

Bristol City Council Post-16 Travel Support Policy Statement

Academic Year 2025 – 2026

Travel Support policy statement for young people and learners aged 16-18 in further education, continuing young persons and learners aged 19 and those young people aged 19 – 25 (inclusive) with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

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Introduction

Local authorities do not have a duty to provide free or subsidised post 16 travel support but do have a duty to prepare and publish an annual travel support 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.

Most young people in Bristol will be able to access their education without the support of the Council. It is expected that public transport and other travel options (including financial support) are explored in the first instance and utilised wherever possible.

All young people carrying on their education post 16 must reapply for travel support to be considered for ongoing support, which, if they were unable to access the bursary fund would be through a personal travel budget.

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

Local authorities also have a duty to encourage, enable and assist young people with learning difficulties / disabilities to participate in education and training, up to the age of 25.

The Council has a duty under s.508A of the Education Act 1996 to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport for all children and young people in Bristol. This requires the Council to have a strategy to develop sustainable travel and transport infrastructure and to promote these modes of travel as part of the [One City Climate Strategy](#).

We encourage young people to walk, scoot, wheel and bus to school with support from our Active Travel Team and [Bristol School Streets - travelWEST](#). These schemes are part of our plans to improve road safety, encourage walking, cycling to and from school and improve the air quality and environment outside of schools.

This policy uses the term 'Post 16' to include both child or young persons of sixth form age and those with learning difficulties / disabilities up to the age of 25.

This policy document specifies the support that Bristol City Council (the Council) considers necessary to facilitate the attendance of Post 16 child or young person receiving education or training.

Education or training refers to learning or training at a school, further education institution, a council maintained or assisted institution providing higher or further education, an establishment funded directly by the Education Skills Funding Agency, learning providers delivering accredited programmes of learning which lead to positive outcomes and are funded by the council, for example, colleges, charities and private learning providers.

Home to school travel provision applies to home (the place where the child is habitually resident) to school (the educational setting where the child is enrolled) travel arrangements, and vice versa. This does not include pick-up or drop-offs at locations other than home or school, such as any extracurricular activities or appointments.

Aims and Objectives

In Bristol we have invested to ensure that young people have sufficient support to be prepared for adulthood, being able access education, employment, training and essential services across the city. This is at the forefront of the Council's SEND Strategy and the Bristol Belonging Strategy. The service is also committed to:

“Work with parents and carers to ensure young people are empowered to travel to and from education safely and as independently as possible”.

The vision within these strategies underpins this policy statement in relation to the assessment of travel needs and necessary travel support that is subsequently provided:

- For our young people to have the best possible start in life, gaining the support and skills they need to prosper in adulthood.
- For our young people to be welcomed into to a city with a culture of nurture and care, with opportunities to grow with support from their community.
- For our young people to have their needs recognised at the earliest point in a system that collaborates to help them thrive.
- For our young people to have a home which sustains, nourishes, and protects them in safe and healthy families.
- For our young people to have a confident sense of self and identity in a cohesive and diverse city.
- For our young people to access education that is inclusive and values diversity, where they learn from each other and benefit from an understanding of their different experiences.
- For our young people to own the whole city and experience and benefit from all that Bristol offers.
- For our young people to develop the skills to travel more sustainably in the future as part of the [One City Climate Strategy](#).

Types of travel support

Concessionary tickets for young people 16 – 25 from public transport providers

Discounted Bus Fares (Bristol)

The West of England Combined Authority, North Somerset Council and bus operators offer discounted fares on buses for everyone in the Bristol and Bath areas.

It caps a single adult ticket (to those aged 16 or over) in Bristol at £2.40 on services within the Bristol Rider Zone (approximately 6-mile radius of Bristol City Centre).

The scheme excludes special school and college buses, and airport buses (except the A4 AirDecker which is part of the scheme).

Tickets are purchased directly with the appropriate bus operator for the service being used. Bus operators participating in the scheme include (this is subject to change):

- Abus

- Bath & NE Somerset Council
- Bath Bus Company
- Citistar
- Coachstyle
- Ct Coaches
- Eurocoaches
- Faresaver Buses
- First Bus
- Frome Bus
- Libra Travel
- The Big Lemon
- Transpora

The scheme is in operation until the end of December 2025. For more details see: [Bus fares changes - WEST](#)

National 16 – 17 Saver (Train)

In January 2019, the Department for Transport announced the launch of a new national Railcard scheme which benefits 16 - 17-year-olds. This Railcard offers 16 - 17-year-olds a 50% discount on rail travel and is available from September 2019. More information is available on the Railcard website [16-17 Saver | National Rail](#).

The Saver offers 16 - 17-year-olds:

- a 50% discount off standard anytime, off- peak, PlusBus, advance and season tickets
- can be used on South Western Railways, Southern and Great Western Railway network and
 - across the National Rail network (except on ScotRail and Caledonian Sleeper services)
- the card costs £30 and is valid for one year or until your 18th birthday
- a season ticket purchased before your 18th birthday can run up to 4 months after you turn 18. For example, if you turn 18 in February 2020 then you can purchase a season ticket which will still give you 50% discount for travel up until June 2020

Concessionary Bus Travel

The Bristol concessionary bus pass (national scheme) entitles holders to travel free of charge on off-peak local bus services anywhere in England. Off-peak hours are 9:30am until 11pm on weekdays and all day at weekends and bank holidays.

Disabled bus pass holders can travel for free in Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset, North Somerset or South Gloucestershire at any time, including during peak hours.

You can apply for a travelcard due to disability if you qualify under any of these categories:

you're severely sight impaired (SSI) or sight impaired (SI)
you're profoundly or severely deaf
you cannot speak or your ability to speak is severely and permanently impaired
your ability to walk is permanently and severely impaired
you do not have arms or have long-term loss of the use of both arms
you have a learning disability
you're unable to drive due to a medical condition

If you receive any of the following benefits you will automatically qualify for a travelcard:

8 points or more in either the moving around or communicating components for the Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
The higher rate for the mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance
You receive a lump sum payment under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme in tariff 1-8
The War Pensioners Mobility Supplement.

Further details can be found on the Council's website: [Disabled person's bus pass \(bristol.gov.uk\)](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/disabled-persons-bus-pass)

Travel support from schools and colleges

Young people may also purchase seats on vehicles run by individual schools, colleges or by third party commercial operators on the school's or college's behalf. For up-to-date information on available routes/support please check individual school/college websites as well as Guidance information from the Council in relation to Post 16 travel support:

Home to School Travel webpage - [School travel support \(bristol.gov.uk\)](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/school-travel-support).

Local offer - [Support with travel for young people with SEND \(bristol.gov.uk\)](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/support-with-travel-for-young-people-with-send)

The 16-19 Bursary Fund

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

There are 2 types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

1. A vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 a year for 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

2. 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 must:

- be aged 16 or over but under 19 on 31 August 2024 or
- be aged 19 or over on 31 August 2024 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- be aged 19 or over on 31 August 2024 and continuing on 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.

Schools and colleges are responsible for managing both types of bursaries. Anyone wishing 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/1619-bursary-fund.

Young parents / Care to Learn

If you are a young parent under 20, Care to Learn can help pay for your childcare and related travel costs, up to £160 per child per week, while you're learning. Care to Learn can help with the cost of:

- childcare, including deposit and registration fees
- a childcare 'taster' session (up to 5 days)
- keeping your childcare place over the summer holidays
- taking your child to the childcare provider

The childcare provider must be Ofsted registered and can be a:

- childminder
- pre-school playgroup
- day nursery
- out of school club

If your child needs specialist childcare, the provider must also be on the Care Quality Commission's register for specialist provision.

If you want a relative to get Care to Learn for looking after your child, they need to be both:

- providing registered childcare for children they're not related to
- living apart from you and your child

Childcare payments go directly to your childcare provider. Before your childcare provider can be paid:

- your childcare provider needs to confirm your child's attendance
- your school or college needs to confirm that you're attending your course

Payments for travel costs go to your school or college - they'll either pay you or arrange travel for you.

Payments will stop if:

- you stop attending your course
- you finish your course
- your child stops attending childcare

You can get Care to Learn if:

- you're a parent under 20 at the start of your course
- you're the main carer for your child
- you live in England
- you're either a British citizen or a national of a European Economic Area (EEA) country
- your course is publicly funded (check with your school or college)
- your childcare provider is registered with Ofsted or the Care Quality Commission

Care to Learn is only available for courses in England that have some public funding. This includes courses that take place in:

- schools
- school sixth forms
- sixth form colleges
- other colleges and learning providers, including Foundation Learning
- your community at Children's Centres

Young parents are also entitled to apply for an Under 19 Bus Only Ticket or for those aged 19 and over can apply for the 19 – 25 card.

For more information please visit <https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn>

LA Support

In 2015, the Government increased the age at which young people must continue in education or training to 18. Although you must now remain in education or training until you are 18, the age range of free travel support available to young people has not increased with this. While the council does not have to provide free support with travel for 16-18 age group, it must publish each year a travel policy statement, setting out what travel arrangements are available for 16-18 year olds to participate in education.

LA support for young people without special educational needs or a disability

You can only receive travel support if you're 16 to 25 and have a current EHCP, a medical condition that means you have mobility issues, or a physical disability that means you have mobility issues.

Young people aged 16-25 who do not have a current EHCP or a disability, who will be attending a school or college to continue their education, will be responsible for all their own travel costs and arrangements. For additional support to attend a school or college you can apply for the concessionary schemes outlined in the Types of Travel Support section of this policy p4-8.

LA support for young people with special educational needs or a disability

The concessionary schemes outlined in the Types of Travel Support section of this policy pages 4-8 are available to young people entering post-16 education with special educational needs or a disability.

Wherever possible we will expect public transport to be used in the first instance.

Travel training referrals will be made available for all young people. It is expected that the Travel Trainers will assess whether the young person can engage in travel training by the end of the first term of post 16 education. Families will be required to contribute towards the cost of travel support.

If the financial circumstances of the family/individual mean they cannot pay the contribution, then a request for the contribution to be waived can be submitted to the Council once all avenues for financial support as set out in this policy have been explored. Applicants must evidence that the other avenues of support have been explored prior to requesting Council support.

To assess any request the Council will need to know:

1.	What other arrangements have been considered or tried and why they are not suitable.
2.	If there is a family member or carer who is willing and able to transport the child or young person and if not, why they cannot assist.
3.	Whether the child or young person is in receipt of higher rate mobility component of the Personal Independence Payment or Disability Living Allowance. The purpose of which is to assist those who have mobility problems, with severe difficulty walking or who need help getting around outside. We would normally expect this benefit to be fully utilised and if there are any factors limiting its use, details should be provided whether there is a 'Motability' vehicle for which the child or young person may or may not be the driver.
4.	Whether the young person is currently in receipt (or has applied for) of any funding from the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund and to what value.
5.	The location of the sixth form unit or college the young person would like to attend.

6.	Whether the young person is attending the nearest appropriate educational setting named in Section I of their EHCP, following formal consultation by the SEND Team, rather than an educational setting named due to parental preference.
7.	The distance from the young person's home to their education establishment and the journey time.
8.	Whether the young person has SEND and/or mobility difficulties which would impede their access to their educational placement, either independently or otherwise, for example, a wheelchair user.
9.	Whether the young person has SEND which would make it unsafe for them to travel independently.
10.	Whether it is reasonable to expect the child or young person to travel to the nearest suitable placement independently using public transport journey.
11.	Any other needs or circumstances relevant to the specific young person.

A child or young person will not automatically be eligible for home to school travel support solely because of parental/carer work or caring commitments that mean they are unable to accompany their child/young person themselves.

Families will usually be required to contribute towards the cost of any travel support provided. The family's contribution amount will be reviewed annually and adjusted in-line with inflation with notification dates published annually in the Local Offer. Families or the young person can arrange to split the assessed contribution into five equal payments to cover the six terms of the academic year.

Local Authorities will consider applications for support with travel to colleges outside the area if the course is considered to be the nearest appropriate course. Applications should be made to the Local Authority in which the student lives.

The eligibility criteria is not an exhaustive list. Each request will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. For information about how to apply for travel support, please see "Applying for LA travel support" below.

Young people aged 19-25 attending post 16 education

The Council has travel support duties to relevant young adults (an adult who is aged under 25, started their current course after their 19th birthday and for whom an EHCP is maintained).

The Council recognises that adults are, in many cases, more capable of achieving independent travel than young people of statutory school age. As such the policy for post-19

(19-25) young people is focused upon a needs-led approach in which the individual needs of each young adult are assessed to inform the appropriate form of travel support.

'Post-19' will include young persons aged 19 to 25 (who started their course before their 19th birthday).

The Council will consider whether support with travel is necessary to enable young adults with EHCPs to maintain attendance at their education placement. If it is identified that support is necessary, then there would be no charge/ financial contribution expected from the young adult.

For post-19 young people starting a new course, they must also evidence why it is necessary for the Council to make their travel arrangements. The same assessment and considerations that were applied to young people aged 16-19 will be applied to those 19-25 based on the evidence provided and, on a case-by-case basis to determine if support from the Council with travel and access to their education placement is necessary.

Refunds

If travel support is no longer required part way through a term, a partial reimbursement of the charge may apply, provided all tickets/passes have been returned and are received within the timescales stated in the table below. When calculating a reimbursement for tickets/passes received after the first day of a term an administrative charge of £10 will apply. The following levels of refund will be payable after the administration charge has been taken:

Length of time ticket/pass has been used	Refund Due
Up to 1 term	75%
Up to 2 terms	50%
Over 2 terms	0%

No reimbursement will be paid during the summer term.

Travel training

Local authorities have a duty to encourage, enable and assist the participation of young people with learning difficulties or disabilities up to the age of 25 in education and training. Independent travel training aims to achieve this.

Independent travel is a valuable skill for preparing for adulthood, an essential employability skill, and provides greater opportunities for young people, not least increasing confidence in their abilities and reducing their sense of reliance on family members.

The Council will work in partnership with education establishments and other individuals to identify young people who could benefit from Independent Travel Training (ITT) and contact their families to invite them to take part in ITT.

Further information on Travel Training, how it is assessed, delivered, and the benefits it provides young people can be found on the [SEND Local Offer \(bristol.gov.uk\)](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/send-local-offer).

Apprenticeships

The learning provider is responsible for ensuring that students have reasonable expenses met in full, where reasonable expenses are needed to overcome barriers to learning. These may include the cost of travelling to or from the place of learning or work placement. Employers are encouraged to support trainees with expenses such as transport and meals. It may also be worth asking the learning provider if they offer their own transport service as some may do this.

Support with travel costs may be available from the Government's Access to Work scheme. For further information go to Access to Work: get support if you have a disability or health condition: [Access to Work: get support if you have a disability or health condition: What Access to Work is - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/access-to-work-get-support-if-you-have-a-disability-or-health-condition)

LA travel support available for young people with SEND

Where young people are identified as only able to access their post 16 education with support from the Council, after exhausting all other travel options, then the Council may allocate a travel option from the categories below.

Subject to meeting the eligibility criteria of this policy, the following support will be considered:

1. provision of a bus pass or train pass for the child or young person
2. provision of independent travel training
3. provision of a Personal Travel Budget

All travel support will be reviewed as part of the annual review of needs and if appropriate as part of an early review. Travel support may be withdrawn or amended if circumstances change.

If a young person is unable to travel on public transport, or unable to learn how to travel independently through Independent Travel Training, the Council will discuss the payment of a Personal Travel Budget (PTB) with the young person and their family. The PTB will be the Council's contribution towards the cost of the child or young person's travel arrangements and will be paid directly to young person or their family. It will be the responsibility of the young person or their family to make the travel arrangements that are best suited to their needs and circumstances, which can be reviewed later if necessary.

More details on PTB can be found at [Personal travel budget \(PTB\): money to help take your child to school \(bristol.gov.uk\)](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/ptb).

Additional eligibility criteria

The Council will consider and may agree requests for support with travel to Post 16 education placements where there are circumstances that prevent a young person accessing their further education placement unless travel support is provided. If the parent/carer(s) or young person believes extenuating circumstances exist and support with travel is necessary, then they should provide additional information and evidence when submitting their application for consideration.

The overriding expectation is that parent/carer(s) and or young person(s) will have exhausted all other available options to support and enable travel to and from their education placement. The Council will need to be satisfied it has been demonstrated that, for social, medical, financial or personal reasons, access to their education placement cannot be facilitated without support towards travel arrangements.

The determination will be based on evidence received to support the case that travel support is necessary for the young person to access their education.

In all cases the decision whether to exercise discretion will be taken on a case-by-case basis.

Applying for LA travel support

The Council will look to complete the assessment of applications in a timely fashion, aiming to put in place travel arrangements for those entitled at the earliest opportunity. However, it may take up to 6 weeks to process and families should be prepared to make their own interim travel arrangements if necessary.

All requests for travel support for young people with an EHCP must have a completed application form.

[Apply for post 16 travel support - bristol.gov.uk](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/apply-for-post-16-travel-support)

While an application is being processed parent/carers will be responsible for making their own travel arrangements, Bristol City Council will not compensate parent/carers during the assessment process for any costs incurred.

During periods of high demand, such as the build-up to the new academic year, timescales for processing applications may be extended. Families are advised to apply for support with travel at the earliest opportunity to ensure arrangements are in place when they are required.

To try and reduce any disruption to the service and inform effective planning, Bristol City Council are implementing cut off dates for applications made for arrangements to begin for the next academic year. The beginning of the academic year is the most critical time with regards to school travel and we aim to promote continuity in the service we provide the children.

Late applications will still receive travel support; however, this may be delayed for the start of the academic year. The arrangements may be interim or temporary solutions that have been sought in the short term and will be subject to review/change.

Cut-off dates will be published well in advance via the Council's local offer, which is available on the Councils website. Where possible, we will also correspond with parent/carers in writing via mail/email informing them of the exact dates.

Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application with explanation of the reasoning of the decision in accordance with this policy.

Appeals

There is a two-stage process for parent/carer(s) and child or young person who wish to challenge a decision about:

- the travel support arrangements offered.
- the child or young person's eligibility.

Stage one: Review by a senior officer

To request an appeal, contact home.school.travel@bristol.gov.uk

- Parent/carer(s) or child or young person have 20 working days from receipt of the local authority's home to school travel support decision to make a written request asking for a review of the decision.
- The written request should detail why the parent/carer(s) or child or young person believes the decision should be reviewed and give details of any personal and/or family circumstances the parent/carer(s) or child or young person believes should be considered when the decision is reviewed.
- Where this is possible, within 20 working days of receipt of the parent/carer(s) and/or child or young person's written request a senior officer reviews the original decision and sends the parent/carer(s) or child or young person a detailed written notification of the outcome of their review.

Stage two: Review by an independent appeal panel

To request an appeal, contact home.school.travel@bristol.gov.uk

Parent/carer(s) or child or young person have 20 working days from receipt of the local authority's stage one written decision notification to make a written request to escalate the matter to stage two.

Within 40 working days of receipt of the parent/carer(s) or child or young person's request, an independent appeal panel considers written and verbal representations from both the parent/carer(s)/child or young person and officers involved in the case and gives a detailed written notification of the outcome (within 5 working days).