



# **CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO Post 16 TRANSPORT**

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# CONSULTATION ON POSSIBLE CHANGES TO POST 16 EDUCATIONAL TRANSPORT

## Introduction

This is a consultation document on possible changes to post 16 educational transport. It will be used to gather stakeholder evidence that the Council will be able to use to help it decide what is the best way forward.

## Why is the Council consulting on possible changes?

Conwy County Borough Council is reviewing its Home to School Transport Policy taking into account the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 and wishes to consult on some aspects of discretionary provision. Post 16 transport is a discretionary service meaning that we are not required to provide the service by law.

Like all Councils, Conwy County Borough Council is under considerable pressure to make savings on its public spending and needs to look at making savings in ways that have the least direct impact.

As a result, the Council has had to look at every aspect of its work, especially where it is not compulsory for us to provide services and to consider how they can be delivered more efficiently and cost effectively.

As part of the overall savings that the Council has to make, Education Services will also need to find savings. Within the Education Services budget, Post 16 education transport is considered to be one area where the direct impact is low compared to the financial gains that may be possible. The service is one which the Council is not obliged to provide by law and which serves only a particular group of learners. Other Councils in North Wales don't provide free transport for post 16 learners.

This consultation is intended to gather opinion from anyone who may be affected by any possible changes to Post 16 transport as well as others who may not be directly affected but who have an opinion. The consultation will help inform decisions about possible changes to Post 16 transport which will be taken by elected members.

If savings were not to be made from the provision of this non-compulsory budget, savings would have to be identified from other education budgets which could impact on individual schools.

## The Current Policy

Generally, parents and carers are responsible, in law, for making arrangements for their children's attendance at school. This means that when deciding which school to apply for a place at, they have to decide whether they need transport and then organise provision themselves.

Councils are required by law to assess the travel needs of learners in their authority area and provide assistance for those learners who are eligible.

In Conwy County Borough Council's current Home to School Transport Policy, the Council provides free home to school transport for:

- Learners of compulsory school age attending primary school who live 2 miles or further from their nearest suitable school.
- Learners of compulsory school age attending secondary school who live 3 miles or further from their nearest suitable school.

These are known as the "mandatory transport arrangements" because this is what the Measure requires a Council to provide.

**In addition**, under the current Home to School Transport Policy, the Council has exercised its discretion to provide free transport for learners of statutory school age:

- to the nearest Welsh medium school if the statutory distance criteria applies.
- where the closure of a school results in a learner being transferred to another school. Learners on the register of the closed school will be entitled to free transport to the new catchment school or the nearest school, subject to meeting the statutory distance criteria, until the learner finishes education in that school.
- where the route to school is considered not available (unsafe) by the Council in accordance with the Welsh Government Learners Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance.
- where a learner requires transport on medical / additional learning needs grounds as per criteria noted in Home to School Transport Policy (3.5 & 3.6).
- Learners who change address during their education as per criteria noted in Home to School Transport Policy (3.7)
- Transport to denomination schools as per criteria noted in Home to School Transport Policy (3.8)

## Post 16

Conwy County Borough Council currently organises and pays for transport for learners aged 16 up to 19 years living in the county of Conwy CBC who are in full time education and live over 3 miles from the nearest appropriate educational establishments listed below:

### 6<sup>th</sup> forms at Secondary schools:

Ysgol Aberconwy	Ysgol Blessed Edward Jones
Ysgol Bryn Elian	Ysgol Brynhyfryd
Ysgol Dyffryn Conwy	Ysgol Denbigh High
Ysgol Eirias	Ysgol Friars
Ysgol Emrys ap Iwan	Ysgol Glan Clwyd
Ysgol John Bright	Ysgol Tryfan
Ysgol Y Creuddyn	Ysgol Y Berwyn

### Local colleges:

Coleg Cambria sites – Northop, Llysfasi, Deeside, Yale

Grŵp Llandrillo Menai sites – Llandrillo, Abergele, Rhyl, Denbigh, Bangor (Parc Menai), Caernarfon, Holyhead, Llangefni, Dolgellau, Glynllifon, Pwllheli.

The Council's current Home to School Transport Policy is available on our website:

<http://www.conwy.gov.uk/en/Resident/Education-and-Families/School-Transport/Free-School-College-Transport.aspx>

Alternatively a hard copies can be requested by e-mailing [TransportPolicyReview@conwy.gov.uk](mailto:TransportPolicyReview@conwy.gov.uk)

What are the possible changes?

## **Post 16 Transport**

### **Option 1**

**Maintain Status Quo. The Council will retain the current level of provision referred to above. This would mean that Education Services and the Council would need to find the equivalent level of savings from elsewhere.**

### **Option 2**

**Introduce a charge for all Post 16 transport to all Educational Establishments referred to above.**

£50 per term (£150 per annum – gross additional income £172,500)

£60 per term (£180 per annum – gross additional income £207,000)

£80\* per term (£240 per annum – gross additional income £276,000)

\*£80 will be the cost of a concessionary seat on learner transport from September, 2018. A concessionary seat is one that can be bought by a learner who doesn't have a statutory entitlement to free learner transport.

### **Option 3**

**Introduce a charge for all Post 16 transport to all Educational Establishments as in Option 2 but for the charge to be waived for learners who are eligible for free school meals.**

£50 per term (£150 per annum – gross additional income £147,000)#

£60 per term (£180 per annum – gross additional income £176,000)#

£80\* per term (£240 per annum – gross additional income £234,000)#

#Figures are based on Conwy's average Free School Meals entitlement of 15% of the school population.

### **Option 4**

**Increase the minimum distance criteria for free transport from 3 miles to 5 miles to the nearest suitable educational establishment.**

### **Option 5**

**Discontinue learner transport for all Post 16 students and expect learners to make their own arrangements.**

This would produce a gross saving of £420,000

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## Post 16 Transport – Consultation Questionnaire

This is a consultation questionnaire on the provision of Post 16 education transport in Conwy.

Conwy County Borough Council currently organises and pays for transport for students aged 16 up to 19 attending local colleges as well as those attending sixth form at secondary schools. Transport is provided free of charge for those who live more than three miles away from their nearest school or college offering the course.

Currently 1,152 learners receive free transport under this policy.

730 of these learners attend Coleg Llandrillo or other Further Education colleges. A further 422 learners attend 6th form provision in Secondary Schools in Conwy or neighbouring authorities.

Post 16 Transport is a discretionary service meaning that we are not required to provide the service by law. Conwy Council is facing a significant reduction in revenue which means that the Council has to consider ways in which it can change the way services are provided. Other Councils in North Wales don't provide free transport for post 16 learners. Within the Education Services budget, Post 16 education transport is considered to be one area where the direct impact is low compared to the financial gains that may be possible.

Continuation of free post 16 transport is not considered sustainable in the current financial climate unless cuts can be made elsewhere. Other cuts may have a greater impact on Educational provision and may affect more learners.

The Council is consulting on possible changes to the Post 16 transport element within the current Transport policy. Should any changes be made they would not be implemented until September 2019 at the earliest.

The consultation is intended to gather opinion from everyone who may be affected by any changes to Post 16 transport as well as others who may not be directly affected but who have an opinion on how the Council should make financial savings. The consultation will help inform decisions about possible changes to Post 16 transport which will be taken by elected members.

This questionnaire can be completed at [www.conwy.gov.uk/post16transport](http://www.conwy.gov.uk/post16transport)

**Please ensure your response reaches us by 15 August 2018**