

Supporting Information for the Public Consultation on the Warwickshire County Council Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Home to School Transport Service 2022

5 December 2022 – 26 February 2023

Introduction

In Warwickshire, we are working to provide children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) the best service experience. As part of the wider consideration of service we are looking at proposed changes to the SEND Home to School Transport Service.

We are inviting views from stakeholders and the wider public on the following proposals:

- A simplified application process for parents and carers.
- A more consistent and transparent approach to determining transport options for children and young people who are eligible for home to school transport.
- Updates to the Home to School and College Transport Policy to make this clearer and easier to understand.

The consultation will inform the future application and assessment process for home to school transport for children and young people with SEND in Warwickshire, and the Home to School and College Transport Policy.

The consultation will run from 5 December 2022 to 26 February 2023.

This document provides a greater level of detail of the proposed changes and should be read in conjunction with the Public Information Document. You can also find answers to Frequently Asked Questions [here](#).

1. Proposals to change the application process for SEND home to school transport

The table below provides a summary of the current process that parents and carers are expected to follow to make a request for SEND home to school transport for their child or young person, the changes being proposed, and the potential outcomes expected because of these changes.

If approved, the new application process would be introduced in time for parents/carers applying for a school place for September 2024.

Current process	Proposed change	Potential outcomes
<p>Parents/carers must submit a separate application to the Council for home to school transport after they have received confirmation of their child/young person's school place.</p> <p>The application form can be time-consuming and complicated for parents/carers to complete.</p> <p>The form is submitted only after confirmation of the school place has been received, which can leave parents/carers little time to prepare their child or young person for any changes in routine or to put transport arrangements in place for when they start school.</p> <p>The timing can also make it more difficult for the transport team to plan transport efficiently and effectively, meaning options chosen may be more costly than necessary.</p>	<p>Parents/carers would be asked to express an interest in home to school transport at the same time as applying for their child's school place. A simple 'Yes/No' tick box on the school application form would capture this.</p> <p>Once the school/ setting is named in the EHC plan a check would be carried out against the Council's published criteria and one of the following would then happen:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If eligible, a risk assessment would be done to identify transport options appropriate to that child or young person's needs. Transport options would then be presented to parents/carers. 2. If not eligible, the parent/carer would be informed and is then responsible for arranging suitable transport to get their child or young person to and from their school/setting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new process would remove the need to submit a separate application form therefore making it simpler for parents/carers to request home to school transport. • Transport options would be provided in a timelier way to parents/carers giving them longer to prepare their child or young person for changes in routine or to make transport arrangements in time for the start of the school year. • The transport service would have more time to plan the transport service more efficiently resulting in better value for money.

2. Needs Assessment Matrix (NAM)

The Needs Assessment Matrix (NAM) is a tool that has been designed to help identify potential travel options for a child or young person, based on their level of special educational need and/or disability.

The tool is meant to identify **how** a child or young person will be transported to their educational setting, not **if** they will be offered transport. This means that it will not affect eligibility.

If a parent/carer indicates that they wish their child to be considered for home to school transport, a check would first be carried out to determine if they qualify. If the child or young person is eligible for transport, an individual assessment would be carried out using the NAM. This will help to identify appropriate travel options for that child or young person, which will then be presented to parents/carers.

The NAM would also be used to make an assessment if a child or young person moves to a different educational setting mid-way through the year.

If approved, the NAM would be introduced in May 2023 and used to identify transport options for children and young people starting school in September 2023.

Children currently accessing home to school transport will not be immediately affected but will be reassessed under the new framework if they move educational settings or house after 1 May 2023.

Current process	Proposed change	Potential outcomes
<p>The Council uses an in-house model for assessing the level of need to be able to identify appropriate transport options for a child or young person.</p>	<p>The Needs Assessment Matrix (NAM) would focus on five areas to identify the needs of the child or young person:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mobility 2. Medical 3. Behavioural 4. Vulnerability 5. Independent Travel Training <p>Each of the five assessment headings are converted into the matrix. For each heading, a score is</p>	<p>Increased ability to support preparation for adulthood and increase independence</p> <p>Consistent and clear decision making</p> <p>An inclusive needs-based approach to support all children and young people.</p>

	calculated and added to the overall score.	
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Matrix scoring

The matrix uses a scale of 1-5 to score need (impact) and likelihood (frequency). these are combined to create a single score. The greater the score, the greater the need for tailored support options ranging from a standard bus to a specially adapted vehicle with attendants(s)The NAM aims to gather a holistic view of the child or young person and give an overall score which may indicate their overall level of need related to transport options. The NAM recognises that a singular area may not provide significant challenge for a child or young person but when combined with other areas appropriate travel options may be identified.

What if transport cannot be agreed?

This NAM is designed to make decision making easier and consistent across all that use it.

However, it’s expected there will be times and scenarios where the result may not feel suitable and appropriate. In this case, the Risk Assessor should ask a more experienced colleague to check the completed NAM for the student to check its accuracy

3. Home to School and College Transport Policy

The Home to School and College Transport Policy sets out our approach to providing transport to schools/educational settings for children and young people aged 3 to 19 years old (up to 25 years for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities).

We are proposing some additions and further clarification to our current policy to make it clearer and easier to understand.

Policy Section	Current wording	Proposed new wording	What this means
Section 4 - General principles applying to transport provision under this policy for those of compulsory school age.	New wording – not previously mentioned in the policy	“Where damage occurs to a transport operator’s vehicle as the result of the actions of the child, a specialist risk assessor will investigate the	Parents/carers will not be approached for repair costs unless the damage is the result of a deliberate act.

4.5 -Behaviour		incident. Repair costs will only be sought from the child’s family if a conclusion is reached by the Council that the damage was the result of a malicious act by the child.”	
Section 5 - Provision of transport for those of compulsory school age 5.1 - Transport Arrangements	No transport assistance will be offered to enable children and young people to attend wrap- around provision, work experience, breakfast clubs, paid employment, extra-curricular activities, or any other provision which exists outside of normal school hours. Similarly, no transport will be provided to any site other than the school’s main campus. No transport assistance will be provided to college day release programmes, to attend an induction or taster day at another school/college, work experience or other school sites.	No transport assistance will be offered to enable children and young people to attend wrap- around provision, work experience, breakfast clubs, paid employment, extra-curricular activities, or any other provision which exists outside of normal school hours. Similarly, no transport will be provided to any site other than the school’s main campus. No transport assistance will be provided to college day release programmes, to attend an induction or taster day at another school/college, work experience or other school sites. Exceptions to this are: Supported internships/apprenticeships schemes and	It will be clear to parents/carers, children and young people that transport is available if the conditions listed apply.

		Specialist placements which include attendance at multiple settings in one day where agreed by the Council in advance (eg. morning at a special school, afternoon at mainstream school).	
<p>Section 5 - Provision of transport for those of compulsory school age</p> <p>5.1 - Transport Arrangements</p>	<p>“Passenger assistants will not be provided on vehicles transporting pupils to schools unless there is a need related to a pupil’s special educational need or disability, or in other very exceptional circumstances.”</p>	<p>“Passenger assistants will not be provided on vehicles transporting pupils to schools unless, following a risk assessment, there is a need indicated that is related to a pupil’s special educational need or disability, or in other very exceptional circumstances.”</p>	<p>This clarifies the mechanism the Council will use to understand if there is a need for a passenger assistant.</p>
<p>Section 5 - Provision of transport for those of compulsory school age</p> <p>5.2 - Direct Travel Payments</p>	<p>“Where transport does not currently operate, in the first instance, parents will be given the opportunity to convey the pupil themselves or to make their own arrangements and to receive a Direct Travel Payment (DTP). DTPs will not be provided unless agreed by the pupil’s parents.</p>	<p>“In the first instance, parents will be given the opportunity to transport the pupil themselves or to make their own arrangements and to receive a Direct Travel Payment (DTP). DTPs will not be provided unless agreed by the pupil’s parents.</p>	<p>parents/carers, will be given the opportunity to transport their child or young person to school in their own vehicle and receive a direct travel payment contribution towards the costs incurred.</p>

What happens next?

Following the consultation all feedback will be analysed and used to inform any changes made to the Home to School Transport assessment and application process, and any changes of wording in the Home to School and College Transport Policy document.