

**Looked After Children and Young People Travel Assistance
Policy Consultation
July 2017**

What does the new policy say?

The policy has these main principles:

General

- Looked after children and young people should share the normal expectations and day to day experiences of all children and young people
- Foster carers will be expected to take the child in their care to school, leisure activities and contact visits wherever possible
- Taxis will only be used as a last resort where it is deemed necessary to keep children and young people safe

School Journey

- Wherever possible, looked after children and young people should:
 - walk with their carer, or
 - walk alone if they are old enough and can do so safely, or
 - use public transport if they are old enough and can do so safely, or
 - be driven by their carer
- Looked after children and young people will be helped and encouraged to travel on their own as soon as they are old enough
- If a change to a child's care placement is needed, it will take place when it will have the least effect on the child's schooling
- Travel assistance may be provided to enable a child to continue at their current school until they reach the next school transfer point (eg from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3)
- If a carer transports the child in their care to school, the Council will pay the mileage costs

Contact Visits

- The Council encourages contact visits at a foster carer's home, especially for babies and younger children, to reduce their need to travel
- The Council will pay mileage costs when a carer transports the child in their care to a contact visit
- The Council will only agree to transport a child to a contact visit after all other travel options have been considered and discounted
- Parents will be asked to agree to their child being transported to contact visits with other looked after children

Passenger Assistants

- The need for a passenger assistant for a looked after child or young person will be decided by the Council and include a full risk assessment

Tell us what you think

The following people are invited to comment on the proposed policy:

- Parents of looked after children
- Looked after children or young people
- Foster carers
- Social workers
- Residential care home staff
- Transport operators
- Other interested parties

When will the proposed policy be introduced?

It is anticipated that the introduction of the new policy will be effective from **1 February 2018**

What might this mean for me?

There will be no changes to the way in which you receive travel assistance from the Council as a looked after child, young person or their carer. The policy is not proposing any changes to the way the Council provides travel assistance, but it will ensure that travel needs are fully considered when making arrangements for looked after children and young people and outline the consistent approach the Council will take in organising transport if it is required.