

SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL

POST 19 YEARS EDUCATION AND TRAINING TRAVEL ASSISTANCE POLICY

Introduction:

This policy sets out Shropshire Council's statutory responsibility in respect of travel assistance for learners, specifically in relation to the duty set out in section 508F of the Education Act 1996.

Policy:

Whilst the Council actively encourages adults to participate in education and training, in order to progress their pathway to employment and maximise their independence; it is expected that the vast majority of adult learners will be able to make their own travel arrangements and meet the cost of those arrangements.

However, the Council will consider if it is necessary to make arrangements for the provision of transport pursuant to Section 508F of the Education Act 1996. The full definition is set out below but broadly this provides that the Council must make such arrangements for the provision of transport and they consider "necessary" for the purpose of facilitating the attendance of learners who are aged 19 and over at certain education institutions. The aim of the duty is to provide transport for those with the most profound needs and severe disabilities with no other means of transportation so they are able to undertake education and training to help them move towards independent living.

The Council will consider each individual application on a case by case basis and if it concludes that such arrangements are necessary, the transport will be provided free of charge.

In considering whether it is necessary for the Council to make arrangements for the provision of transport, the Council will have regard to, amongst other things, the matters set out in Section 508F(6) Education Act 1996, which includes the age of the adult and the nature of the route or alternative routes, which the adult could reasonably be expected to take.

In relation to adults who have an EHC Plan, the council will also have regard to what the Council is required to do under section 15ZA(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Where the Council has determined that it is not necessary to provide assistance under s508F of the Education Act, it may nevertheless, be appropriate to assess an individual who may be eligible for social care needs under the Care Act 2014. Any travel assistance identified within that process may be subject to a contribution.

How to apply:

You can apply online for travel assistance for any of the ages detailed on the 0-25 SEN transport page, alternatively you can contact the Specialist Travel Team at special.transport.team@shropshire.gov.uk who will be able to support with your application or if you have any queries.

How to appeal:

If an application for travel assistance is not approved, or you're unhappy with the nature of the assistance offered, you do have the right to appeal. Appeals should be made in writing. Full details can be found on the 0-25 SEN transport page.

When might it be necessary for the Council to provide travel assistance?

In determining whether it is necessary for the Council to provide assistance with transport, the Council will also consider on an individual basis why it is necessary for the Council and not the learner or family to make suitable travel arrangements. To determine whether transport may be necessary the factors the Council considers it relevant to consider will include:

1. That the learner resides in Shropshire
2. Whether the institution attended is the nearest appropriate educational establishment offering a suitable course, on a full-time basis
3. Whether the learner has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) with details of their individual needs
4. What other arrangements have been considered or tried and why they are not suitable;
5. What funding is available for transport from the institution (such as any bursaries) that the learner is attending; there is an expectation that the learner has actively applied for that funding;
6. What other funds the learner can access; there is an expectation that the learner has actively applied for that funding;
7. If there is a family member/carer who may be willing to transport the learner;
8. If the learner is in receipt of higher rate mobility component of the Personal Independence Payment, this would be considered as a means of securing independent travel assistance. If there are any factors limiting its' use applicants will need to provide details of them;
9. If there is a Motability vehicle it is expected under the terms of use that the learner will directly benefit from its use. If a decision has been made not to use the Motability vehicle to enable the learner to attend their post 19 education placement, the learner will normally be expected to make their own appropriate alternative arrangements. If this is not possible applicants will need to provide details to explain why.
10. Whether the learner has a journey to the educational or training institution that cannot be undertaken on public transport due to the availability of public transport services or because of the learner's special needs and/or disabilities

Where it is considered that travel assistance is necessary it will be arranged in the most cost-effective way and will focus on support that will aim for or enable the learner to travel as independently as possible.

Transport is not provided to meet a learner's individual timetable, including before and after college clubs, extra-curricular activities, exams or work experience/placements. It is also not provided for supported internships.

(Section 508F of the Education Act 1996 provides that the Council must make such arrangements for the provision of transport and they consider "necessary" for the following purposes:

1. To facilitate the attendance of adults receiving education at specialist institutions either maintained or assisted by the Council and providing further or higher education (or both) or within the further education sector,
2. To facilitate the attendance of an adult for whom an EHC Plan is maintained receiving education or training at institutions outside both the further education sector and the wider higher education sector, but only where the Council have secured the provision of education or training at the institution in question, and the provision of boarding accommodation.

An "adult" is defined as a person who is neither a child nor a person of sixth form age (which means they are over compulsory school age but either under 19 or have begun a particular course of education or training before the age of 19 and continue to attend that course))