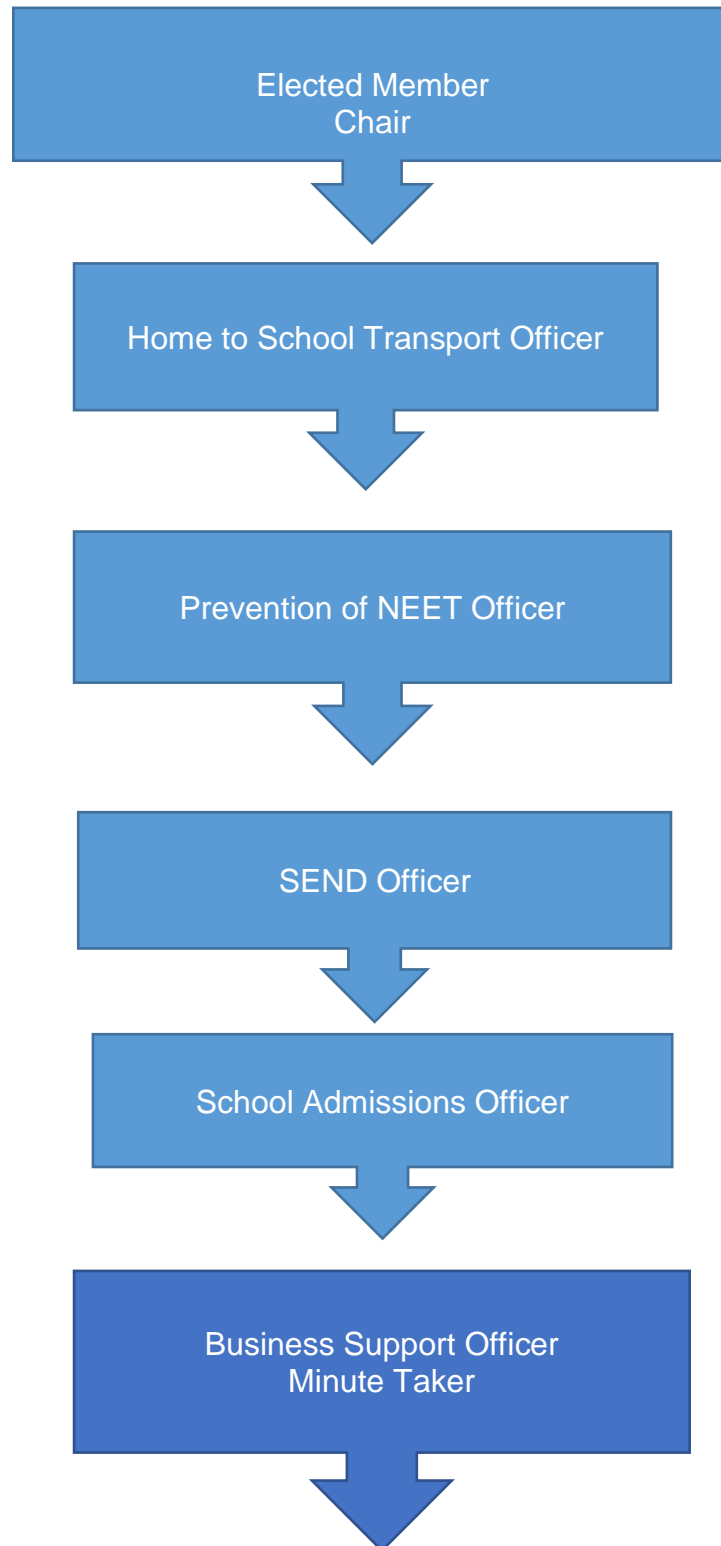
11.1 Entitlement Flow Chart



11.2 Application Form

Application forms are located here: **(Web link to be added on live publication)**

11.3 Composition of Stage 2 appeals Panel



12.0 Glossary

Qualifying Education or Training – Definition

Education or training refers to :

- a school;
- a further education institution;
- a local authority maintained or assisted institution providing higher or further education;
- a 16 to 19 Academy; or
- at any establishment (not falling within the above categories) at which the authority secures the provision of education or training under section 15ZA of the Education Act 1996.

Travel assistance is not provided to students undertaking work placements, apprenticeships or traineeships. In these circumstances, young people are advised to contact their employer or learner provider.

END

North Somerset Council Post-16 Home to School Travel Support Policy Statement 2020 – 2021 for students with SEND.

1.0 Introduction

Context:

This is one of a suite of North Somerset policies for students applying for travel support.

The policy is based on the [Statutory guidance produced by the Department for Education](#). It sets out the travel assistance North Somerset Council will provide for students of sixth form age and SEND young adults aged 19 to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in education and training.

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

There are separate policy documents for mainstream and SEND students of compulsory school age (aged 5-16) which can be found on the Council website [here](#).

Scope:

Local authorities do not have to provide free or subsidised post 16 travel support. However local authorities 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.

All young people carrying on their education post 16 must apply for travel support on an annual basis in all circumstances. Travel support will not be awarded until this process has concluded. Applications for Post 16 travel can be found [here](#)

2.0 Aims & Objectives

The aim(s) of the policy are to outline:

- The different types of support available and who provides it
- How to apply for travel assistance
- How to appeal a transport decision

North Somerset Council continues to support Post 16 further education to ensure that all children and young people have the opportunity to access education, employment, training and essential services across the county. As such, most young people are able to access Post 16 provision without requiring additional transport support.

However, we recognise that the rural nature of some parts of the county can require young people to travel outside of their immediate community to access further education opportunities. This travel policy statement therefore applies to students aged 16-19 who attend their nearest education establishment (or provider) that provides the elected course.

Consideration will also be given to 19-25-year olds who are continuing to progress and meet criteria under low income policy to enable participation.

North Somerset Council's objective is to determine how travel support is provided to those aged 16 and above. The council support the Government initiative to promote sustainable travel such as walking, cycling and use of public transport.

3.0 Transport and Travel Assistance

There are a range of options for support available to young people and their carers to support their travel and support and enable their continuing education and training. The following sections provide guidance on what is available:

3.1 Concessionary tickets for young people

Young people (aged 16-21) and students (of any age in full time education) can get up to 30% discount on all bus tickets across West of England (including Bristol, Bath, Weston-super-Mare and Wells) with First Bus. There are also railcards available for discounted rail travel for students aged between 16 - 25.

Within this Travel Policy statement examples of other concessionary schemes that are available from bus companies and those provided by schools and colleges are provided.

Students will be expected to purchase concessionary tickets themselves, North Somerset Council do not manage these schemes.

3.2 Concessionary tickets for young people (Registered Disabled)

Young people (11 years old and above) who are registered as disabled are able to apply for a concessionary bus pass through the council. Those unable to travel independently due to the nature of their disability may also be entitled to apply for a bus pass for a companion to travel with them. All relevant details can be found on the council's website [located here](#):

Young people in receipt of a disability concessionary bus pass through the council can access free transport between 09:00 – 05:00 Monday to Friday and at any times on weekends and Bank Holidays.

The council understands the importance of helping young people with disabilities to lead an independent life as possible and can be contacted to discuss individual cases where some additional support in accessing, or fully benefiting from, a concessionary bus pass may be required.

3.3 The 16 – 19-Year-Old Bursary

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

Further information can be found at www.gov.uk search for post 16 bursaries.

There are two main types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

A. Vulnerable Groups Bursary.

A vulnerable groups 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

B. Discretionary Bursaries.

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 at 31 August 2020 or
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2020 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2020 and continuing 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 the local authority

3.4 Young Parents/Care to Learn (C2L)

C2L provides funding for childcare to help young parents (defined as those aged under 20) continue in education after the birth of a child. The scheme provides funding for childcare whilst the young parent is engaged in a study programme and is not able to provide care for their child. It can also help the young parent with any additional travel costs involved in taking the child to the childcare provider.

C2L provides funding for childcare whilst young parents are on work placements or industry placements, where these are a defined part of the study programme.

Further information and to apply for the scheme, information can be found [here](#).

4.0 Local Authority Support for Learners with Special Educational Needs or Disability.

4.1 Who is eligible for support with travel?

The Local Authority will consider travel support for students who meet *all* the following criteria:

- 1. Students are under 19 on 31st August immediately preceding the start of the academic year**
2. Students who attend their nearest education establishment (or provider) that provides the elected course.
3. Students with a current statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP)
4. Students who reside outside of 3 miles (accompanied as necessary)
5. Students are studying a full-time course
6. Students who are enrolled a course which qualifies under the definition of 'Qualifying Education or Training'.

and provide satisfactory evidence to the LA:

7. That the applicants have applied to their school or college for financial assistance (Bursery), with details of the level of support offered.

The Local authority will consider individual applications where or medical or physical difficulties, mean they are unable to walk the distance of 3 miles (accompanied as necessary)

Students who are completing a course funded by North Somerset Council (using the high needs top-up funding available for the individual) will continue to receive support until the end of the academic year in which they reach 25 years of age.

5.0 What does Local Authority Support look like?

The nature and mode of travel support will be determined by the Local Authority and will be one that is consistent with the Local Authority's duty to secure value for money. There will be a presumption in favour of shared travel arrangements.

Contracted transport services will be provided only where there is no appropriate alternative. The desired outcome of this approach is to actively encourage young people to travel as independently and inclusively as possible and to develop confidence and vital travel and social skills to support options for post 16 training and employment thereafter

In cases where the Local Authority agrees assistance, it will be for a "main road" type of service, unless otherwise agreed. Parents will be expected to make their own arrangements for transport to a specified pick up point. Transport assistance will not necessarily be for a door to door service.

Any assistance offered will be to the school/college start and finish times, based on one inward and one outward journey each day. Travel assistance will not be tailored to meet individual timetables, i.e. where contract vehicle timetables are not in line with that of the student. In such circumstance's parents are expected to make suitable adjustments to travel arrangements.

Where there is no statutory duty to do so, the Authority will not provide a Passenger Assistant where this a requirement to meet individual need. Where Passenger Assistants are travelling as part of shared travel arrangements, the Authority will consider sharing this resource where the wider needs of the service continue to be met.

Where the journey time is lengthy or requires changes of vehicle as a result of the course chosen by the student, (whilst assistance may still be offered), the parent will be responsible for managing that journey.

6.0 What transport support will the Local Authority provide?

Where the eligibility criteria have been met, the Authority shall provide the following travel support in order of:

6.1 Sustainable Travel

The Local Authority will provide, where appropriate:

- Provision of a Vacant Seat on an existing Local Authority contracted vehicle under the **Vacant Seat Payment Scheme** (VSPS). Successful applications will be subject to the published parent/carer contribution charges. Details concerning the VSPS scheme together with the application form can be found [here](#).
- Provision of a season ticket where the use of is deemed by the Local Authority as appropriate. The parent shall be responsible for providing the access to the pickup/drop off point

6.2 Parental Travel Budget (PTB)

- A financial allowance to assist with travel costs to and from college

The Parental Travel Budget (PTB) will be the council's contribution towards the cost of the learner's travel arrangements (where determined by the Authority as appropriate), but by mutual agreement of both the parent/carer and the Local Authority. The payment will be tailored to the application and made directly to the learner or their family. It will be the responsibility of the learner or their responsible carer(s) to make the travel arrangements that are best suited to their needs and circumstances, which can be adapted later if necessary. Any offer by the Authority will include the value of the budget together with terms of contract and payment schedule.

A PTB will be considered where the market will not be able to supply a suitable solution.

In all cases the Parental Travel Budget value will not exceed the cost of commercially provided services.

6.3 Contracted Transport Services

Contracted transport services will be provided only where there is no appropriate alternative and where the market will be able to supply a suitable solution.

The Authority will consider the provision based on exceptional circumstances which the application will evidence within. Any award will reflect this as an effective use of Authority cost and resource, determined by a consultation with relevant stakeholders

6.4 Learners who attend a residential further education institution

Learners receiving education or training at an independent specialist provider on a residential basis (when this placement is arranged by the council and funded by the High Needs Top Up Funding) will receive travel assistance until July, or the end of their last term (whichever is earlier), in the academic year that they reach the age of 25. These learners are not required to contribute towards the cost of their transport.

Term-time boarders at residential colleges will normally only be provided with travel support at the beginning and end of terms and half terms (12 journeys in total) to reflect the residential provision.

6.5 Parental Contributions

In any discretionary award, the Local Authority may exercise its discretion, where they believe it appropriate, to ask students, parents and carers for a contribution towards travel costs. Contributions will reflect the Vacant Seat Payment Scheme (VSPS) costs published at the time of application.

7.0 Local Authority support in other circumstances

Consideration will be given for students who:

- Have a temporary disability or illness which means they cannot attend education via their usual method
- Have wider family circumstances such as parental disability, which prevents their ability to access education
- Have medical or physical difficulties, which means they are unable to walk the distance of 3 miles (accompanied as necessary)
- Have demonstrated vulnerability or socially exclusion that impacts directly on their ability to study a full-time course.

All discretionary applications will be considered when made in writing and accompanied with the relevant supporting information. Parents, carers and students have the responsibility to disclose any information which may influence the travel support provided.

8.0 Applying for Local Authority transport support

To complete an application form, students or their parent/carer will need to create a login via the home to school travel assistance page on the council website:

<http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/schools-learning/financial-support-for-pupils/home-to-school-transport/free-home-school-transport/>

The application will be assessed to determine eligibility and travel provision.

Upon receipt of the application form, the Integrated Transport Unit will normally process the application within **20 working days**. We will inform you in writing of the outcome of your application.

It is the duty of the parent/ carer or student to disclose any information which may influence the travel support we provide. North Somerset will consider discretionary applications on a case by case basis.

9.0 Appeals and Complaints

If a student or parent/carer wishes to raise a complaint regarding an application for travel support, they can do so via the following link:

<https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-council/complaints/complaining-council-services/>

If the council refuses travel assistance or a student/parent/carer is unhappy with the transport arrangements offered, they have the right to appeal the decision. There are two stages to the appeals process:

9.1 Stage one: (Review by Senior Officer)

The parent/carer within 20 working days upon receiving the offer or refusal for travel assistance should submit a written request (by email or post) to the appeals officer within the Integrated Transport Unit for a review of the transport decision. This should detail why the decision should be reviewed and include any information which should be considered alongside the review.

A Senior Officer within the council will have 20 working days (on receiving the parent/carers request) to review the decision in light of the information provided against the home to school travel assistance policy and respond, this will include; whether or not the transport decision has been upheld, why that decision has been reached and the factors taken into account in reaching the decision.

9.2 Stage two: (Appeals Panel)

If a parent/carer feels the stage one appeal has not resolved the matter, an impartial re-consideration of the case can be undertaken through a stage two appeal. A parent/carer should submit written notification that they wish to escalate this to stage two within **20 working days** of receiving the outcome of the stage one appeal.

Within **40 working days** of receiving the parent/carers request for a stage two appeal an independent transport appeal panel will review the case. The composition of the panel is detailed within Appendix 3. The decision of the appeals panel will be sent to the parent/carer **within five working days** of the appeal panel hearing.

9.3 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

If following an appeal, you believe that North Somerset Council has refused help unfairly, made a mistake or not handled your appeal correctly, you may be able to complain to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

For more information please visit <https://www.lgo.org.uk/>

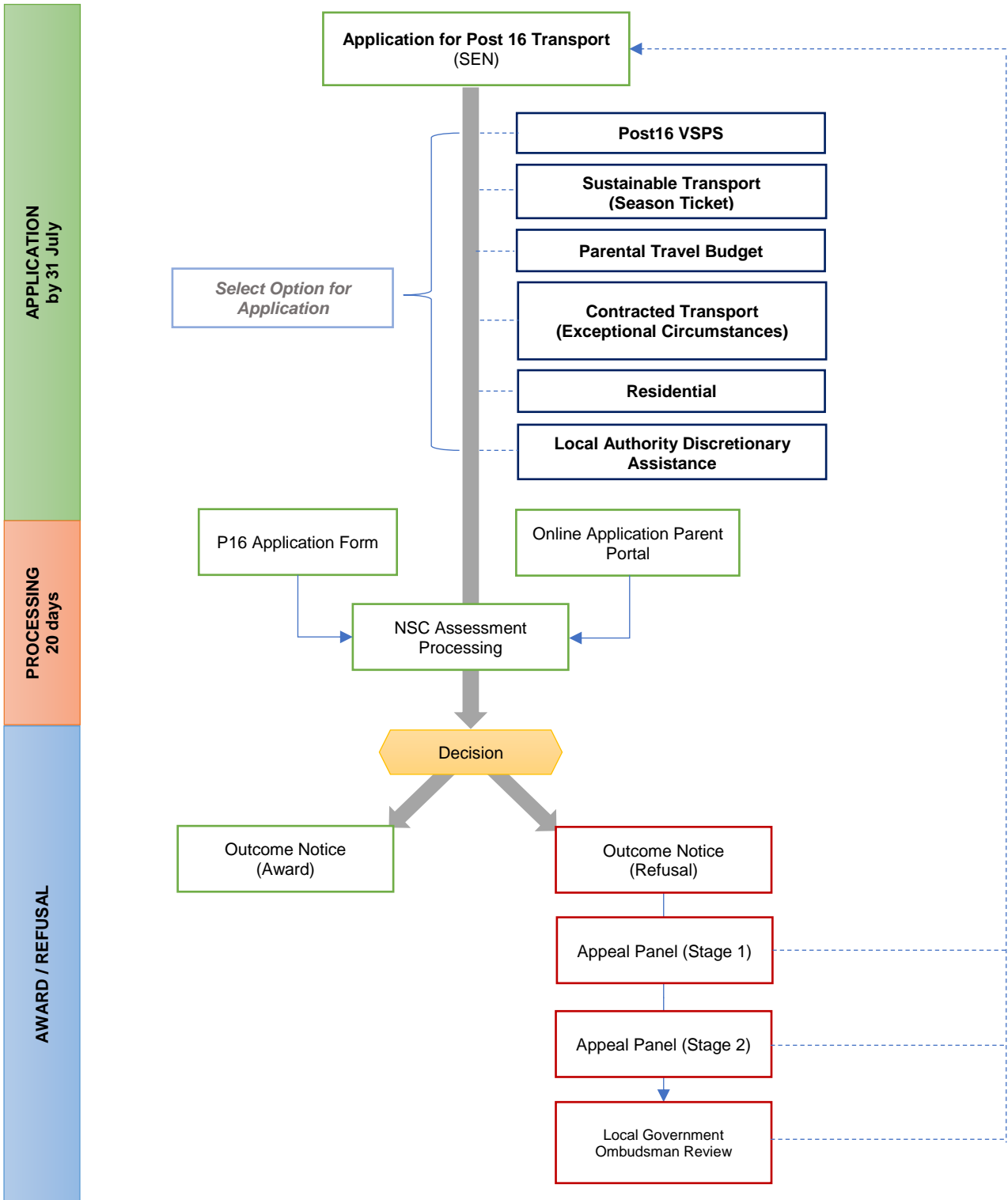
10.0 Useful Contacts Table:

Scheme	User Group	Discount	Times Available	Registration cost	Details
First Bus Concessionary Scheme	16 – 21-year olds (excluding students) which have valid First photo ID pass All students (in full time education) with valid photo ID	Up to 30% off all tickets	Any time of the day	None	Photo ID pass: Free of charge and valid for a year from the date of issue. Can apply via the link below: Valid ID for students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ NUS cards ◦ University ID cards ◦ International Student ID cards https://www.firstgroup.com/bristol-bath-and-west/tickets/ticket-types/young-person-16-21-students
16 – 25 Railcard	16 – 25 or older in full time education	Up to 1/3 on journeys	Can be used on: standard Anytime or Off-Peak trains Standard Class and First Class Advance tickets	£30 for a year's railcard £70 for a 3-year railcard	For further information on savings and to apply: https://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/
16 – 17 railcard	Valid for students aged 16 up to their 18 th birthday	Up to half price on rail fares	??	£30 per year	
Diamond Travelcard					
The information contained below details how some schools and colleges provide extra transport help. If your school or college is not listed below please contact them directly for information.					
Baytree School	https://www.baytreeschool.co.uk/parents/#transport				
Ravenswood School	Nothing on the website				
Weston College	https://www.weston.ac.uk/travelling-to-college				

Bridgewater and Taunton College	https://www.btc.ac.uk/students/essential-information/transport/
City of Bristol College	Nothing on website for 'travelling to college'
Bath College	https://www.bathcollege.ac.uk/college-life/getting-to-college
St Brendan's Sixth Form College	https://www.stbrn.ac.uk/info/travelling-to-college/getting-to-college/
South Gloucestershire and Stroud College	http://www.sgscol.ac.uk/subsidisedbus/

11.0 Appendices

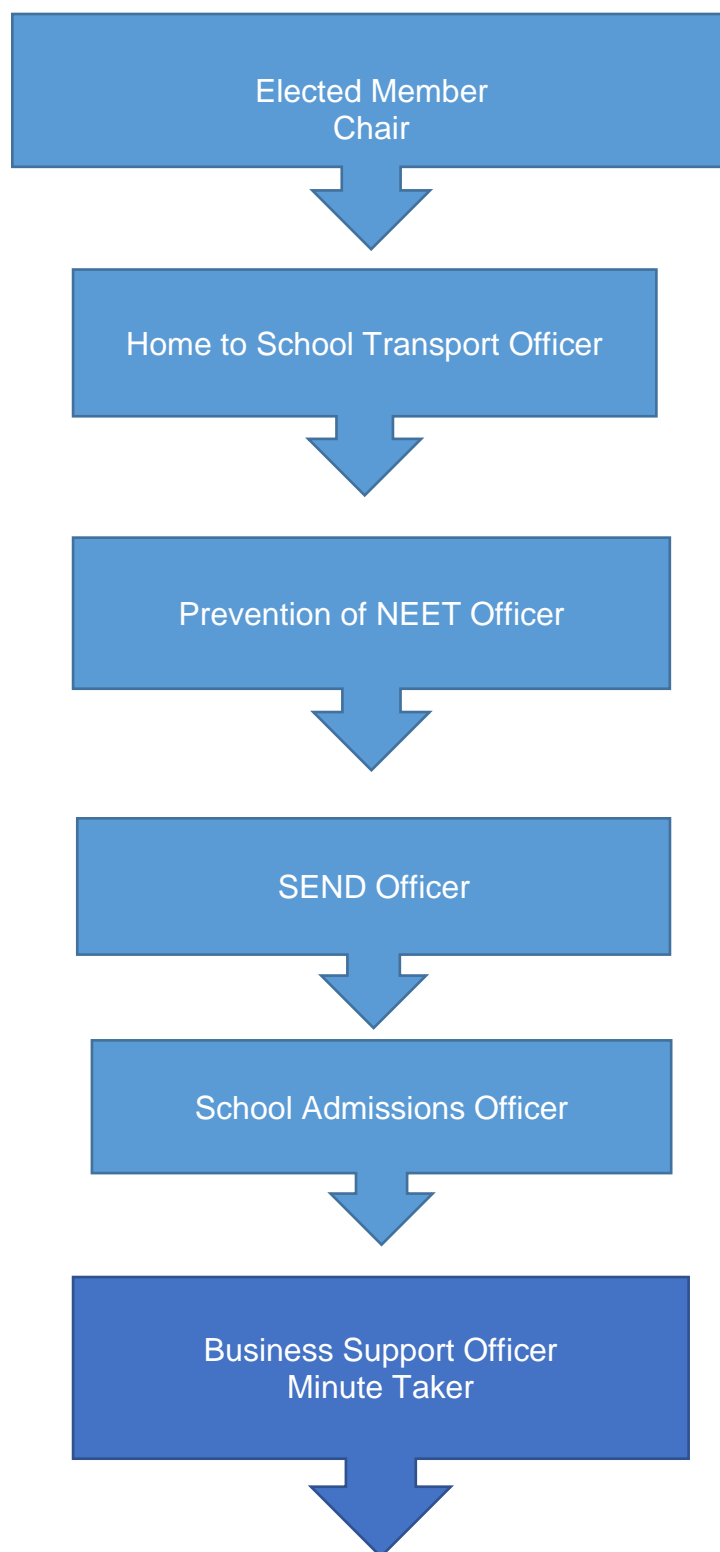
11.1 Entitlement Flow Chart



11.2 Application Form

Application forms are located here: **Web link to be added when policy published**

11.3 Composition of Stage 2 appeals Panel



12.0 Glossary

Qualifying Education or Training – Definition

Education or training refers to :

- a school;
- a further education institution;
- a local authority maintained or assisted institution providing higher or further education;
- a 16 to 19 Academy; or
- at any establishment (not falling within the above categories) at which the authority secures the provision of education or training under section 15ZA of the Education Act 1996.

Travel assistance is not provided to students undertaking work placements, apprenticeships or traineeships. In these circumstances, young people are advised to contact their employer or learner provider.

END

North Somerset Council

Initial Equality Impact Assessment

1. The Proposal

Service area:	Integrated Transport unit
Lead Officer:	Carl Nicholson
Links to budget reduction proposal? (Yes/No):	No
Date of assessment:	30/04/2020

Description of the proposal:

The introduction of a revised Post 16 home to school transport statement. There are no material changes to the legislative instruments, or how North Somerset Council assesses and applies our policies, however the policy statement has been re-designed to reflect updated DFE Statutory guidance, which suggests ways for LA's to present policies to reduce complaints. Our newly proposed statements are designed to reflect this as did the statutory school age policies we adopted in 2019.

Summary of changes:

The newly proposed statement has been split into 2 statements to reflect the acute differences in practice for mainstream and SEND students, which is a welcomed clarity for our students. The wording has been revised to give clarity, with the addition of non-binding alternative delivery options, such as the offer of personal travel budgets, or parental mileage payments, have been included for those who wish to utilise them.

The council has maintained its right to seek contributions towards travel, however the practice of applying a charge or the amount that can be charged has yet to be implemented. Any implementation would be subject to a further detailed Equalities Impact assessment.

There is no actual policy change or change to how transport is assessed or awarded in practice.

2. Customer equality impact summary

Will the proposal have a disproportionate impact on any of these groups?

Impact Level Insert X into one box per row, for impact level and type.	Impact type				Impact type		
	High	Medium	Low	None	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Disabled people			X		X		
People from different ethnic groups				X			
Men or women (including pregnant women or those on maternity leave)				X			
Lesbian, gay or bisexual people				X			
People on a low income			X		X		
People in particular age groups			X		X		

People in particular faith groups				X			
People who are married or in a civil partnership				X			
Transgender people				X			
Other specific impacts, for example: carers, parents, impact on health and wellbeing. Please specify: Parents of students who are progressing to Further Education			X		X		

3. Explanation of customer impact

In line with your assessment above please provide an explanation for the level of impact for each protected group listed.

- **Disabled People;** Specific policy statement with improved wording to define our policy and practices.
- **People on Low Income;** Improved guidance on support provided to all students on low income
- **People in Particular Age Groups;** The nature of the policy specifically relates to students over the age 16 and entering further education, the policy has been updated to reflect the need to give consideration to some students with SEND to the age of 25.
- **Other Specific Impacts;** The policy specifically impacts Students and therefore by its very nature parents or guardians.

4. Staff equality impact summary

Are there any staffing implications for this proposal?

Yes

No

Explanation of staff impact

If yes, please describe the impact including the number of posts that could be affected? State whether they are currently vacant or filled permanently or temporarily.

6. Review and Sign Off

Directorate Equality Group

When was this assessment reviewed by the Directorate Equality Group?

Is a further detailed equality impact assessment needed?

Yes

No

If 'yes', when will the further assessment be completed?

Service Manager: Colin Medus

Date: 21/05/2020

Please ensure this EIA is approved by Service Manager prior to circulation.

If this assessment identifies a potential medium or high impact, then a Full Equality Impact Assessment needs to be completed