

## SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL

### Transport policy statement for learners aged 16-18 in further education and continuing learners aged 19 and over 2011/12

#### CONTENTS

	<b>Page No</b>
1. Summary of Policy Statement and Main Objectives	2
2. Details of fares, passes and travel cards available for learners aged 16–19 and who provides them	3
3. Details of Colleges and other Operators who provide transport.	3 - 4
4. Use of travel passes and availability of concessionary fares	4
5. Transport arrangements for students who reach the age of 19 whilst continuing on a course.	5
6. Eligibility for transport support	5
7. Transport assistance for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	5
8. Transport to study for students with substantial and permanent disabilities aged 21-25.	5 - 6
9. Independence training for learners who face difficulty with transport	6
10. When should learners start to apply for transport support?	6
11. What help can learners apply for if they need to travel to a course that is outside the LA area?	6
12. What help is available for learners who attend a further education institution which is beyond daily travelling distance and they need to stay away?	7
13. What to do if you think you should be entitled to transport assistance but have been told it will not be available	7
14. Contact Information	7 - 8
	8

**31 May 2011**

## **Introduction**

This policy statement provides information about the transport that is available to enable students aged 16-25 to attend their place of learning.

It includes the transport arrangements made by Suffolk County Council as well as information about those arrangements made by the Further Education Colleges in Suffolk and by the various transport operators. It also explains what to do if you have been refused transport assistance.

## **1. Summary of Policy Statement and Main Objectives**

The local authority will provide transport assistance to those learners who:

- a. Are over compulsory school age but under 19 years (also to those who are completing a course started prior to their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday)
- b. Undertake an approved full-time course of further education study
- c. Are normally resident in Suffolk
- d. Live at least three miles away from the school or college to be attended.

Where learners qualify, transport assistance will be provided to the sixth form centre that serves the area, the local FE college, or to another school, college or learning provider that is funded by the Local Authority or by the Young People's Learning Agency, to study an approved course subject to the home-to-study journey time not exceeding 75 minutes.

The time for the journey will be assessed by calculating the door-to-door journey time using the nearest public transport service to the home address. This assessment will take into account any walking time to a pick up point, time gaps in public transport connections, and walking time from set down point to the school/sixth form centre/college.

The offer of assistance with transport is for a "main road" type of service only. This provision is usually made on existing contracted or public transport services, and students should note that they are responsible for the arrangement and cost of any additional travel needs at the "home" end of the journey or in the area of the school/college. Where deemed necessary, the County Council reserves the right under certain exceptional circumstances to make additional transport provision, including the contracting of new or additional services.

Transport for learners at special schools and for other learners with special educational needs may be provided irrespective of the minimum distance and other criteria set out in this policy, where it is accepted by the County Council that transport is necessary to enable them to have access to the education they require. For learners undertaking a course at a sixth form this might be through a Statement of Special Educational Needs made while the student was of compulsory school age and which continues to be maintained.

The general policy contained in this statement provides transport assistance for learners who are aged 16-19 years. However, for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, transport assistance may be provided to learners who begin a course after they reach the age of 19 years. In such cases assistance through the arrangements agreed by the County Council and its partners and set out in this statement would continue until the student is 21 years of age.

Suffolk County Council will provide transport assistance to learners aged 21-25 to attend a FE college provided they meet the Fair Access to Care Services criterion (see Section 8).

The local authority expects all learners to make a payment towards the cost of transport assistance. Exemptions from charges will only be made in exceptional circumstances. (see

Sections 2 and 5).

Students attending Colleges of Further Education who are pursuing courses such as HNDs, Diplomas of Higher Education or degrees are not entitled to receive discretionary travel.

## **2. Details of fares, passes and travel cards available for learners aged 16–21 and who provides them, including costs to the student.**

### **Local Authority provision**

The annual cost to learners aged 16-21 of the transport assistance described above will be £450 for the school year 2011/12, starting in September 2011. Travel is provided on a “return” basis and the local authority provides learners with a travel pass.

Learners may either make a single annual payment of £450 or pay the charge in three termly instalments of £150.

The charges for 2012/13 and 2013/14 have been provisionally set at a minimum of £480 and £510 per year respectively. These charges will be published on 31<sup>st</sup> May each year prior to the start of the school year in September.

Learners who are not entitled to assistance under the terms of this policy may be able to use spare seats (but only on contract services arranged by the County Council for home to study purposes) on a ‘first come first served’ basis. The charge for these spare seats is £150 per term in 2011/12 and will rise as set out above in 2012/13 and 2013/14.

## **3. Details of Colleges and other Operators who provide transport**

### **COLLEGES**

The following schools and colleges offer specific transport assistance to learners:

**Suffolk New College, Ipswich.** Financial support with transport costs may be provided to eligible students. For further details contact the College direct.

**Otley College, Otley, Ipswich.** Transport is through application only and learners are required to pay a termly sum as a contribution toward travel costs, as the College uses specially contracted vehicles. Services cover a range of areas in Suffolk and include Colchester and Clacton in Essex. For further details contact the College direct.

**West Suffolk College, Bury St Edmunds.** Learners who have had a break in Education (and who fall outside the policy operated by the LA and its partners) can enquire about help with the cost of public transport fares. For further details contact the College direct.

**Lowestoft College.** Transport help may be provided to students who are not eligible for assistance through the LA managed scheme. For further details contact the College direct.

For these colleges, and for schools in Suffolk, enquiries should be made directly to the establishment concerned to ascertain the latest information about courses or programmes of study. See Section 14 for contact details.

### **TRANSPORT OPERATORS**

**Ipswich Buses Ltd.** Child ID cards are available to all young travellers aged 5-19. With this scheme, learners up to their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday, who are in full time education in Ipswich (including the College at Otley), are allowed to travel at a special flat rate at any time on

any day on all Ipswich Buses town services and on some other services they operate in the Ipswich area. The ID card costs £2 – application form and further details available from the bus company. The company also offer weekly, monthly and annual season tickets and a “Greensaver 7” for 7 trips for anyone at anytime, any day, anywhere, for £11.70. Further information is available direct from the company on Freephone 0800 919390 or visit the Ipswich Buses web site at [www.ipswichbuses.co.uk](http://www.ipswichbuses.co.uk) .

**First Eastern Counties Ltd.** This company operate many of the inter-urban public bus services in Suffolk. The company may offer a specific range of concessions to young people including weekly, termly, monthly and 3-monthly travel passes. Tickets may be purchased on line. Further information is available directly from the company - visit their website at <http://www.firstgroup.com/ukbus/easterncounties/easterncounties/home/> .

**Other Public Transport Operators.** May offer concessions, on their commercial services and on those sponsored by the County Council, to young people travelling to and from their place of study. Termly passes issued to students for travel on Suffolk County Council contracted vehicles are not valid on public transport services. Further information is available direct from those companies.

**English National Concessionary Fares Scheme.** From 01 April 2011 Suffolk County Council is providing the statutory minimum scheme of free travel on local bus services during off peak hours for those who are eligible via age or disability. Full information can be found at [www.suffolkonboard.com](http://www.suffolkonboard.com).

## **4. Use of travel passes and availability of concessionary fares**

### **SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL**

Some of the transport arranged for learners by Suffolk County Council involves the use of special contract services. In such cases, each route is served by a vehicle travelling to and from the place of study only at times to coincide with the start and end of the day. Students who have been allocated a place on one of these routes will be issued with a pass. This pass cannot be transferred to other routes or other forms of transport.

For those who are provided with passes for use on public transport services some greater flexibility may be available. Students should contact the operator to check on the possible uses – see the contact information in section 14.

Learners should also contact local operators to check for prices to obtain the best possible deals. As a comparison, the annual charge of £450 represents an average charge of less than £2.50 per day for a return fare.

### **COLLEGES OR TRANSPORT OPERATORS**

Details of the times when travel passes can be used or when other concessions apply are available from the establishment or transport operator concerned. Contact information is available in Section 14.

## **5. Transport arrangements for students who reach the age of 19 whilst continuing on a course.**

Transport assistance is available for learners who are under 19 years of age, or who started a course before the age of 19 years and who meet the criteria set out in Section 1.

## **6. Eligibility for transport support**

Section 1 contains the principal eligibility criteria.

In order for the county council to assess whether learners are eligible for transport, learners need to complete an application form including home address and course details. Suffolk County Council determines eligibility for transport assistance based on the information provided (seeking advice from Connexions and other partners where necessary regarding career outcomes).

Once eligibility has been established from the initial application and the first travel pass has been issued the student need do nothing further. Each term during the whole of the course a reminder invoice will be sent which will offer the opportunity to continue with the transport next term.

There are no concessions for students on low incomes. The Coalition Government has announced new arrangements to replace the Education Maintenance Allowance scheme, which closed to new applicants on 1 January 2011. Details of the new bursary scheme are available on the Directgov website at: <http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/index.htm>

In brief, the arrangements for 2011/12 will be:

Students will receive payments while they are studying in 2011/12 if:

- They first applied for EMA in 2009/10 (students will receive the same weekly payment); or
- They first applied for EMA in 2010/11 and receive the maximum EMA payment of £30 (reduced to £20 a week in 2011/12)

From September 2011, EMA will be replaced with a new £180m bursary scheme. Students aged between 16 and 19 years who face financial hardship while in full-time education may be eligible to receive a bursary.

Schools, colleges and training providers will be responsible for awarding bursaries to students. For most bursaries schools and colleges decide on the amount, when it is paid and whether it's linked to behaviour or attendance, except for those most in need.

Those most in need, such as those in care, care leavers or those claiming income support will be guaranteed a bursary of £1,200.

## **7. Transport assistance for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities**

Transport for learners at special schools and for other learners with special educational needs may be provided irrespective of the minimum distance and other criteria set out in this policy, where it is accepted by the County Council that transport is necessary to enable them to have access to the education they require. Charges will be as described above for 2011/12 and future years - there are no concessions for students with learning difficulties or disabilities.

For learners undertaking a course at a sixth form this might be through a Statement of Special Educational Needs made while the student was of compulsory school age and which continues to be maintained. In other cases the advice about transport needs may

also come from Connexions, Social Care Services, schools or other agencies.

The general policy contained in this statement provides transport assistance for learners who are 16-19 years. However, for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, transport assistance may be provided to learners who begin a course after they reach the age of 19 years.

In such cases assistance through the arrangements agreed by the County Council and its partners and set out in this statement would continue until the student is 21 years of age.

## **8. Transport to study for students with substantial and permanent disabilities aged 21-25**

In all circumstances advice and information will be given to customers who wish to access educational opportunities. For people who are eligible under Fair Access to Care Services this support may be incorporated into their support plan. This applies to customers:

- Between the ages of 21 and 25
- Who meet the Fair Access to Care Services criteria (currently “critical or substantial”)

Students who are planning to continue their studies in the academic year 2010/11 and think that they may need support with transport to study in the future, should contact Adult and Community Services:

- Phone: Customer Service Centre on 08456 023 023
- Email : [customer.first@socserv.suffolkcc.gov.uk](mailto:customer.first@socserv.suffolkcc.gov.uk)

Other options to consider:

- Some colleges in Suffolk may be able to assist learners through their Learner Support Grants. Please contact the colleges direct (refer to section 14).
- District and Borough Councils operate the National Concessionary Fares Scheme for disabled persons. Contact your council direct (refer to section 14).
- Some students may be able to use their disability living allowance to support them with their transport needs. Further information is available at:  
[http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/FinancialSupport/DisabilityLivingAllowance/DG\\_10011925](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/FinancialSupport/DisabilityLivingAllowance/DG_10011925)

For further information on special educational needs transport please visit:  
<http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/EducationAndLearning/SpecialEducationNeeds/SpecialEducationalNeedsTransport.htm>

## **9. Independence training for learners who face difficulty with transport**

The County Council is supporting travel training in certain areas. Students wishing to find out more about travel training should contact the Passenger Transport Unit. (Contact information is included in Section 14).

## **10. When should learners start to apply for transport support?**

Learners should ask about help with transport as soon as they know what course they

intend to undertake. It is not necessary for a student to wait for formal acceptance on a course before applying. Information about transport and forms on which to apply for transport assistance are available at schools and colleges in Suffolk and from the Passenger Transport Unit – the contact details are shown in Section 14. In all cases application forms need to be returned to the Passenger Transport Unit.

### **11. What help can learners apply for if they need to travel to a course that is outside the Local Authority's area?**

Learners living in Suffolk are entitled to transport assistance to establishments outside the Suffolk LA boundaries, providing they meet the criteria set out in Section 1.

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

Such cases will be considered on an individual basis as they arise. Learners should contact the Passenger Transport Unit (contact details in Section 14).

### **13 What to do if you think you are entitled to transport but have been told it will not be available.**

The County Council's Post-16 Discretionary Travel Policy is applied consistently. However, if a student falls outside of the terms of this policy and the parents/carers believe that their circumstances justify special consideration they are entitled to make representation to the Education Transport Appeals Committee. The members of this committee take final decisions in those areas where the County Council has discretion to provide home-to-school and college transport.

If, as a result of a complaint about this transport policy, the County Council considers that this policy statement should be amended, a revised statement will be published on the County Council website at:

<http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/EducationAndLearning/Schools/TransportToSchool/>

For further information about how to make representations to the Committee please contact.....

### **14. Contact Information**

Information about many aspects of this policy statement are available from the Suffolk County Council website: [www.suffolk.gov.uk](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk). At this site you will find contact information for the Local Authority, including the area offices and the Youth and Connexions Service.

Details of the policy and other arrangements described in this statement can be found at:

<http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/EducationAndLearning/Schools/TransportToSchool/>

General information about public transport arrangements in Suffolk can be found at:

[www.suffolk.gov.uk/TransportAndStreets/PublicTransport/](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/TransportAndStreets/PublicTransport/)

Contact information for all schools in Suffolk can be found at:

<http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/EducationAndLearning/Schools/ListOfSuffolkSchools/Listing.htm>

The County Council also produces annually a booklet “**Schools in Suffolk – A Parents’ Guide**” which provides detailed information about education in Suffolk and also provides contact points for all schools and colleges. This booklet is available from area education offices in the county and from individual schools. It can be accessed through the Suffolk County Council Web site at:

<http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/EducationAndLearning/Schools/AdmissionsToSchools/>

Contact information for the colleges in Suffolk can be found on their websites, which are:

Lowestoft College: <http://www.lowestoft.ac.uk/>

Otley College: <http://www.otleycollege.ac.uk/>

Suffolk New College: <http://www.suffolk.ac.uk/>

West Suffolk College: <http://www.westsuffolk-ac.co.uk/>

**Details about courses on offer at establishments throughout Suffolk are contained in the website: [www.future4me.org.uk](http://www.future4me.org.uk)**

For information about the National Concessionary Fares scheme visit your district or borough council website:

<http://www.ipswich.gov.uk/>

<http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/>

<http://www.suffolkcoastal.gov.uk/>

<http://www.waveney.gov.uk/>

<http://www.forest-heath.gov.uk/>

<http://www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/>

<http://www.babergh-south-suffolk.gov.uk/babergh/home>

**Alternatively**, information about the County Council’s school and college transport policy, details of other points of contact as well as application forms for transport assistance for learners can be made available by the County Council’s Passenger Transport Unit:

**Suffolk County Council**  
**Passenger Transport Unit**  
**Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road**  
**Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 2BX**  
**Phone: 01473 265064 Fax: 01473 216884**  
**E-mail: [education.transport@educ.suffolkccc.gov.uk](mailto:education.transport@educ.suffolkccc.gov.uk)**