

London Borough of Ealing
Independent Travel Policy for
Post-16 Young People Accessing
Further Education

Academic Year 2018-19

June 2018

Contents

Section 1: Introduction	3
Section 2: Who is eligible for travel assistance?	6
Section 3: Assessing Your Application.....	16
Section 4: Forms of Travel Assistance Offered	18
Section 5: How to apply for travel assistance?	22
Appendix A: Parent/carer Responsibilities	25

Section 1: Introduction

This policy is Ealing Council's Independent Travel Policy Statement which the 2014 statutory guidance for post 16 transport to education and training requires every local authority to publish each year. We are required to identify what travel assistance is available to support young people aged 16 to 18 and learners aged 19 to 25 who access school or further education institutions. The policy will be reviewed annually. This version covers the academic year from 1 September 2018 to 31 August 2019.

The London Borough of Ealing is committed to ensuring that every child, young person and family in Ealing leads independent, healthy lives, feeling safe and secure and achieving their potential.

We want to support all children and young people to be as ambitious as possible throughout their lives including those with the most complex needs in preparation for adulthood, this means preparing them for:

- **Traveling independently** - being able to go where they want when they want
- **Higher education and/or employment** – setting and pursuing goals for their future, including exploring different employment options and further education
- **Independent living** – this means young people having choice, control and freedom over their lives and the support they have (including their accommodation and living arrangements)
- **Participating in society** – including having friends and supportive relationships and contributing to their local community
- **Being healthy** – being as healthy as possible in adult life

There is no automatic entitlement to home to school or college transport once a young person is over compulsory school age. However, in support of the raising of the participation age (RPA) and preparation for adulthood (PfA) the Council offers a discretionary service to young people meeting the agreed eligibility criteria. This ensures that Ealing Council supports and encourages young people to continue with their education and training where this is appropriate and suitable to their needs. This will enable young people to acquire the knowledge, skills and experience necessary for their personal development, to support preparation for adulthood, and wherever possible progression into employment or higher education.

A range of support is available to young people to enable them to access education post 16 years of age. It is expected that Ealing Council will only provide travel assistance if these travel options are identified as not suitable due to the specific needs of the young person. Examples of support that is available for young people and their travel arrangements include:

- Transport for London – Free and Discounted Travel
- Vulnerable Student Bursary
- Discretionary Bursary
- Young Person Bursary

Over 60% of children / young people in Ealing who have an EHCP are not in receipt of travel assistance support from the Council and either travel independently or the family make their own arrangements to and from their place of education.

Travel Assistance may be offered to a young person if they satisfy the eligibility criteria, they are aged 16 to 18 entering further education, or they are continuing learners aged 19 to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

If Ealing Council agrees to provide travel assistance it will be provided in a safe manner taking account of the young person's specific needs and the best use of the Council's resources. Ealing Council recognises that travelling to school independently is a valuable experience for young people as they grow older. To do this, many young people with SEND may need extra training to help them learn the skills required for greater independence.

Ealing Council will provide access to a bespoke Independent Travel Training programme to work with children and young people with SEND who have been identified as able to benefit from travel training.

For eligible young persons, there is also the option of a personal independence budget (PIB). The young person can use the budget to make their own arrangements which might not be possible without a form of financial support. Arrangements could include: using the family car, organising a taxi, paying a carer to support them to school, paying towards the cost of individual to drive motability car (if available), or combining the Council's contribution with family finances to design bespoke travel solutions.

Nearly 100 families are benefiting from using a personal independence budget to make their own travel arrangements to school for their child, benefiting from the financial contribution made by the Council and the bespoke arrangements in place with fit around family/individual circumstances and commitments.

This policy applies to all students participating in the scheme and supersedes all previous transport arrangements and entitlements.

General Principles

This policy is based on the following principles:

Parental, Young Person and Council responsibilities

You and your young person are responsible for ensuring participation in education (full responsibilities are detailed in appendix A). To support this, Ealing Council may provide discretionary assistance with travel in certain circumstances.

If assistance is provided, it remains your responsibility to ensure attendance at the place of education.

Independence and wellbeing

A key aspiration and requirement of Ealing Council is to provide the necessary support for young people with and without SEND.

Our commitment is to prepare each child for adulthood through the development and promotion of individual independence, facilitating opportunities for social inclusion, as well as looking after the physical wellbeing for all children.

Where necessary travel assistance makes an important contribution to enable this commitment to be achieved.

Sustainability

Ealing Council will favour environmentally sustainable forms of travel, including walking, cycling and the use of public transport.

The Council will also promote those options which make the most effective use of public resources.

Who will be considered for travel assistance?

Pupils aged 0 – 5 and 5 -16

Ealing Council will only consider providing assistance for children below compulsory school age (5) if all reasonable options to facilitate attendance at the child's place of education have been exhausted or if other factors exist which make it an unreasonable expectation of the family to provide assistance.

The duty to provide travel assistance, where necessary, only applies in law, to children and young people of statutory school age (aged 5 to 16). There is a separate policy which details who may be eligible, and what form of travel assistance may be offered.

Pupils aged 16 and over

Post 16 travel assistance is discretionary and subject to assessment. Details of the support that is available are contained within this policy. Including who may be eligible for assistance, how to apply, and what form of travel assistance may be offered.

You can access the policy via the Ealing Council Local Offer and Council Website. To access you can use the following links:

Ealing Council Local Offer: <https://www.ealingfamiliesdirectory.org.uk>

Section 2: Who is eligible for travel assistance?

Each application will be assessed on its own merit, reviewing the specific individual needs of the young person against this policy. It is therefore important that all the information and evidence requested is provided during the application process.

When making a decision about the young person's eligibility to travel assistance the Council will ask the following questions which are explained more fully in the sections that follow:

1. Does the young person attend the nearest education establishment for their chosen study programme?
2. What is the walking distance from the child's home to school?
3. Does the young person have any special educational needs or disabilities, which limit their mobility or ability to use public transport?
4. Have all other forms of support with travel been explored and identified as unavailable/unsuitable?
5. Are there other exceptional circumstances relating to your child and family that need to be taken into consideration?

Question 1 – Does the young person attend the nearest education establishment for their chosen study programme?

What education establishments will travel be considered to?

Your study programme or training must take place through a publicly-funded provider as listed below:

- A publicly-funded school or academy (including a free school or University Technical College (UTC))
- A publicly-funded further education institution, including sixth form college and further education college
- A local authority maintained or assisted institution providing further or higher education
- An independent specialist provider for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- A learning provider that is funded by a local authority to deliver accredited programmes of learning which lead to positive outcomes (this could include colleges, charities and private learning providers)

The 'nearest education establishment' means the nearest education establishment with places available that provides the appropriate support based on their individual special educational needs and the chosen study programme. Travel assistance will not be provided on the basis of one subject being unavailable at your nearest education establishment.

What type of study programmes will be considered?

- Full time study programmes – equivalent to a minimum of 18 hours per week. The study programme does not have to last a full academic year.

- Programmes at foundation learning level, level 1, 2 or 3 (the study programme should normally be at a higher level than previous achievements and have a clear benefit for young people, suited to their needs)
- Unless they have an EHCP, travel assistance will not be provided to those who have left education and are returning after the age of 19.

Qualifying Schools / Colleges for Young People with SEND

Where a young person has SEND then the nearest appropriate 'qualifying school or college' will be named on the EHCP.

If, because of parental preference a pupil with SEND secures a place in a school which is further away from the home address than the school identified in the EHCP, then the Council will draw to the attention of the parent that travel assistance will not be provided to the more distant school, or that the chosen school falls outside the Council's boundaries.

Summary:

- **The chosen study programme or training must take place through a publicly-funded provider**
- **If the young person does not attend the nearest education establishment, the Council will not offer any form of travel assistance**

Question 2 – What is the walking distance from the young person's home to their place of education?

Travel assistance for young people over the age 16 is a discretionary service and therefore no 'statutory walking distance' exists. For consistency with pre-16 travel assistance Ealing Council will use the 'statutory walking distance' criteria as defined in the 2014 statutory Home to School Guidance, published by the DfE as:

- Over 2 miles if the child is aged between 5 and 8 years old, or
- Over 3 miles if the child is 8 years old or older

Using the Council's GIS mapping system, we will measure the shortest walking route which a child, accompanied as necessary, may walk with reasonable safety when calculating the walking distance.

Where a young person is able to use public transport, it is expected travel assistance provision will take the form of a Transport for London (TfL) Zip Oyster Card (See section 4: Forms of Travel Assistance Offered).

Consideration will be made in relation to the walking distance of a young person with SEND

In some circumstances a young person with SEND may not meet the distance criteria but are unable to walk to their place of education because of their needs. Where this is identified through the assessment process then travel assistance will be offered.

The form of travel assistance offered will be influenced by needs (determined through the assessment process), the distance between the home and school, and the transport routes available.

Summary:

- **If you / your young person lives within the 'statutory walking distance' you will not receive Council travel assistance, except where the SEND significantly affects mobility, or there are circumstances presented that require support from the Council**
- **In most cases, travel assistance for those who live outside the 'statutory walking distance' but who do not have a SEND will take the form of a Transport for London Zip Oyster Card (See section 4)**
- **If you / your young person has SEND, travel assistance will be offered based on an assessment of mobility, but the distance from home to school may influence the type of travel assistance offered**

Question 3 - Does the young person have any special educational needs or disabilities, which limit their mobility or ability to use public transport?

You and your young person have a legal responsibility to ensure participation in education up to the age of 18, regardless of the young person's SEND. Wherever possible, the council expects you to plan your own travel arrangements, as this is important in developing independence, social and life skills.

Most Ealing children and young people with an EHCP or SEN statement do not require specialised travel assistance

Travel assistance for young people with an EHCP or SEN Statement attending one of Ealing's Special Schools will be offered based on the needs of the young person. In exceptional circumstances children who do not have an EHCP or are not attending an Ealing Special School but have medical needs may also be eligible for transport, this is explained further in question 5.

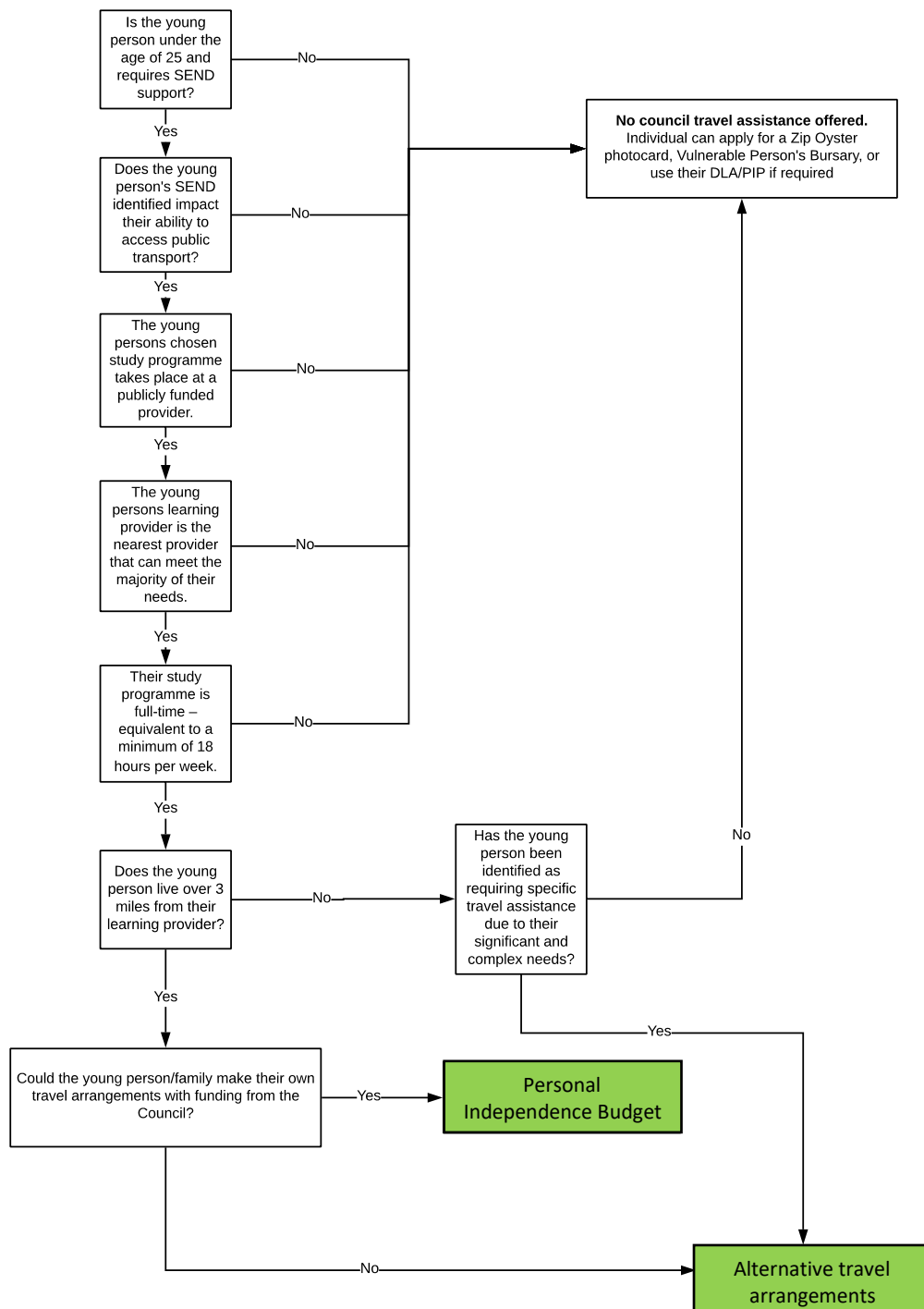
How is eligibility assessed and how are forms of travel assistance chosen?

The Travel Independence Hub will assess whether the young person is eligible for travel assistance in accordance with this policy as a whole. If your child is deemed eligible for some form of travel assistance, the Council will decide which form is most suitable. The decision will be based on careful consideration of the following:

- whether the young person would have considerable difficulty in walking or using public transport (accompanied as necessary) due to their special educational needs or disability
- whether the young person has a physical or medical disability that rules out the use of free public transport, or suitable public transport is not conveniently available – for example wheelchair users, students who require specialist seating, harnesses, head restraints or other specialist facilities

- whether the young person has emotional/behavioural difficulties that severely affect their ability to use free public transport or access alternative travel options in the community.
- the distance and complexity of the journey to and from school, and the public transport routes potentially available
- whether the young person would be vulnerable and at risk of danger to themselves or the general public if they use public or other transport (accompanied as necessary)
- whether the young person would be able to travel independently to school if suitably travel trained and supported

Ealing Council will then decide which form of travel assistance to offer and will reflect the considerations previously mentioned which are illustrated in the following 'Decision-Making Flowchart'.



Other Considerations

1) Residential schools

For entitled young people aged over 16 with special educational needs and disabilities who attend residential educational placements, their travel assistance offer will reflect their type of placement

Travel Assistance offers will be as follows:

- Termly boarding - Travel assistance will only be provided at the beginning and end of each term and the beginning and end of each half term and at other official school closures
- Weekly boarding – Travel assistance will be provided to and from school at the beginning and end of the academic week and at other official school closures
- If the young person's placement is not one of the above then this will be assessed on a case by case basis as an exception to policy.

It is expected that these young people will travel either by public transport (accompanied by a parent or carer as necessary), or be transported in a parent or carer's vehicle where the young person attends a residential placement.

Ealing Council will offer a personal independence budget to the family/young person in these cases to cover any associated costs. In exceptional cases specialist transport may be considered.

Summary:

- **Parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their young person attends their place of education up until 18 years of age, regardless of the young person's SEND**
- **Travel assistance for children with an EHCP or SEN Statement will be offered based on the needs of the young person**
- **If the young person is deemed eligible for some form of travel assistance, the council will decide which form is most suitable based on the following:**
 - **Young person's ability to walking and/or use public transport (accompanied as necessary)**
 - **Any physical or medical disability that rules out the use of free public transport**
 - **If the young person has any emotional/behavioural difficulties that severely affect their ability to use free public transport or access alternative travel options in the community.**
 - **The distance and complexity of the journey to and from school**

- **Whether the young person would be able to travel independently to school if suitably travel trained and supported**

Question 4 - Have all other forms of support with travel been explored and identified as unavailable/unsuitable?

Support is available from various organisations to enable a young person to travel to and from their place of education. Ealing Council expects that the young person and family will have exhausted all available options for travel support from other organisations before requesting assistance from the Council. Including the use of a Motability vehicle where it is provided to support the young person, in these instances the Council would expect this to be used if necessary to enable the young person to access their study programme.

Ealing Council will only consider offering travel assistance to the young person if it is evidenced that all available support with travel arrangements have been exhausted and that the young person can only continue their education if the Council's agrees to provide additional travel assistance.

The following are some examples of the support options available that the majority of young people use to access their study programme. Other support options are available.

1) Transport for London – free and discounted travel

Most young people attending post 16 education will have their travel needs met via the free and discounted options provided by Transport for London (TfL).

Before starting their programme of study/work-based learning the young person should obtain the appropriate Oyster card. It is the young person's responsibility to ensure they meet the requirements set by TfL for retaining an Oyster card.

For further details on these options, please visit the Transport for London website (www.tfl.gov.uk).

16+ Oyster photo card

Residents of London boroughs aged 16 to 18 and in full-time education, or on a work-based learning scheme of at least 12 hours per week (including apprenticeships) can apply for a 16+ Oyster photo card.

The card gives:

- Free travel on London buses and trams
- Half adult rate Oyster single fares on the tube, DLR, London Overground and some national rail services
- Child rate travelcard season tickets on the tube, DLR, London Overground and some national rail services

Apprentice Oyster card

Young people aged over 18 years who live in Ealing and are on the first year of an apprenticeship that will last for more than 12 months are eligible to apply for an Apprentice Oyster card.

The Apprentice Oyster card gives a 30% discount on bus, tram, tube, DLR, London Overground and national rail travelcard season tickets.

18+ Student Oyster photo card

18+ Student Oyster photo cards are available to young people who are aged 18 and over, and who are attending a full-time course at colleges, schools and universities registered on the TfL 18+ Student Oyster photo card scheme.

The 18+ student card gives a 30% discount on bus, tram, tube, DLR, London Overground and national rail travelcard season tickets.

If the young person is able to use and access public transport, then the Council will expect the current travel assistance offer from Transport for London (TfL) to be appropriate. This means that most young people attending college/sixth form will not require any further support from the council for travel arrangements.

In some circumstances, the Council will agree to provide a travel card that allows travel on the London Underground and London Overground trains in addition to bus and tram travel.

2) The 16-19 Bursary Fund

The 16-19 Bursary Fund, administered by individual education providers, is available to support any young person who faces genuine financial barriers to participation in education, including transport costs. There are two types of 16-19 bursary available:

Vulnerable Student Bursary

Those most in need are eligible for a vulnerable student bursary of up to £1,200 per year. To qualify, the young person must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- The young person is in or recently left local authority care
- The young person gets Income Support (or Universal Credit in place of Income Support) in their name
- The young person is disabled and gets both Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) (or Universal Credit in place of ESA), and either Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in their name

To receive the maximum bursary the programme of study must last for 30 weeks or more. If the programme is shorter than 30 weeks, the young person may receive less.

Discretionary bursary

The young person could get a discretionary bursary if they do not qualify for the vulnerable student bursary. Education providers may, at their discretion, distribute any remaining funds to a young people in ways that best fit the needs and circumstances of the young person. This is targeted at young people facing financial barriers to participation, including transport costs.

All education providers must make available a copy of their 16-19 Bursary Fund policy. Applications should be made directly to the education provider.

For further information on the 16-19 Bursary Fund visit: www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund Local providers and contact details are listed in on the Ealing Local Offer website.

3) Discretionary Learner Support

If the young person is aged 19 or over, on a further education course and facing financial hardship, they could get Discretionary Learner Support (DLS). This is similar to the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

The young person must apply directly to their learning provider (e.g. your college) for DLS. How much the young person receives will depend on your circumstances. The money can help with learning costs, including transport.

For more information visit www.gov.uk/discretionary-learner-support

Local providers and contact details are listed on the Ealing Local Offer website.

4) Residential Support Scheme

The Residential Support Scheme is for young persons aged 16-18. If the programme of study being followed is not available locally and is more than 15 miles from the home, or more than a two-hour return journey away, the young person can apply for help with the cost of term-time accommodation.

How much assistance the young person receives will depend on household income and where the education provider is based.

For further information on the Residential Support Scheme, including eligibility criteria, visit: www.gov.uk/residential-support-scheme

5) Residential Bursary Fund

Young persons aged 16-18 may be able to get a bursary towards the cost of accommodation from some specialist residential colleges. This is different from the Residential Support Scheme.

Most of these colleges are 'Specialist Residential Centres' for subjects like agriculture, art and design or horticulture. Each has its own eligibility criteria, often including parental income. To apply for assistance you should contact the college directly.

Summary:

Ealing Council expects that all the young person and family will have exhausted all available options for travel support from other organisations before requesting assistance from the Council.

Examples of the support options available include:

Transport for London

- **16+ Oyster photo card**
- **Apprentice Oyster card**
- **18+ Student Oyster photo card**

The 16-19 Bursary Fund

- **Vulnerable Student Bursary**
- **Discretionary bursary**

Discretionary Learner Support

Residential Support Scheme

Residential Bursary Fund

Question 5 – Are there other circumstances relating to the young person and family that need to be taken into consideration?

Each application is assessed based on the individual circumstances presented to the Council. In exceptional circumstances, examples of which are listed below, the Council may provide transport even when other eligibility criteria are not met:

Temporary medical conditions

We will consider an application for travel assistance for the young person if they have a temporary medical need, even if you live within the statutory walking distance.

You will need to provide written evidence from an appropriate medical practitioner confirming that the young person has specialist transport requirements which cannot be met by public transport (accompanied or unaccompanied) or a vehicle available for use by the family.

Any assistance offered will be reviewed at regular intervals, and when your child's medical need no longer requires the council support, then travel assistance arrangements will stop. We will expect you to have exhausted all other travel options before applying for travel assistance.

Young persons with disabled parents

If you have a disability that prevents you from walking with your young person to their education placement, the local authority may provide travel assistance to support the young person even if they live within the statutory walking

distance. However, if you or the young person are in receipt of transport assistance as part of your disability living allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payment (PIP) then we will expect this to be adequate provision. In exceptional circumstances assistance may be offered.

SEND Children in Care

Travel support may be available for children in care, to ensure their care arrangements are supported by appropriate home to school travel arrangements. The Care Plan sets out how a young person will be cared for and how their needs will be met, this includes home to place of education travel arrangements. The Care Plan is agreed at the child's statutory Child in Care Review, which is chaired by an independent reviewing manager.

Parent / Carer work arrangements are not regarded as an exceptional circumstance:

Parent / carers are responsible for ensuring their child attends their place of education (responsibilities are outlined in appendix A). This may include making or assisting with travel arrangements to and from school and/or accompanying your child.

If your work arrangements conflict with your child's travel to and from school, this will not normally be considered as an exceptional circumstance. Parent / carers who work are advised to:

- Look for before and after college clubs or activities so drop off and pick up times fit in with working hours
- Use alternative care options available, such as a personal assistant or community groups
- Take up the statutory right to flexible working hours (more information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/flexible-working>)

Summary:

The Council may consider an application for travel assistance for your young person, if:

- **The child / young person has a temporary medical need, even if you live within the statutory walking distance.**
- **A parent/carer has a disability that prevents them from walking with the young person to their place of education**
- **Working arrangements will not normally be considered as an exceptional circumstance. You have a statutory right to flexible working hours, find out more at <https://www.gov.uk/flexible-working>**

Section 3: Assessing Your Application

Application Assessment

The Travel Independence Hub will assess your application for Travel Assistance. The hub aims to let you know the outcome of their assessment within 4 weeks of the date they receive your application. In circumstances where additional information is required from other professional then the assessment process may exceed 4 weeks.

If your application is successful, then consideration will then be given as to what type of travel assistance will be offered.

Travel Assistance will reflect your child's needs and circumstances and will be selected from the range of options available. Factors that will influence what Travel Assistance will be offered include:

- The needs of the young person and ability to complete travel training both at the time of application and in the future
- The distance from home to school
- Public transport route
- Whether there is already transport going to the school
- The most cost-effective mode of travel assistance

Travel Assistance Provision Exclusions

A young person will not be eligible for travel assistance if any of the following apply:

- a) Their chosen study programme takes place at a privately-funded organisation.
- b) The young person is employed and starting or continuing an apprenticeship. Apprentices aged 16 to 18 can apply for a 16+ Oyster photo card. Young people aged over 18 years and in the first year of their apprenticeship are eligible to apply for an Apprentice Oystercard.
- c) The young person's study programme is at Level 4 or higher, including a foundation degree. Education levels are explained on the government website.

The purpose of travel assistance is to support children accessing their education for the start and end of the standard timetable at the education establishment. Travel assistance will not be available for any of the following*:

- Hospital, medical, or dental appointments
- Children taken ill during the school day
- Schools where parent/carers are making their own arrangements
- Travel to and from after-school clubs and other extra-curricular activities
- Schools which are not the nearest school able to meet the needs of the pupil
- Travel to and from work experience

* unless there are exceptional reasons for doing so

In addition to the above, we will not be able to accommodate any preference in terms of collection/drop off times.

Travel Assistance will be planned using the most efficient route available to maximise the use of resources available to Ealing Council whilst ensuring journey times are not longer than necessary for any of the children it provides support for.

Multiple home addresses

When assessing your application, Ealing Council will use your child's 'main residence' for assessment purposes. Where a child has two home addresses then provision will only be provided from their 'main residence'.

'Main residence' will be considered as being the address at which your child is registered whilst attending school, with their GP, and, if applicable, the address of the parent who is in receipt of Child Benefit or Child Tax Credits for your child.

Review of Provision & Eligibility

Where travel assistance is approved and provided, Ealing Council will review these arrangements on at least an annual basis.

This will help ensure that travel assistance arrangements continue to meet your child's needs as well helping them move towards greater independence for adulthood. Travel Assistance will be discussed at your child's annual review if they have an EHC plan/statement.

Unless travel assistance has been agreed for a limited period e.g. for one term only, your child changes school, they move home during an academic year, or the child's needs change significantly travel assistance arrangements will stay in place for the academic year in which they were assessed as eligible. Whilst the form of travel assistance will not change, sometimes during the year collection/drop off times and/or the route your child may travel on may change. We will endeavour to keep change to a minimum, but where a change is required we will aim to inform you with as much notice as possible.

If your child changes school (including school site) or their home address changes then travel arrangements will be cancelled from the date the child moves home/school. For travel arrangements to be reinstated you will need to re-apply for travel assistance for reassessment. Travel assistance will only be provided if the child continues to meet the eligibility criteria. Alterations will not be made to your current provision until the re-assessment has been completed.

In addition to the above Ealing Council reserves the right to withdraw travel assistance from persons of sixth form age where:

- a. The education or training provider state that attendance has not been satisfactory (measured over the previous term);

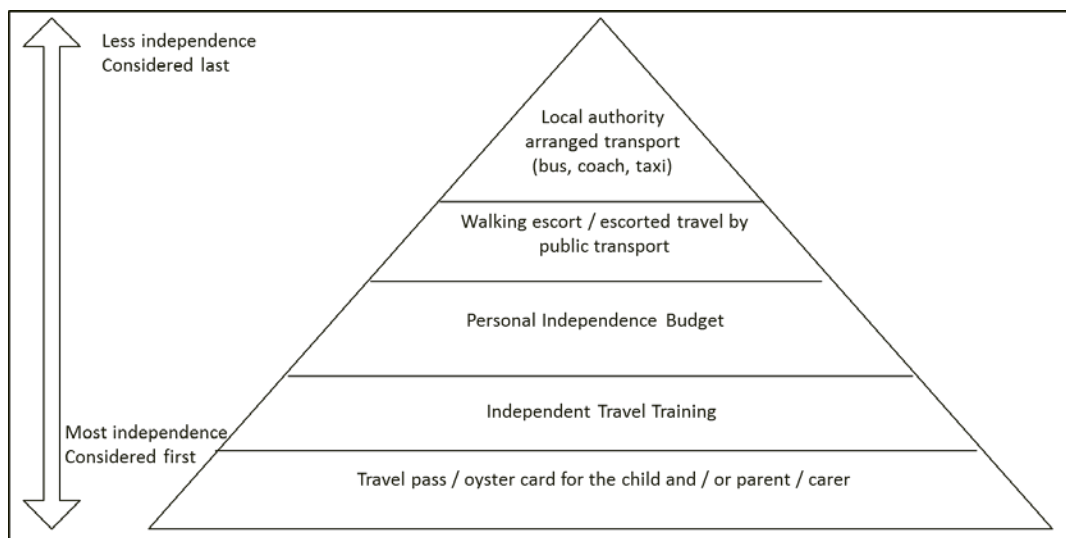
- b. It is proven that assistance was obtained on the basis of fraudulent or misleading information, or
- c. Where changes in the individual or household circumstances of the person of sixth form age result in either the person of sixth form age no longer being eligible for assistance or no longer requiring assistance.

Section 4: Forms of Travel Assistance Offered

Range of Travel Options Considered

The parent / carer is responsible for getting their child or young person to school, full responsibilities of the parent / carer are set out in appendix A. If it is decided that Ealing Council will assist the parent / carer in taking their child to and from school, a range of options will be considered. The type of travel assistance offered will reflect the evidence and information provided to ensure their needs are supported accordingly.

To support the young person's needs and assist their move towards independence for adulthood the Council will explore travel options that offer the greatest level of independence to the individual based on their needs. These options often also promote a healthy lifestyle as they may include walking. The following travel options will be considered, please note that this list is not exhaustive and other forms of travel assistance may also be offered:



*Attendance records may be required for payments being made directly to parents.

Allocation of Travel Assistance

Independent Travel Training

To support young people to travel independently, Ealing Council may offer Independent Travel Training as their travel assistance offer. The training will support the individual to be taught the necessary skills that will allow them to effectively deal with and resolve a range of scenarios that they might encounter when travelling on public transport.

The benefits of this travel option for the family and young person are as follows:

- Increased independence, confidence and personal mobility
- Increased access to education opportunities at colleges and universities, local services and leisure activities
- Reduced reliance on family members to provide on-going travel to current and future activities and services
- Improvement in life skills, such as handling money, personal and road safety skills
- Increased opportunity to gain employment and further education

A trainer will travel and work with your child on a 1:1 basis to ensure the following aspects of the training are understood and put in to practice independently:

- Timetables (including time management)
- Orientation
- Road Safety
- Accessibility (access to transport, exits and purchasing tickets)
- Communication
- Personal Safety (including what-if scenarios)
- Travel Preparation

Travelling independently is a key life skill, and we would like to offer the opportunity to participate to as many children and young people as possible. The Council will assess the young persons suitability for the training before considering or offering alternative travel options.

If the Travel Independence Hub identify through either the assessment process or annual reviews that a young person may have the potential to be supported to travel independently through a travel training programme then they will arrange for their travel training provider to conduct an assessment to decide if training is a suitable option for the individual now or in the future.

If the outcome of the assessment identifies that the individual is not suitable for Independent Travel Training at that time then an alternative offer of travel assistance will be made by the Council. If it is decided the young person is able to benefit from the training then then arrangements will be made to begin training, at the earliest opportunity.

Training programmes last on average 12 weeks, and will only be complete once the young person, trainer and family agree that independence goals have been reached. Following training, a future journey to school / college which maximises independence for the young person will be agreed.

Personal Independence Budget

Individuals eligible for travel assistance may be offered a personal independence budget if appropriate to both the Council and the family.

The benefits of this travel option are as follows:

- The young person and the families are able to make their own arrangements to best suit the needs of their individual

- Travel arrangements organised by the young person and/or family can be tailored to fit around other commitments
- The type of travel arrangements organised by the young person or family can take any form that they deem appropriate. Examples of options include:
 - Using the family car
 - Paying a carer to support the young person to and from their place of education
 - Paying for a bus or train pass so parent or friend accompany the young person on their journey
 - Pool payments with another family to make joint travel arrangements
- Family are in control of arrangements and can make changes at any time rather than other more restrictive travel options
- Provides greater opportunity for travel arrangements to support collection/drop off at alternative locations or support the attendance at after school clubs/activities in the community

Families are able to request this as an option by contacting the Travel Independence Hub. This option may be of interest to you if:

- You wanted to take your child to their education placement but needed support to make it financially viable for you
- Your child has very complex needs and you wanted to make your own travel arrangements
- You wanted to combine the council's contribution with your personal finances to provide your child with bespoke travel assistance to meet their needs and fit in with your family circumstances

If you were offered this form of travel assistance, it would be your responsibility to ensure travel arrangements allow your child to:

- Travel safely
- Attend school regularly and on time
- Be ready to learn once they arrive at school

The value of a personal independence budget offered will be as follows:

- the mileage of a returned journey e.g. driving from home to school, dropping your child off and returning home
- the number of times you transported your child to and from school (total number of return journeys and days attended)

Once the total number of miles have been calculated then the personal independence budget value will be calculated using a rate of 35p per mile

Personal independence budget payment will be made to the parents bank account, in advance of any travel taking place. Attendance levels will be monitored and money will be reclaimed for non-attendance at school.

Further information can be found on Ealing Council's Local Offer.

Arranged Transport

If all other options have been explored and identified as not suitable, such as public transport, independent travel, personal independence budgets or walking escorts then Ealing Council may consider providing a standard vehicle to transport the young person to and from their place of education.

Normally, arranged transport is planned to collect many passengers from agreed collection points (home address or identified collection point) into the same education establishment. You should be aware that as passengers join or leave the school collection times may change. Times are not fixed and may change throughout the year because of the mid-year pupil changes at the education placement.

Where possible and appropriate, vehicles may collect passengers attending different schools/education placements for an effective use of resources.

All staff are DBS checked and trained. Staff will be provided by a qualified, registered transport provider, working to contractual standards set by the Council.

Collection Points

The Travel Independence Hub may identify that the appropriate form of travel assistance for your child is by means of a collection point.

Ealing Council uses collection points to support the development of independence and preparation for adulthood.

If the young person is accessing a collection point you will be responsible for ensuring that they get safely to and from the collection point at the appropriate time. If your child's travel assistance offer requires them to walk to a collection point, then it is expected that an adult will accompany them where necessary. You will also be responsible for your child when they are waiting for transport, and when they leave the transport at the end of the day.

In the event of an emergency, late running of the service, or an adult not being present at a collection point, children/young person will be taken to an agreed safe point for parental collection.

Passenger Assistants

There is no statutory entitlement to a passenger assistant on any route. Any provision of passenger assistants will be based on the individual needs of each passenger and where the use of a passenger assistant will mitigate high levels of risk. If after assessment Ealing Council identify that a child/young person does not require the support of a passenger assistant then one will not be provided.

A passenger assistant may be used when there are a number of passengers with significant and complex needs who are travelling on the same vehicle. This will require a separate assessment and will be reviewed on a regular basis to establish if the continued provision of a passenger assistant is required.

Passenger assistants are not authorised to administer emergency rescue

medication. Emergency services will be called if a pupil has a medical emergency whilst on the vehicle.

Walking Escort

Where appropriate the Council may consider providing an escort to accompany a young person to walk to school or travel via a public transport. Such a scheme may be the forerunner to introducing pupils to travel training and would seek to improve confidence and independence by providing a more 'normal' travel experience for pupils. Escorts may accompany more than one child or even introduce a 'walking bus' route (subject to satisfactory completion of a risk assessment).

Section 5: How to apply for travel assistance?

Complete an Application Form

If you believe your child may be entitled to travel support you should obtain and complete an assistance request form from Local Offer

<https://www.ealingfamiliesdirectory.org.uk>

You can submit your completed application form either by email or post using the following addresses:

senta@ealing.gov.uk

Notification of decision

All applications will receive careful consideration. Ealing Council will aim to inform parents and carers of the decision in writing within fifteen working days of receipt of the completed application.

Formal Appeal Process

What if I disagree with a decision?

Where an application for school travel support has been refused, or you believe further consideration of your child's circumstances is required, the following process will apply.

- **Stage 1 – Review**

You should submit your review in writing via email within 20 working days of the original notification of decision. Requests for reviews must be sent by email to senta@ealing.gov.uk

Your request for review must detail all the options explored and considered by the family to make their own travel arrangements, and why these options are not suitable/available.

New information/evidence not included in the original application must also be provided. This should support the circumstances and reasons why you feel travel assistance should be provided, and where possible this

information/evidence should be from relevant professionals and should clearly identify how specific needs/circumstances mean that travel assistance is required.

The decision will then be reviewed by the Senior Officer within the Travel Independence Hub. You will receive a decision within 20 working days from the date of receipt of the request for a stage 1 appeal.

- **Stage 2 – Appeal**

You have 20 working days to challenge the review decision. The stage 2 appeal will be reviewed by a panel within 40 working days of receipt of the Stage 2 appeal. The panel will consist of the Assistant Director Ealing Services for Children with Additional Needs, the Assistant Director of School Planning and Resources, and the Head of Disabilities or a nominated substitute identified by the panel members. You should submit your appeal with supporting evidence along with the stage 1 decision to senta@ealing.gov.uk. The panel will consider the appeal in line with this policy. This decision will be sent by letter within 5 working days.

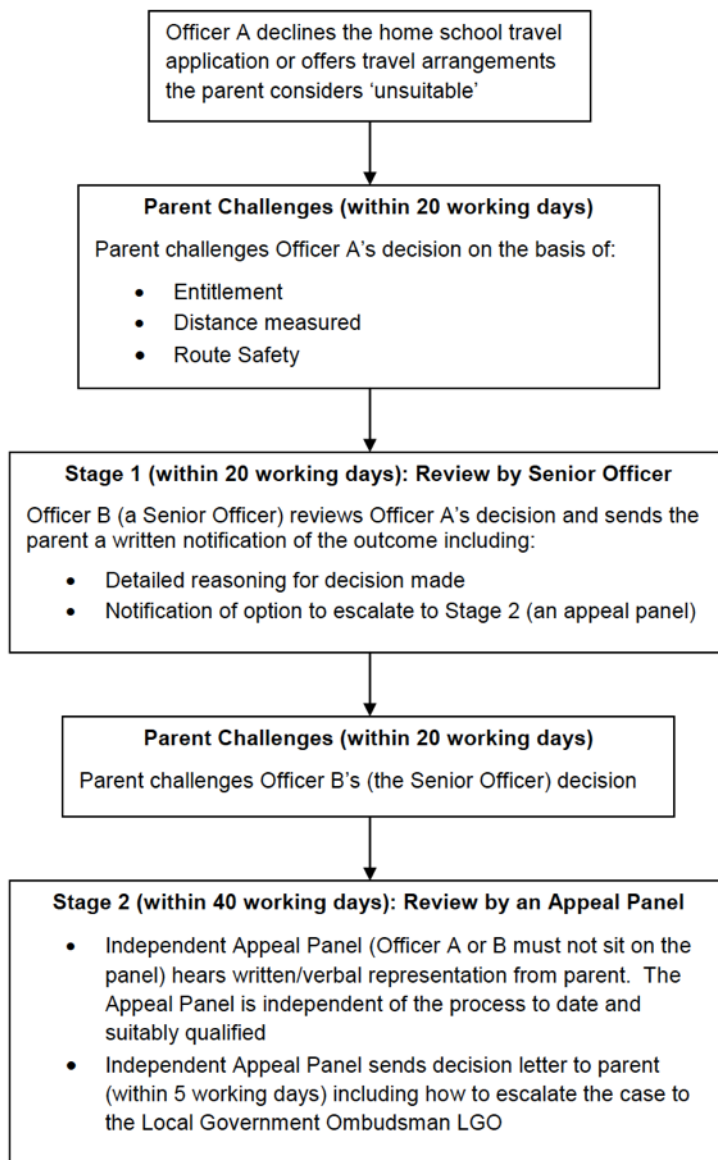
During each stage of the appeal process the reviewing officers/panel will use the evidence available to them to review the previous decision and whether the policy has been applied correctly. When you submit additional information for consideration it may be helpful to consider providing any of the following:

- Details of how your child currently travels around outside of school
- Examples of incidents/concerns as a result of the Council's original decision
- Supporting medical evidence from a consultant
- What efforts have been made by family and friends to support your child with his/her travel assistance and attendance at school
- Evidence that alternative travel options have been explored, along with evidence why they are not considered suitable

The appeal process is separate from any complaints or concerns that you wish to raise around the quality of the service that you and/or your child receives.

Complaints

If you are unhappy with the assistance you have received and wish to submit a complaint to the Council this can be done on the Ealing Council website: https://www.ealing.gov.uk/info/201033/council_and_local_decisions/516/complaints



Appendix A: Parent/carer Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all parents and carers to ensure that their children attend their education placement, including those children with SEND.

Ealing Council has a duty (and powers) to make particular arrangements for children with SEND to facilitate their attendance at school.

You play a key role in ensuring the smooth running of your child's travel assistance.

You support this by:

- Providing home and work telephone numbers and an emergency contact number and address
- Notifying the Travel Independence Hub of any changes to normal arrangements
- Recognising that travel assistance is provided for the benefit of the child
- Making sure that the young person is ready at least ten minutes before the pick-up time; transport can wait no more than three minutes after arrival
- Bringing the young person to the vehicle and assisting with placing them on the vehicle
- Always being at the set-down point to meet your child at the end of the day, contractors must ensure the young person's are handed over to a responsible adult
- Telephoning 0208825 5544 or emailing sent-transport@ealing.gov.uk as soon as possible if your child is sick or unable to attend school for any reason
- Ensuring your child behaves in an acceptable manner on the vehicle so as not to detract from the comfort and safety of other passengers or distract the driver
- Treating all staff with courtesy

It is your responsibility to ensure that your child is on time at the correct location for collection and you are available to receive your child after school at the designated pick up point.

If you are late on a regular basis for either the pick up or drop off, you will be contacted by an appropriate person from the Council in an attempt to work together to resolve the situation. If the lateness continues the Local Authority will decide on an appropriate course of action.

If you are not at home or at the collection point to meet your child, transport will wait three minutes after the scheduled set-down time and then continue the journey, the transport provider will then attempt to drop your child off for a 2nd time after completing the remainder of the route. If unsuccessful, then your child will be taken to a place of safety.

You will be responsible for the cost of any extra travel involved and supervision provided. If such incidents occur frequently Ealing Council will suspend provision of transport and you will be responsible for travel

arrangements to ensure that your child attends their education placement.

Both you and your child's education establishment are expected to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure appropriate behaviour on home to school travel and to take necessary action when incidents of unacceptable behaviour are reported. It is appreciated that some children with special educational needs will display behaviour which is related to their special educational need. In this situation we will work with the school and yourself to improve behaviour so that your child can travel to and from school safely. Incidents of serious or persistent indiscipline will lead to Ealing Council suspending transport. You will then be responsible for travel arrangements to ensure that your child attends school.