

Post 16 Transport Consultation

Questions & Answers

Q. What travel assistance is currently offered to Post 16 learners?

A. In its most simplistic form, the current transport policy for students aged 16+ provides subsidised assistance for students who have to travel over three miles to their nearest school or college. A 50% contribution towards the cost of a bus pass is required - for September 2015 it was £456. Full details of the policy can be found on the council's website: <http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/applyforabuspass>.

Q. What is the overall cost of providing this support for the council?

A. As it is a discretionary service, the council does not have a dedicated budget for providing Post 16 transport but obviously tries to keep costs as low as possible by combining their travel with public services and school buses carrying younger children to school.

Q. Is there any other financial help available?

A. The Government provides funding for bursaries for students aged 16-19 to assist with education related costs, depending on their circumstances. Full details can be found on the Government's web page below:

<https://www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund/overview>

Q. The dedicated school bus that my daughter travels on at the moment will be the only way that she can get to school when she goes into the sixth form. How will she get there if she cannot use this bus next year?

A. Although there is a duty for authorities to consider what arrangements they feel are necessary to support learners of sixth form age to access education and training, there is no requirement for the council to provide free transport.

We are therefore consulting on removing the financial subsidy given to students, not the actual transport that they use. This will mean that students can still access education by using a public service if it is available, or a school contract bus that the council already has in place, but they would need to fund the full cost of that service.

Q. What is the current cost of transport for a Post 16 learner?

A. The real cost of transport varies depending upon the service students use, the operator providing those buses, the distance students travel and where they live and all bus fares are subject to change. However, the average across the county is just over £900 this year.

Q. Will I be able to spread the cost of the bus pass?

A. The cost can be spread by direct debit payments, usually over eight months, or you can pay by debit card in two instalments.

Q. Why are you considering removing the subsidy for Post 16 transport when the Government says that pupils now have to continue in education until the age of 18?

A. Although the Government increased the age to which all young people must continue in education or training (Raising the Participation Age), this does not mean that young people must stay in school. They may continue in full time education in school or college, work based learning such as apprenticeships, or part time education or training if they are employed. The statutory school leaving age has therefore not been changed, and the statutory duty on local authorities to provide transport for pupils still ends at 16 years.