



Transport policy statement for learners aged 16-18 in further education and continuing learners with learning difficulties and or disabilities aged 19 and over from September 2017

1. What is the purpose of this policy statement?

Torbay has an established public transport network that enables students to access post-16 provision in and around Torbay. This statement explains the circumstances when the council and post-16 sixth forms/colleges will provide assistance with the cost of accessing this network, and the assistance available for students who are not able to access public transport due to a learning difficulty or disability. It also directs students to other assistance that may be available directly from sixth forms/colleges.

2. What are the criteria for assistance?

Assistance from the local authority

There is no automatic entitlement to free home to school or college transport once a student is over 16. A bus pass can be purchased through Stagecoach in Torbay for **£180** per term. The local authority provides assistance for some students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This is individually assessed and detailed information can be found in Section 5. Otherwise local authority assistance is only given on an exceptional basis.

Students from families on low income can apply to their school or college for bursary funding to assist with their travel costs. For many students this is discretionary and schools/colleges will assist in different ways.

Where the route from a student's home to the public transport network is considered unsafe, the local authority will provide transport to that point free of charge.

Exceptionally, consideration will be given to additional support to students where the journey is unreasonably long i.e. over 75 minutes. This time will not normally include walking time from home to public transport.

Where a student is on low income and has applied for and been refused bursary assistance, if there are exceptional circumstances they may appeal to the local authority for support.

Assistance from South Devon College

If you are

- Aged 16-18
 - Studying a full time course at the college
 - Living more than 2 miles from your place of study
 - Living with a household income less than £21,000
- you will be eligible for a free travel pass.

If your household income is greater than £21,000 the travel pass will cost **£300** for the academic year. The cost for some students living outside of Torbay is higher.

3. How do students apply for travel assistance?

Local Authority Post 16 Transport

Students with a learning difficulty/disability who believe they are eligible for travel assistance should complete a Torbay Council transport application form, available from <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/school-transport/post-16/>

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For South Devon College, please see information on their web site at <http://www.southdevon.ac.uk/contact-and-travel/free-discounted-travel>

4. When should learners start to apply for transport support?

For requests for assistance from the local authority, application forms are available to all students on the Council's website. Students can apply online and application forms can also be requested from a Connections office. Please refer to the contact details.

For students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities:

- **23 June 2017** – deadline for transport applications (**Application submitted after 23 June 2017** may take several weeks to process and you may need to pay for your own transport for the first weeks of the Autumn Term, even if you are entitled to financial support)
- **15 September 2017** – first payment due for monthly and direct debit payments

You will be notified individually in writing about specialist transport arrangements. If you have not received a letter by 25 August, please contact the Transport Team immediately (details in section 16).

For South Devon College, please see information on their web site at <http://www.southdevon.ac.uk/contact-and-travel/free-discounted-travel>.

5. What help is available for post-16 students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities?

The transport needs of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities will be reassessed when they move to post-16 education. There is no automatic entitlement to free Post 16 transport. Student needs are assessed on an individual basis.

Where a student requires specialist transport, the mode of transport will be determined by the Council. There will be a charge for 2017-18 of £540 towards the cost of this transport. Where a fuel allowance is paid, this will be at a rate of 40 pence per mile. The financial contribution will still apply.

An application form will need to be completed annually and transport requests will be considered on their individual merits. Wherever possible, students will be expected to travel by public transport. Transport will not be automatically provided where a student cannot walk to a school or college, accompanied as necessary, because of his or her disability.

Students who believe they are eligible for travel assistance should complete a Post-16 SEN/medical transport application form, available from <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/school-transport/post-16/>

Where a request is being made for specialist transport, appropriate evidence must be provided to demonstrate the need for the transport. Transport assistance will normally only be given to the post-16 setting named on the Statement or Plan.

Students attending South Devon College requiring specialist transport should apply in the first instance to the college:

<http://www.southdevon.ac.uk/contact-and-travel/free-discounted-travel>

6. Payment methods for transport assistance

local authority

Contributions to specialist transport can be made by the following options:

- Annually - one invoice will be issued
- Monthly Instalments - one invoice will be issued with a payment plan set up

Payment can be made by the following methods:

- Credit/Debit Card
- Direct Debit(monthly only)
- Monthly instalments through the Post Office
- Torbay Council online payment system
- Torbay Council automated payments line

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Payments can be by cash, card or cheque payable to South Devon College, by direct debit or via the college's online shop.

You can pay monthly, termly or annually.

For more information, please look at the college website:

<http://www.southdevon.ac.uk/contact-and-travel/free-discounted-travel> .

7. How do I appeal against a decision to refuse transport assistance?

Local Authority Transport Appeals Procedure

Students may appeal against the council's decision not to assist with transport if they feel there are exceptional circumstances. The appeal will be considered by a panel of officers. If transport is not awarded by the Officer Panel, the council has an Appeal Panel, where elected members will consider representations from parents.

The Senior Officer Panel Appeal form is available from the Transport Team, contact details in section 11. The application will be put forward at the next available Senior Officer Panel date and the decision will be informed to you in writing. If the decision is to not award transport, a form will be included for you to complete should you wish to take forward your appeal to the Appeals Committee where elected members will consider the case. You are unlikely to succeed in an appeal for financial assistance/reduced contribution unless you have applied for and been refused a bursary from the school and can provide evidence that you are on low income.

If you would like to appeal against a decision by Torbay Council to refuse travel support please follow the appeal process found at <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/school-transport/school-transport-appeals/>.

If you consider there has been a failure to comply with procedural rules or if there are any other irregularities in the way an appeal was handled, you may have a right to refer the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman. If you consider the decision of the independent appeals panel to be flawed on public law grounds, you may apply for judicial review.

8. What support is available from individual schools and colleges and public transport operators?

Individual Colleges and Schools exercise discretion to assist with students facing hardship where assistance is not available from the LA. Contact the individual schools or colleges for further information. A yearly bursary of up to £1,200 is available to young people in any of four defined vulnerable groups, which include:

- young people in care
- care leavers
- those on Income Support or Universal Credit
- disabled young people (in receipt of both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment)

Institutions are responsible for verifying that young people meet the criteria for vulnerable student bursaries. Applications should be made through your school or college.

Schools and colleges are also allocated funding from which they can make discretionary awards to young people. Discretionary awards are for any students who are facing genuine financial barriers to participating. Schools/colleges determine eligibility criteria and the frequency and conditions of payments. These bursaries can be used to help towards transport costs. Support available from individual schools and colleges in the area can be found by following the links below:

Brixham College	http://www.brixhamcollege.co.uk/sixth-form/student-finance-information
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Churston Ferrers Grammar School	http://www.churstongrammar.com/vi-form/bursary/
Combe Pafford School	Offers independent travel training to students attending/joining the sixth form. Discretionary bursaries may be available. Contact the school for further information: cmilner@combepafford.torbay.sch.uk
Mayfield School	http://www.mayfield-special.torbay.sch.uk/16-19-bursary/
Paignton Community and Sports Academy	http://www.aspirefutures.org/financial-support/
St Cuthbert Mayne School	http://www.st-cuthbertmayne.co.uk/6f_exr.php?nav=Form
South Devon College	http://www.southdevon.ac.uk/contact-and-travel/free-discounted-travel
The Spires College	http://thespirescollege.com/sixth-form/useful-documents-and-links
Torquay Academy	http://www.tqlearn.com/sixthform/bursary_fund/
Torquay Boys' Grammar School	http://www.tbgs.co.uk/financial-assistance/9367.html
Torquay Girls' Grammar School	http://www.tggs.torbay.sch.uk/sites/default/files/SixthFormBursaryPolicy2014.pdf

Independent travel training may be available from Combe Pafford School, Mayfield School and South Devon College.

Care to Learn (C2L) can help pay for childcare and travel costs for learners. Further details are available at www.gov.uk/care-to-learn. You can get Care to Learn if:

- you are a parent under 20 at the start of your course
- you are the main carer for your child
- you live in England
- you are either a British citizen or a national of a European Economic Area (EEA) country
- your course qualifies
- your childcare provider qualifies

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Details of current fares can be found at <http://www.southdevon.ac.uk/contact-and-travel/free-discounted-travel>

Public Transport Operators

Public transport operators, Stagecoach Devon, First Bus and First Great Western offer a range of discounted multi-journey fare deals, monthly and season tickets. Visit their websites for

further information. Contact details are given below.

9. What support is available for apprenticeships and traineeships?

If a young person is seeing to engage with an apprenticeship or traineeship, they should talk to the learning provider who will be able to inform them of any transport assistance that may be available. Employers and learning providers should take into account a young person's transport arrangements when planning any job training, particularly outside of normal working hours.

10. What times during the day can learners access travel assistance?

For learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, transport arrangements feature an outward and return journey at the start and end of the school day. Where possible these are tailored to individual timetable needs but this depends on whether or not other students are sharing the transport.

11. Will support continue to be made available to learners who reach 19 whilst continuing on a course?

Local Authority Post 16 Transport Scheme

Students supported by the LA who reach 19 during the academic year retain their entitlement to support until the end of the year.

Individual Schools and Colleges

Where Colleges and Schools exercise discretion, it is normal for support to continue for the whole academic year.

12. What support is given to students over the age of 19 with learning difficulties and or disabilities?

Anyone who is assessed for Adult Social Care services is assessed using Fair Access to Care services, and any transport to a service would be considered within the context of the Adult Care Transport Policy. If anyone post 19 is assessed as having a critical substantial need then they would be entitled to transport if they fit the criteria under the policy. Transport will not be automatically funded as it is not a service in its own right but a means of getting to a service. Support with transport to education usually would not be part of this.

Students up to age 25 continuing in education may be provided with free transport if they are unable, because of a special educational need or a disability, to walk or travel by bus to their education setting. Transport will be provided if the setting is

- maintained or assisted by the authority and providing further and/or higher education,
- an institution within the further education sector or
- an institution outside the further and higher education sectors where both education/training and boarding accommodation are provided, where the student has an Education, Health and Care Plan and has been placed there by the local authority.

13. Do you provide mobility/independence training for learners who face difficulty with transport?

Combe Pafford School, a local Special School, runs an independent travel training programme for their students in order to encourage them to travel on public transport. The bus passes are provided by the Transport Team. Independent travel training may also be offered by Mayfield School and South Devon College.

14. What help can learners apply for if they need to travel to a course that is outside of Torbay?

Students must attend a School/College outside the Torbay Area but within daily travelling distance and have a compelling reason as to why they must study at this School/College i.e. they cannot find suitable courses within Torbay.

It is not normal for the Council to support students to attend establishments outside Torbay since a full range of courses are available at local 6th forms and South Devon College. The student wishing to travel outside Torbay would need to demonstrate a compelling reason why he or she needs to study a particular course at an alternative establishment.

In reaching a decision, the Council will take into account the availability of alternative and equivalent courses locally, whether the course is key to the student's future career or study plans, whether the chosen course is an entry requirement to subsequent course(s), the cost of the transport arrangements and the length of the journey. The Council will not normally agree to arrangements that appear to be a simple expression of preference for one establishment over another, are excessively expensive, or require the student to travel for more than 75 minutes in any direction.

Schools and Colleges outside the Local Authority sometimes offer transport schemes to students from Torbay who do not qualify for support with transport.

15. Is help available for learners who attend a further education institution which is beyond daily travelling distance and they need to stay away?

The Local Authority does not normally support learners who attend an institution outside normal daily travel distance. Rare exceptions are made for some students with learning difficulties who need to access specialist colleges, or courses.

Some specialist Colleges and Schools have boarding facilities and schemes to offer assistance to students facing hardship. Contact the college/school directly for more information.

16. Points of contact for learners seeking transport support

Children's Services Transport Team (for advice on LA scheme of assistance, students with special requirements and contact details for schools)

Telephone: 01803 207688

Website: www.torbay.gov.uk

Email: cstransport@torbay.gov.uk

Stagecoach Devon (main public transport operator)

telephone 01392 427711

website: www.stagecoachbus.com

First Bus
telephone 0845 600 1420
website: www.firstgroup.com/ukbus/southwest/devon/home

GWR (local rail operator)
Telephone: 03457 000 125
Website: <https://www.gwr.com/>

South Devon College
Telephone: (08000) 540323
Website: www.southdevon.ac.uk/home/public
Email: enquiries@southdevon.ac.uk

17. How do I complain?

If you believe your request for transport from the Local Authority has not been properly handled, or if you have a problem with the transport that has been provided, please approach Children's Services Transport Team informally in the first instance. If this does not resolve your concern, you can complain using Torbay Council's complaints policy. This can be found at <http://www.torbay.gov.uk/index/getinvolved/feedback/complaints.htm>.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome you can complain to the Secretary of State.

For complaints against individual education institutions, please contact the institution concerned for advice in the first instance and ask for a copy of their complaints policy.

18. Consultation

If there are any changes to the council's charging policy (beyond an annual review of charges to keep them in line with operator charges) a formal consultation will be undertaken. This will be advertised on the council's web site www.torbay.gov.uk and will be communicated via schools. Meanwhile, you are invited to give any feedback you wish on the content of this statement and it will be considered when the statement for next year is being drawn up. Feedback should be emailed to cstransport@torbay.gov.uk

Where you have been directed to web sites for information within this document, if you would like a hard copy of information sent to you through the post please phone 01803 207688 to request this.