

POST-16 TRANSPORT POLICY 2020-21

Name of Local Authority:
Northumberland County Council - 929

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Eligibility for Post-16 Transport

1. What is Northumberland County Council's Post-16 Transport Scheme?

This scheme enables eligible young people to access relevant learning. There is a non-refundable £50 administration fee which needs to accompany an application for transport so we strongly advise you to check your eligibility carefully (please see Annex 1) before applying for a course or for transport. You can check the availability of courses at your nearest appropriate learning provider by accessing the relevant prospectuses. The cost of the administration fee is, in almost every circumstance, non-refundable, an exception being where a parent/carer is able to demonstrate that their child has been unable to take up their chosen course of study due to their GCSE exam results.

2. What are the eligibility criteria for qualifying for free Post-16 Transport?

You may be eligible for free transport if **all** of the criteria as set out in Annex 1 are met by you. You must refer to Annex 1, however, in summary this includes:

- You are a Northumberland resident and
- You live more than three miles away (as measured by the local authority using it's approved measuring tool) from your nearest appropriate learning provider and
- Your course is undertaken at your nearest appropriate learning provider (please see Annex 1 for further information on what we define as your nearest appropriate learning provider) and
- You are 16 years old or over, but under 19 on 31 August 2020 and
- You are starting the course in Y13 or earlier and
- Your course is full time, which is a minimum of 12 hours a week, within each academic year

and

- Your course is at a higher level than your previous achievements and equates to foundation learning 1, 2 or 3 and
- Your estimated journey time to your chosen educational establishment will be no more than 75 minutes (150 minutes daily travelling time) and
- The cost to the Council of your proposed journey is, in the opinion of Northumberland County Council, an efficient use of public resources and
- You make the appropriate contribution (if applicable), i.e. the standard non-refundable administration fee.

You will not be eligible for any assistance with transport costs if any of the following apply:

- You choose to attend a particular learning provider which is **not** the closest to your home address as defined under Annex 1 of this policy.
- If you live less than 3 miles (as measured by the local authority using its approved measuring tool), from your nearest appropriate learning provider
- You are outside the age range for the scheme
- You are starting a course in Y14
- Your course is not full-time, ie at least 12 hours per week
- You are an Apprentice
- Your course is Level 4 or higher education, including foundation degree

3. Can I buy a concessionary Pass?

In some cases it may be possible for you to buy a spare seat on existing County Council contracted transport that serves a school which is not your nearest learning provider to your home address as defined in Annex 1 to this policy. However, you should be aware that the first priority for the allocation of any spare seats is always for those students in pre-16 or post-16 education who are eligible for free transport. Concessionary fares will **not** be allocated until after the start of the school year and they can be withdrawn without notice at any time if the seat is subsequently required for students who are eligible for free travel. The cost of a concessionary fare for a Post-16 Student from the start of the 2020/21 Academic Year is £360 per year.

Transport Provision

4. What kind of transport provision can I expect?

Transport is arranged by the local authority. Usually this will consist of allocating a qualifying student a place on a dedicated school bus or taxi but where it offers better value for money travel on public transport will be arranged. The issue of a free boarding pass to enable travel on dedicated school bus/taxi services, the purchase of a season ticket for travel on local bus or rail services or a travel grant such as payment of a mileage allowance is at the discretion of the local authority.

If successful with your application travel passes will be issued for two years, assuming you continue with your chosen course of study as outlined in your transport application.

If we make provision through a school bus or taxi a dedicated school transport route will be allocated to the student and indicated on the Student Travel Pass. Travel will only be permitted on this route. This is in order to ensure there is sufficient capacity available for all passengers and will help to prevent overcrowding and passengers being left without a seat.

If you are assigned a pass to enable travel on a local bus or rail service operated by Arriva, Go North East or Stagecoach for example, you are bound by their conditions of carriage as well as the terms of travel as laid out by Northumberland County Council. For example, the cost of purchasing a replacement travel pass from a bus company will vary to that charged by the Council.

Where appropriate a “feeder” service will be provided to enable transfer onto dedicated school bus services or, if appropriate, provide connections to local bus and rail services. Connections will be made at locations which are safe but are not likely to be under cover.

In all cases the local authority will consider costs and will decide on the appropriate type of transport to provide.

You may need to share transport with other students. You may need to wait for transport after your course of study has ended or arrive early at your learning provider to accommodate other students’ different timetables. Where possible we will try to minimise waiting times.

You will be expected to make your own way to and from the nearest main pick-up/drop-off points, unless you have a disability or medical condition which makes this unreasonable.

5. How long can I expect to have transport to a learning provider?

You will normally be provided with transport for two years of further education study in Year 12 and Year 13.

You will not be provided with transport for a third year (Year 14) unless you have already started the first year of a two year course in Year 13.

You will be allocated transport for three terms each academic year, providing you continue to attend, but the type of transport may change. Transport during your learning provider’s holiday periods will not be provided. If you are required to attend your learning provider during such periods then you should approach the learning provider for assistance with travel costs.

6. What information will be on my *Student Travel Pass*?

For student travel on council contracted school bus and taxi services travel passes will normally contain the following features:

- Your photograph;
- Your name and student identity reference;
- The learning provider at which you are enrolled;
- Boarding and alighting point description;
- Route number of school bus service.

You must show this travel pass when you board the vehicle for each journey on each day. If you fail to show your pass on a local authority operated contract service, you will be unable to travel.

7. What times during the day can I use my travel pass when travelling on council contracted school transport?

Passes only cover travel at the start and end of the main education day and do **not** include extra-curricular activities, access to extended services or travel on days which are not normal working days for that establishment. Transport will not operate during holiday periods.

Application Process

8. Will I have to pay for Post 16 Transport?

Notwithstanding payment of the non-refundable administration fee, Post 16 transport will be provided free for students who meet all the eligibility criteria as outlined in Annex 1 of this policy.

The one-off and non-refundable administration fee of £50 is required with each application. If your application form is accompanied with evidence that as the responsible parent/carer you are currently in receipt of any of the following benefits you will be exempted from paying the fee.

- income support
- income-based jobseeker's allowance
- income-related employment and support allowance
- guarantee credit component of pension credit
- Child Tax Credit (but not entitled to Working Tax Credit) where your annual income, as shown on your Tax Credit award notice, is £16,190 or less
- 16–18-year-olds receiving the above benefits or tax credits in their own right.
- asylum seekers in receipt of support provided under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

We will only proceed to assess eligibility and to put travel arrangements in place for a student if payment of the non-refundable administration fee has been made in full.

Payment of the non-refundable administration fee is only required once, at the point a student embarks upon their Post-16 studies.

We aim to process all applications within 15 working days of confirmation of payment of the non-refundable administration fee so it is advisable to apply for transport as early as possible.

9. When do I need to apply for transport support?

You should check your eligibility for transport carefully by reading Annex 1 and only submit an application for transport if you meet all the criteria listed. If you are not sure whether you meet all the eligibility criteria, then please contact *The Transport Network Officer, School Transport Team, County Hall, Morpeth NE61 2EF*, post16transport@northumberland.gov.uk or tel 0345 6006400 and ask to speak to a School Transport Network Officer

Transport will only be arranged on receipt of an application assuming all the eligibility criteria outlined in Annex 1 are met.

We recommend that you apply before the exam results come out. If you do not have a valid pass for travel you will not be permitted to travel on the school bus service.

Application forms for Post 16 Transport will be available from 27 May 2020. If you are currently enrolled at a learning provider, you can apply online at the "Post-16 Transport" page through the local authority webpage

<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Education/Schools/School-transport-1/Transport.aspx>

Payment of the non-refundable administration fee must be made at the time you submit your completed application form.

If you apply by **15 August** and are successful with your application, a travel pass or season ticket will be sent to you during the summer break for Year 12 and will, generally speaking, be valid for

two years (exception being travel passes purchased through bus companies such as Arriva or Go North east which are valid for one school year at a time. If you submit an application after this date it may not be possible to ensure your application can be processed and a travel pass issued in time for the start of Year 12 and you will be required to make and incur the cost of your own travel arrangements until such time as the travel pass is issued to you. In other words, any travel costs incurred in this way will not be reimbursed.

Students with Special Needs and/or Disabilities

10. Is transport provided for students with special needs and/or disabilities?

This scheme will support eligible young people with special educational needs and disabilities to access relevant learning. You should check your eligibility for free transport carefully before applying for a course.

All of the eligibility criteria outlined in Annex 1 to this policy (and which is briefly summarised in section 2 above) will apply.

In other words students with special educational needs and disabilities will have their application for transport assessed the same way as already described in this policy. However, if they live within three miles of their nearest appropriate learning provider, they may be provided with transport support, if following an assessment, it is clear that the nature of their disability or special needs is such as to make it unreasonable for them to travel to school without such support. If you are in receipt of the higher rate disability component/mobility vehicle you will be expected to use that for journeys up to 3 miles without reimbursement of travel costs. For longer journeys payment of a mileage allowance may be granted.

11. Does the non-refundable administration fee apply to students with special needs and/or disabilities?

If your child is in receipt of an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan) they are exempt from paying the fee. If your child has a special need or disability but is not in receipt of an EHC Plan then the non-refundable administration fee will apply unless evidence of low income can be provided with your application - see para 8 above.

12. What kind of transport will you provide for a student with special needs?

Where a student has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan, the Council will normally make the arrangements for and meet the costs of the transport necessary to transport the student to the nearest learning provider which could meet the needs set out in their EHC Plan. In such circumstances, transport may be provided up to the age of 25 rather than the normal age of 19. However, this is not guaranteed. There will be annual reviews to confirm that there is appropriate student progression on the course. Progression means, for example, undertaking a course of study at Level 2 following successful completion of a course at Level 1 or study at Entry Level 2 following successful completion of Entry Level 1 course of study. The LA may maintain a student EHCP but transport will only be considered where the study programme is at a higher level than previously studied and where the student remains a "high needs" student. Where a student is attending a Supported Internship programme it will be expected that the provider will have made an application for transport through "Access to Work" before an application for transport will be considered.

We will make appropriate travel arrangements, making best use of existing education and social care transport as well as community transport and local bus and rail services. We may also

contract additional services if necessary, whilst always ensuring best use is made of public money. The transport provided will reflect the access and support needs of the individual student.

We will review taxi and minibus provision termly, this will be based on the development of independent travel skills.

You may be provided with a more personalised mode of transport if you have a specific transport requirement.

You will be allocated transport for three terms in each year for which transport is approved, providing you continue to attend, but the type of transport may change over time.

You may need to share transport with other students. You may also need to wait for transport or arrive early at your learning provider to accommodate different timetables. We will try to minimise waiting times.

13. Do you provide independent travel training for students to increase their confidence in using public transport?

Northumberland County Council promotes independent travel to support young people in the transition from using a taxi to using public transport. In partnership with schools, colleges and training providers it works to support those young people who have the potential to gain personally from focused support to prepare and equip themselves in their everyday life, including how to get to and from college.

The provision of Independent Travel Training (ITT) will enable young people to travel independently between home and school or college utilising public transport when appropriate. ITT helps to provide young people with the skills they need to travel independently. Independent travel is a crucial life skill that helps to give a young person the freedom to fulfill their potential and live a full life. Travel training has been shown to have positive effects on the lives of young people who are trained as well as those around them. Successful travel training, for example can enable families to do more things, both as a family as well as providing more time for separate activities. Travel training is a very important skill for life. Being able to travel with less support allows the trainee to do more social and educational activities and helps them to maintain better relationships. Independent travel skills also help to open up employment opportunities after leaving school. This all contributes to a more fulfilled life.

During the review process for those young people who have an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) who are making the transition from school to college, independent travel will be discussed. If appropriate, an individual travel support plan will be drawn up so that the young person can receive further support to prepare them for independent travel when they start their new school/college.

The County Council also works with Children North East's Youth Link Project to provide peer and travel buddy support for those who could benefit from this. Referrals to the travel buddy scheme are made via the County Council with the support of schools, parents and carers.

Review procedure

14. If I am refused transport, is there anything I can do about it?

If you are refused transport you will be sent a letter advising you of the reason for the refusal. You have the right to ask for a review of this decision.

The review process is a two stage procedure.

Stage One – Request a Review by a County Council Officer

If you have been informed that you are not entitled to transport assistance under the County Council's Post-16 policy you can apply for a review under Stage One. You must set out clearly, in writing, why you believe that the County Council should reconsider the refusal to grant you transport assistance, enclosing any relevant information that may support your case. You may only request a review based upon the student's or your family's personal circumstances or the application of the Post 16 policy but not about the policy itself.

A review of your case will **not** be triggered or undertaken over the phone, your case must be submitted either by letter or email.

You should write (or email) setting out your reasons to the Passenger Transport Manager, County Hall, Morpeth NE61 2EF within 20 working days of the date on the letter advising you that you have been refused support.

Email: schooltransportappeals@northumberland.gov.uk

You will be advised of the outcome of the review in writing within 21 working days of the receipt of your correspondence.

Stage Two - Appeal to a Panel

If your Stage One appeal is unsuccessful you can seek a Stage Two appeal. Details of how this process will work will be enclosed with the decision letter if your Stage One appeal confirms the original decision.

Your case will be put before a panel for their consideration. They will not consider your application without the submission of relevant supporting information. You should submit your appeal form within 20 working days of receipt of the Stage One written decision notification. You will receive correspondence confirming that your appeal form has been received and advising you of the appeal date (which will be within 40 working days of receipt of a written request for a Stage Two appeal). You do not attend the hearing. A letter providing you with the outcome of the Panel's decision will be sent to you within 5 working days of the appeal.

If you win your review you will be allocated transport from a week following the date of the panel hearing, you will not be entitled to claim a refund on transport costs incurred before the date when your request for a panel review was received. If you lose your review you will not be able to appeal again. If there have been significant and material changes in your circumstances that require a new decision you may make a separate application to the Council.

Complaints

A post-16 transport complaint is a complaint about how the local authority has carried out (or failed to carry out) its transport responsibilities in relation to post-16 students. It can be made by a person who is, or will be, 16-19 (or 16-25 in the case of students in receipt of an Education, Health & Care Plan) at the relevant time, or the person's parent /carer. Any such complaints should be submitted to the Council under our Complaints Procedure which can be accessed via [Make a Complaint](#) However, any complaint solely about the outcome of the review will not be considered under this procedure, i.e. you can only complain about how the appeal was handled. .

Complaints and appeals must first be taken up with the local authority and their appeals process and/or complaints process must be fully exhausted before you consider contacting either the Local

Government Ombudsmen (LGO) or complaining to the Secretary of State for Education. The LGO is an independent organisation that looks into complaints against councils. Further information can be found at [Local Government Ombudsman: Home](#). To complain to the Secretary of State, the contact form on gov.uk [Contact the Department for Education](#) should be used. Any complaint should outline the case, set out the decision taken by the local authority and include any other relevant documentation, for example any advice or decisions from the LGO where appropriate.

Student support

15. Is there any further help available for students?

Residential Support

If you attend a further education institution which is beyond daily travelling time and you need to stay away, you may be eligible for residential support.

The Department for Education offers a residential support scheme. If you need to study away from home because the course you need isn't available locally, you may be able to get financial help with the cost of your term-time accommodation in 2020/21. More information on residential support is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/residential-support-scheme>

Help with Childcare costs

If you are studying and aged under 20 at the start of your course and have dependent children, Care to Learn can help pay for your childcare costs while you are learning.

More information on the Care to Learn scheme is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/care-to-learn>

16-19 Bursary

If you are 16 to 19 you might be able to get £1,200 from the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund from your school, college or training provider if you are in one of the groups below.

- student in care or care leavers
- student claiming Income Support in your own name
- disabled students getting Employment and Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment

If you are not in one of these groups, you could still get a discretionary bursary depending on your own and your family's circumstances. Contact your learning provider to discuss whether you are eligible for a discretionary bursary which is designed to assist students with low incomes with items such as transport costs. More information on the 16-19 Bursary is available at:

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

You can also ring the Learner Support Helpline on 0800 121 8989 Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm for further information.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Free transport will only be considered if you meet **all** of the following criteria:

- You are a Northumberland resident; and
- You are 16 years old or over, but under 19, on 31 August 2020. Arrangements will not be made for new courses that start in Year 14 except possibly for students with special educational needs (see paragraph 10-13 above), but will be made for courses that start in Year 13 and continue into Year 14; and
- Your course is undertaken at your nearest appropriate learning provider, as defined below; and
- Your course is full time, which is a minimum of 12 hours a week, within one academic year; and
- Your course is at a higher level than your previous achievements (i.e. embarking, for example, onto a Level 3 course following successful completion of a course at Level 2 or study at Entry Level 2 following successful completion of Entry Level 1 course of study) and provides appropriate progression to further learning or employment; and
- Your course is foundation learning, level 1, 2 or 3, but not level 4 or higher education or if you are an Apprentice. Students undertaking work placements, apprenticeships or traineeships are advised to contact their employer or learning provider; and
- You live 3 or more miles, by the shortest route measured and indicated by the local authority, from your nearest appropriate learning provider, or you live less than 3 miles from your nearest appropriate learning provider but the route is not deemed to be a safe walking route by the Authority. The walking distance is measured using the County Council's approved GIS system, the current version which is in use is QGIS 10.5.1. Distance measures between home and school will be strictly applied. This means that in some cases pupils living in the same street or even adjoining properties may not all be eligible for free home to school transport. Routes are measured from the main entrance to the property that opens onto a road or street that is maintained at public expense to the main school entrance. Private driveways or roads not owned or maintained by Northumberland County Council are **not** included in the measurements. Decisions about the safety of walked routes follow the guidelines on the Assessment of Walking Routes issued by the Road Safety Officers Association (ROSA). Such assessments of walking routes address issues from a road safety perspective. They do not consider matters of personal security which is deemed to be the responsibility of parents; and
- Your estimated journey time to your chosen learning provider will be no more than 75 minutes (150 minutes daily travelling time). This calculation will be based on using public transport, typically local bus services, to get to and from your learning provider; and
- The cost to the Council of your proposed journey is in the opinion of Northumberland County Council an efficient use of public resources; and
- You make the appropriate contribution (e.g. payment of the non-refundable administration fee at the time of application) towards the costs as determined by the Authority.

For the purposes of this policy the nearest appropriate learning provider is as follows:

- the educational establishment you want to attend post-16 is the nearest learning provider to your home address; or
- the educational establishment you want to attend post-16 is not the nearest school but is the school named by the local authority as the catchment area school for your home address; or
- the educational establishment you want to attend post-16 is not the nearest school but is the nearest school which would be consistent with your religion or beliefs and you supply the necessary evidence of that religion or belief; or
- the educational establishment you want to attend post-16 is not the nearest establishment to your home address but it is the nearest that offers the course you wish to study in accordance with the following:
 - i. For a student wishing to study one or more A-levels, this will be the nearest educational establishment that offers 9 or more different A-levels. For the avoidance of doubt, the student's choice of A-levels, A-level subject combination, timetable clashes etc. will **not** be taken into account when determining eligibility.
 - ii. For a student wishing to undertake a vocational course, this will be to the nearest education establishment that offers a course in the relevant vocational area at the appropriate level. To facilitate this, all courses are categorised by the Authority under "vocational areas" and transport will only be provided for students who express a desire to study at their nearest educational establishment that offers a course under their chosen vocational area at the appropriate level of study. There are approximately 30 separate categories, including "Travel & Tourism", "Art & Design", "IT & Computing/Media" or "Catering & Hospitality". The full list of vocational areas is set out below. For the avoidance of doubt, the student's precise choice of course within each of these areas of vocational study will **not** be taken into account when determining eligibility.

Normally, the only exception in applying these criteria will be where an individual has applied to the appropriate provider at the appropriate time, but has been refused admission by the school/college, in which case that establishment will be ignored when considering eligibility. In such cases, written evidence of refusal will be required.

List of Vocational Areas

Aerospace	Fashion
Accounting	Foundation Learning
Agriculture	Hairdressing
Animal Management & Care	Health & Social Care
Arboriculture	Horse Management & Care
Art & Design	Horticulture
Beauty Therapy	IT & Computing/Media
Business & Administration	Motor Vehicle
Catering & Hospitality	Outdoor Education & Activities
Childcare	Renewable Energies
Construction	Sports & Leisure
Countryside Management	Public Services
Customer Service	Science & Technology
Engineering	Skills for Working Life
Floristry	Travel & Tourism

Useful Contacts

Further information on the **Post-16 Transport Scheme** and the application process is available by email to post16transport@northumberland.gov.uk or telephone **0345 600 6400** or **01670 624839** (Direct Line) website <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk>

Information on the availability of courses within Northumberland and Tyne & Wear can be found on the relevant prospectuses.

The Employability and Skills Service at the local authority will either provide advice or direct you to another source of support in identifying a suitable course. The Service can be contacted on 01670 622799.

Ashington Community High School Sports College

Admin@ashingtonhigh.northumberland.sch.uk

01670 812166

Astley Community High School

reception@astleyigh.org

0191 2371505

Bedlingtonshire Community High School

Admin@bedlingtonshire.northumberland.sch.uk

01670 822625

Berwick Academy

admin@berwickacademy.co.uk

01289 305083

Cramlington Learning Village

Admin@cramlingtonhigh.northumberland.sch.uk

01670 712311

Haydon Bridge High School

admin@haydonbridge.northumberland.sch.uk

01434 684422

James Calvert Spence College

enquiries@jcsc.co.uk

01665 710636

Ponteland Community High School

phs@pchs.northumberland.sch.uk

01661 824711

Prudhoe Community High School
Admin@prudhoe.northumberland.sch.uk
01661 832486

Queen Elizabeth High School
Admin@queenelizabeth.northumberland.sch.uk
01434 610300

St Benet Biscop RC Voluntary Aided High School
CampbellH@st-benetbiscop.org.uk
01670 822795

The Blyth Academy
admin@bcc.uk.com
01670 798100

The Duchess's Community High School
Admin@duchesss.northumberland.sch.uk
01665 602166

The King Edward VI School
kevi@the3rivers.net
01670 515415

The Northumberland C of E Academy
Executive.director@ncea.org.uk
01670 816111

Bede Academy
enquiries@bedeacademy.org.uk
01670 545444

Buzz Learning
www.buzzlearning.co.uk
01670 852244

Northumberland Adult Learning
www.northumberland.gov.uk

Northumberland College 01670 841200 and choose option 1 or via the Website:
<http://www.northumberland.ac.uk>
<http://www.northumberland.ac.uk/campuses/how-to-get-here/>

The government's website <https://www.gov.uk/browse/education>

Information on bus routes, rail services and timetables is available from the Traveline website: www.travelinenortheast.info or via individual company websites

Arriva: www.arrivabus.co.uk

Go North East: www.simplygo.com

Stagecoach: www.stagecoachbus.com

East Coast: www.virgintrainseastcoast.com

Northern Rail: www.northernrailway.co.uk