

## Consultation Report on WLA Policy for Travel Assistance for Children and Young People 2013

### 1 - Do you agree or disagree that Brent Council should regularly review all those receiving transport to ensure they continue to be eligible? If you do not agree, please tell us why?

- I disagree as my child is in no way ready for independent travelling. This has been reported in forms that I as a mother had to fill in every time. This puts pressure on the child with learning difficulties.
- Unless a child's statement has not changed or the child has not shown any improvements in their development, they should not be changes, but in years to come and there is an improvement in their learning disability then yes they should be assessed.
- My child's got a life long disability and it is not going to change for the rest of his life. Brent Council has already done a review as it is just a waste of money and time.
- The child's disability is not going to get better and it just adds more pressure and just added more paperwork.
- So long as it is a proper review, don't forget that many children in Brent with SEN do not get proper support. It falls very short of proper support.
- I agree the Council should review people travelling if they are borderline cases and their condition can improve but my son would never be able to travel independently.
- All children receiving transport receive for a reason it can become a working time when the parents have to reapply each year for their placement on the bus and not finding out til a week before they go back to school.
- Condition of my child is unlikely to improve in the near future however, this is the third time I've had to complete a form regarding her travel arrangement. It's too stressful.
- There are some children who will need this service consistently. They will remain eligible and these reviews cause parents undue stress.
- Children with disability problems, they are having difficulty with Transportation.
- This gives people stress, because you can never be sure whether transport will be taken away and I need it.
- All the children that get transport have to be reviewed before that get it so I don't think you should be reviewed again year after year and it wastes money.
- I disagree because this transport is to help make the disabled child's life easier. Constant reviewing is senseless as a disabled person isn't going to suddenly change to an abled person. The child's disability isn't going to go away, so why review the transport provided for them?
- If family need transport for their children, there should not be further disruption or views regularly to see suitable as I think already families with children who have special needs should also need to be concerned now about transport problems.
- If those receiving transport have had any kind of disability and going to a special school or colleges, why then are Brent Council wanting to review their case?
- Too much unnecessary paperwork
- The reason why one receives this transport is because the child is vulnerable – why review? Does not make child less vulnerable.

### 3 - Please tell us about other ways, in your view, that the council's home to school transport policy could support independent travel?

- Again timing is very important for each child no matter what age group, as a child has different levels of understanding and not forgetting the health issue that they have to go through. Council's should perhaps make the assessment with longer gaps.
- It is very good.
- The school bus service is excellent method.
- Where appropriate for traveller who are more capable of exercising (within the context of safe guarding), there should be more variety in the mode of transportation thereby better integration with the general community, i.e. a wider choice in the method of travelling to school.
- A carer should be available to assist SEN children (those that can travel on London Transport) or walk home to school, for the child's safety.
- It is very good and does not need improvement.
- Yes, assess the child that does have a moderate learning ability to know between left, right, danger, no danger and a route to get home and an understanding of directions. If they are able, yes the child should be if they are not then no.
- I do agree that Brent Council should encourage the special needs children to take independent travel but each and every decision should be taken according to the schools feedback on every child, as they need to be sure that they are 100% safe and comfortable when they travel independently.
- Carer to be with them always.
- You can support home to school transport only for those young adults who are capable of travelling, eg. My son who is autistic and 14 years old would not be able to get to the end of our street by himself.
- I agree independence should be encouraged but my son's independence would be taken away from him as his only his only independence is leaving me at his house and going on the school bus.
- Assessments after a certain age to determine a child is suitable whether a child can travel to school on a public transport, rather than saying a child of a certain age is able to travel on public transport unaccompanied.
- It's too dangerous for a special needs child to travel on a bus/underground train especially in winter time as it grows dark so early. As the world is growing so violent, I fear that I am putting my child in danger.
- More support to help brothers/sisters to manage without their mothers when they have taken children to school.
- As a child gets older they should have a person who is trained to help them.
- A person with special educational needs cannot be given independence via their means of transport as their needs are present due to having a brain or body defect. The only independence such a child can be given is through teaching them on how to cope with their disability in an abled world, not by inconveniencing them, by making their travel stressful for them.
- The bus transport we have already I believe is good just as it is.
- Pay someone to accompany child to school and take the home journey by public transport.
- It depends by what you mean – if it means not providing transport – then no.
- I totally disagree with independent travel due to the fact will make things harder and there is no way of supporting it.
- Good services. On time always welcome.
- Brent Transport Services come on time.

- Independent travel depends on the level of client's disability and the distance to school. In case of my son his school is too far to even think about independent travel.
- The first step would be to dispose of an 'escort' accompanying the young person. In this way the young person will need to become more responsible in the cab. This would save lots of money!
- I agree that the Council support the independent travel.
- Independence is fine for those that are able to manage this with support.
- The Council should support children with special needs as always this service has benefit this service.
- We are completely satisfied with service.
- The Council should be teaching students at school how to behave whilst outside the home and through more independent activities outside the school and home.
- They should look in for late start of school and after school late pick ups. As students time table.
- Brent council should fully support current proposal for "Eden Manor". Secondary special school at Barham Park. There are very good public transport links to Barham Park on no. 18 bus directly through the borough.
- Yes, I would like to support for independent travel. Because it's good for children and they stay on their own.
- I think it does promote independent travel as for example my son feels all grown up getting to school on transport, the thought of getting up and keeping an eye on the time to make sure he is ready for when BTS come.
- It depends on individual needs as some young people live in notorious areas. Therefore, it will put them at risk.
- There should be an age limit (12 years plus) before this independent travel for young people with SEN start.
- Improving public transport availability during school hours.
- Everything is fine, we are happy about travel for my son from home to school, thanks.
- I am very happy with BTS.
- If they receive help to train them to help them become independent if they are ready.
- Because there are a lot of pupils that deserve it the most and should support independent travel.

**4 - Are there particular areas of the policy you do not agree with? If so, please tell us.**

- I don't think by the Council thinking that they are doing the children a huge help by giving the independence promoting every year. They should give a child time and gap to help the child to reach by themselves and not being forced in any way.
- It is very good.
- Section 12 – The council will arrange the most appropriate sustainable and cost effective transport provision. The safety and well being of the child should be paramount. Councils should not compromise this in order to save money. There are children with SEN and learning difficulties who have no option but to use transport provided by the local council.
- I think the cost of travel buddies and their oyster cards will outweigh any transportation savings. Wages and travel costs are higher. If implemented, transition should be seamless for those kids affected and they should not be put at risk. I don't believe major savings will be made by this policy.
- I agree with all the areas because as to say a lot of pupils need support for independent travel.

- Yes, all children can not be assessed, especially if their ability shows no growth in age, understanding and general common sense, should not have to go through yearly questions, and put parents through more stress.
- Yes. Council do not need to do regular reviews on the children who got life long disability as it is just a waste of money, especially when the Council is cutting down all the funds telling that the country is in recession time spend money for needed areas. Not for unnecessary things.
- I would like to know if the Council believes that they are already providing travel assistance to any child that does not deserve travel assistance. Of all the children with a SEN that I know, I believe they all merit transport, it's the least we can do.
- I do not agree that my son's needs for transport should be reviewed yearly, my son's mental age is 2. He has no road sense whatsoever and receives the higher rate getting around DLA, he can never travel to school without the school bus.
- I don't think it's fair that children that have been given transport have it taken away even though their circumstances haven't changed.
- You need to take the child's disability and needs into account. I am for cost cutting but I think you need to find cutting cost somewhere else.
- In my point of view, it's rather discouraging both parents and child, who were using the Brent council transport for a long time because parents were really comfortable with the transport they had been using as they used to know the drivers and escorts for a long time, therefore, had minimum consideration on child security. But as it changed to a different transport and environment, both parents and child may find it a bit uncomfortable to cope with.
- Seems very general and needs to be made more understanding and don't agree with being reviewed every year until child becomes a teenager.
- I feel that parents should have the choice of where their child goes to school and if it isn't local, the Council should provide free transport for our vulnerable children.
- The whole review policy is not in the interests of the disabled child, but looks like it's a way of trying to cut costs at the child's expense.
- I do agree with the WLA I do agree with the WLA policy section 4 Entitlement, c) learner's age 19-25 under section 139A Act 2000, but do not agree with Brent, they didn't mention age 19-25?
- Many children with SEN find public transport difficult on the buses, etc that are crowded and loud. Walking is dangerous as they have no road sense.
- Children with special needs should be given a priority over those whose parents choose a school farther away.
- Recently, we were told the transport policy will change, which I am not happy with due to the fact my home is quite far from Manor School. This is why I disagree.
- The Council's right to refuse the application if there is a school nearer to the child. As Council knows itself there are not any schools tailored around children with autism. I think they need to get their facts together.
- I believe each young person should be assessed individually, as each young person has very specific needs. 'One size fits all' cannot work for everyone.
- Too long documents. Could it be more simple.
- The Council has a legal responsibility to assist all children with SEN and medical/genetics abnormalities to participate in education. Our children deserve better.
- All pupils as and where practical should be supported to travel independently to and from school. Travel buddy scheme.

- Your definition of nearest suitable school as one that can meet the child's SEN needs. This needs to be clarified. You cannot decide yourself a school could meet someone's SEN needs. A more holistic approach is needed for eg. Does the school support other pupils with special needs, enough space to accommodate the SEN pupil, etc.

## **5 - Do you have any comments or suggestions for improving the service?**

- You must not look at a child's age. You have to understand is the child's health issue effect them in any way. Is the child learning enough to make them ready. Most importantly their health and understanding of safety no matter what age.
- I think the service is excellent.
- I thought the transport was running well already but too many changes our children cannot handle. The bus helps us parents a lot especially if there are other children involved.
- Yes, if you could give better training on how to handle special needs children on transport for drivers and escorts that would be better as they do have very little knowledge on how to handle special needs children.
- Communication between office and drivers.
- Reduce the number of children on the bus and provide more buses. A better communication system with the WLA which is poorly run and managed in a disgraceful manner. Employees who are dead wood should be sacked.
- The service is very good.
- I am happy with the transport and the service.
- I notice that the buses are full to capacity and as a result some children are on the bus for 1 and a half hours. I know for a fact and its unacceptable. The buses are frequently breaking down, resulting in late pick ups, late to school, etc. You should purchase smaller vehicles, therefore, shorter routes. My main concern is the welfare of all the children not just my own. Cuts should be made elsewhere.
- The service is very good and thanks again for the service.
- I'm not in support of independent travel, because anything can happen to these children whilst they're travelling independently.
- To work with child's timetable.
- I believe that parents are the best judges regarding which school is appropriate for their child. Only the parent can know this. Does anyone know the child better than the parent. My son is autistic and mainstream or language units attached to main stream did not work for him.
- This year when we had to fill in forms to say why our children had to travel by school bus, it caused great stress for me as his mother. He cannot get to school without the bus and I think unnecessary stress can be avoided if our children really need the bus they should get a place without a fight. Parents of special needs children have enough stress and these constant reviews are just another problem we can do without.
- Hope the service that we are using continues as it is.
- You should give more warning to parents of when they are require transport or any changes more easier.

- I agree with this policy, it's good but my fear is the people making the final decision. Instead of given more emphasis to parents/teachers statement or facts. They decide on what they think is good.
- Need to be told of any bus route changes at least 48 hours before.
- Money invested in our children's needs will prove to benefit all in the future because you will have young adults who can contribute to society.
- Travel assistance is exactly as the name suggests. It is present to assist those who need it. Why try and take it away from them?
- Council can save money – if they pay sufficient funds to carers to take children to school. No need to pay taxi plus escort.
- Assessment of special needs should be the main criteria in provision of transport. If the Council has no money, do not provide it to those who have no special needs!
- I'm happy with the services and I want it to stay like that for the future to help disabled children.
- The Government needs to focus on putting money in special schools such as travel and expenses.
- I would say drivers and escorts be communicative towards the parents of the kids.
- Good punctuality and excellent services.
- Better care of the children in the car.
- I would suggest that the Council would take parent's views into consideration as I have had such horrendous problems with the transportation service over the years. I can only thank me son's escort and driver who have worried tremendously hard to make our lives bearable.
- Everything I think is good.
- Being a parent dealing with many difficulties of a severely disabled child to receive paperwork instructing me that I am responsible for getting my child to school is quite harsh. We already have enough to deal with.
- Provide a training service where children between 10 -16 are make to use public transport. This may give them confidence and promote safety and guidance.
- As working parents of visual impaired child we would appreciate to have same escort. However, if there is a chance we would expect well advanced notice.
- The service is excellent should be improved by arranging with special facilities with buses and always be.
- Pick up and drop service is on time. So we are happy with the services.
- Both Village and Woodfield are very inaccessible by public transport and therefore Borough transport is needed.
- Eden Manor proposed school due to location will improve accessibility and encourage independent travel.
- Currently not enough special school provision in Brent pupil's forced to go out of borough with long journeys.
- No comment, it's good!
- Thank you.
- Clear criteria for defining whether or not the nearest school can meet the SEN pupil's needs.