

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Executive
Date: 25th February 2019
Report for: Decision
Report of: Executive Member for Constitutional Reform and Resident Engagement

Report Title

Children, Families and Wellbeing All Age Travel Assistance Policy 2019/2020.

Summary

The purpose of this report is to set out the approach taken to the All Age Travel Assistance consultation undertaken with regards to the proposed policy for 2019/2020 and to approve the revised policy.

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the Executive:

1. notes the content of the report, in particular:
 - 1.1 The methodology and approach used for the consultation process;
 - 1.2 The feedback received from the consultation process;
 - 1.3 The Equality Impact Assessment in relation to the travel arrangements policy for 2018/19; and
2. approves the Children, Families and Wellbeing All Age Travel Assistance Policy 2019/2020 as detailed in the report; and
3. approves the proposal to implement the above policy with effect from 1st June 2019.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Alison Milne
Extension: 3233

Background Papers: None

The following documents are attached as appendices:

Proposed Trafford Council All Age Travel Assistance Policy 2019-2020.
EIA All Age Travel Policy Updated January 2019
EIA Appendix A – School Census October 2018 (gender and free school meal eligibility) January 2018 (ethnicity)

Implications:

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	Services focussed on the most vulnerable people Re-shaping Trafford Council
Financial	The Council has forecast it will spend £4.218m in 2019/2020 on transport and travel assistance. There are no changes proposed to the level of charges.
Legal Implications:	The proposals as set out in the report enable the Council to adhere to its legal obligations in relation to home to school transport, disabled children, adult learners and adults with care and support.
Equality/Diversity Implications	Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) In line with the council's PSED under section 149 of the 2010 Equality Act an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out and is provided as part of the background papers to this report. The development of the EIA has enabled the Council to give due regard to the impact of the proposed changes on those identified with protected characteristics under the 2010 Equality Act. Members must have regard to the EIA, the likely impact of the proposed policy on persons with protected characteristics and the mitigation proposed in relation to those impacts in reaching their decision on this matter.
Sustainability Implications	The Council will have to continue to procure transport providers to transport children across the Borough, and that number is likely to increase. A range of travel options are highlighted in the Policy. The Policy links to the Sustainable Modes of Transport Strategy.
Resource Implications e.g. Staffing / ICT / Assets	The number of Passenger Assistants required is dependent upon a number of factors including needs of pupils on commissioned transport.
Risk Management Implications	These are addressed in the Policy and the EIA.
Health & Wellbeing Implications	Travel assistance enables eligible children and adults to access school, learning, training, respite care and activities which contribute to their employability, health and wellbeing. Independent Travel Training is one travel assistance solution and helps young people prepare for adulthood and independence.
Health and Safety Implications	These are addressed through the Service Standards described in the Policy.

1.0 Background

- 1.1. Trafford Council has made significant changes and service improvements to the provision of travel assistance to children, young people and adults. To meet that need the Council's All Age Travel Assistance Policy was revised for the 2016/2017 academic year.
- 1.2. In 2017 and again in 2018 the Policy was revised to clarify some wording which users had found confusing. The charges for providing travel assistance to eligible nursery age children and those students of 6th form age, including those children and young people from low income families, was reduced to £510 and £255 for low income families per academic year from September 2018.
- 1.3. Demand for travel assistance continues to rise. This mirrors the increase in the number of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities who require an Education, Health and Care Plan. As a result of increased demand the budget for travel assistance, including home to school transport, has been increased from £3.573m in 2018/2019 to 4.218m in 2019/2020.
- 1.4. The Council has now exercised, in the proposed 2019/2020 Policy, its statutory duty to review travel arrangements for service users; the costs and charges, and eligibility to assistance. The proposed revised Policy ensures that the Council's obligation to review the Policy is met and more clearly states eligibility for low income families, travel assistant arrangements for looked after children and medical assistance whilst on transport for children and young people with complex physical or medical needs. An EIA reveals the proposal has either a positive or neutral impact on children and young people with SEND.
- 1.5. There is no proposal to increase the level of fees so they will remain unchanged for the academic year 2019/2020.
- 1.6. The public consultation was undertaken from 20th November 2018 to 12th January 2019 and details of the consultation approach and methods used are noted in Section 3 of the report. The results of the public consultation are summarised in Sections 4, 5 and 6 of the report.
- 1.7. The proposed revised Policy will apply to children of compulsory school age, pre-school children, children starting reception class, pupils attending grammar school or faith schools, young people of sixth form age, adult learners and adults with care and support needs. The Policy is therefore not solely addressed to children and adults with disabilities, but is a wider document pertinent to all relevant groups.

2.0 The Policy Changes Summarised

- 2.1 This section summarises the main changes of the proposed revised Policy.
- 2.2 To make some changes to the wording of the All Age Travel Assistance Policy to make it clearer. These are highlighted in yellow in the Proposed Trafford Council All Age Travel Assistance Policy 2019-2020 which is attached in the appendices.

Page Number	Description
5, 12	Update the dates to reflect the 2019/2020 academic year and Policy start date.
8	<p>Slight change to wording to include “means tested benefits”. It is proposed to have the following:</p> <p>“A low income family is regarded as one where the child is eligible for ‘Free School Meals’ or where the parent that the child normally lives with is in receipt of a means tested benefit. Where a parent is applying for travel assistance on the basis that they are a low income family copies of relevant benefits will be required.”</p>
8	<p>Amendment to Free School Meal Entitlement to reflect changes to Universal Credit. It is proposed to include the following</p> <p>“Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)”</p> <p>“All children in reception, year one and year two are entitled to a free school meal in state funded schools under the Children and Families Act 2014, however, unless the family of such a child also receives one of the above qualifying benefits the family will not be regarded as a low income family.”</p>
11	<p>New section in relation to Trafford Looked After Children. It is proposed to include the following:</p> <p><u>“Trafford Looked After Children (LAC)</u></p> <p>Travel assistance for eligible children will be provided following authorisation from the relevant social care panel.</p> <p>There is an expectation that placement providers / carers would provide travel assistance where possible.</p> <p>A range of travel solutions will be considered that best supports the child’s attendance at school.”</p>
11	<p>Amendment to Travel Assistance between Schools to include educational support package or placements. It is proposed to have the following:</p> <p>“Pupils based full-time at one school may visit another school for integration purposes or to access an additional educational support package or placement to that provided by the school at which they are on roll.</p> <p>Where this happens, transport arrangements must be made between the schools.”</p>
23-24	Amendment to Children with complex Physical or Medical Needs setting out what support will be provided by Passenger Assistants under an acute care pathway plan in the 2019 Policy.

30	<p>Additional information supplied in relation to appeals. It is proposed to add the following:</p> <p>“Please note that any appeals received, just before or during the main summer school holidays, may be delayed if information that is needed to be considered at an appeal cannot be obtained from a school due to its closure”.</p> <p>The following was added following consultation to clarify the position about applications for travel assistance.</p> <p>“However, any applications for travel assistance will still be considered through the school holidays.”</p>
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- 2.3 To make changes to the support provided to children and young people with complex physical and medical needs. The Council is no longer able to sustain the provision of Passenger Assistants to administer medication for children on transport. At the moment a very small number of Passenger Assistants have received some training from the Community Nursing Team to provide emergency interventions (this will include buccal Midazolam, inhalers, suction and oxygen) in a few cases. This has been a voluntary arrangement with parental agreement. It is proposed to withdraw this voluntary provision and instead replace with an acute care pathway plan.
- 2.4 There were further changes made to the Policy following consultation about the changes proposed for children and young people with complex physical and medical needs.
- 2.5 The creation of a specific pathway for the management of children, young people and adults with epilepsy whilst on Trafford commissioned transport will be followed. In addition for those children, young people and adults known to have epilepsy that individual’s Epilepsy Care Plan (agreed with the Epilepsy Nurse Specialist, parents and school) will be required to be made available to Trafford’s Travel Co-ordination Unit (TTCU). The pathway is on page 26 of the Policy.
- 2.6 To change the name of the Acute Care Pathway to Emergency Care Pathway.
- 2.7 Collaboration has taken place with the Designated Clinical Officer from Trafford Clinical Commissioning Group and the Community Nursing Team to design the new pathways.
- 2.8 To change the wording in the Policy in relation to the management of children, young people and adults with complex medical and physical needs from “medical interventions” to “healthcare needs/interventions”.
- 2.9 Review of the application form for travel assistance to better capture and flag the medical and health care needs of children, young people and adults.
- 2.10 It is proposed that, should the Policy be approved, that the Policy would be implemented to take effect from 1st June 2019.

3.0 Communications and Publicity

- 3.1 The consultation set out the changes under two sub-headings; proposal one detailed the minor changes to the Policy wording and proposal two detailed the changes in support for “complex medical cases”.
- 3.2 The consultation was promoted through the following communications channels in order to promote the changes and encourage participation and feedback by all interested parties, individual users and groups:
 - 3.2.1 Websites as detailed below;
 - 3.2.2 Notification Letters as detailed below;
 - 3.2.3 Social Media methods as detailed below; and
 - 3.2.4 Contact meetings as detailed below.
- 3.3 The consultation was promoted on the front page of the Council’s website to deliver maximum exposure to ‘passing traffic’, as well as providing an immediate landing spot and link to the consultation’s dedicated webpage.
- 3.4 The dedicated webpage received a total of 681 page views with 569 of these being unique visitors to the site.
- 3.5 Front page promotion was conducted for the period of 20th November 2018 to 12th January 2019.
- 3.6 The webpage also invited feedback by allowing respondents to either complete a Yes/No question and/or to leave additional feedback in an expandable text box. Respondents could also send comments to a dedicated email account and to the Executive Member for Constitutional Reform and Resident Engagement for review and inclusion.
- 3.7 Notification letters regarding the changes and the methods of responding to the consultation were emailed to parents where their email addresses were known.
- 3.8 Notification letters were also posted to the parents of all school age children and the carers of adult transport users.
- 3.9 The consultation was also promoted widely by social media and other Council communication channels.
- 3.10 Face to face meetings were held at Brentwood High School and Community College, Delamere School and at Trafford Parents Forum, to promote the consultation and provided opportunities for feedback and questions.
- 3.12 The Family Information Service promoted the consultation via social media, placed information on their dedicated website, and also ‘re-tweeted’ the news and information to their followers. Young people, parents and carers were targeted; 1,621 Facebook users were reached and there were 2,352 Twitter ‘engagements’.
- 3.13 Information regarding the consultation was also promoted on the Trafford SEND Local Offer website along with an invitation to find out more and leave feedback. A link to the consultation was placed prominently on the ‘carousel’ on the Local Offer front page and the consultation was also promoted “In the Loop” and sent to around

420 Early Years Settings (including maintained, private, voluntary and independent childcare providers and childminders in Trafford on 7th December 2018.

- 3.14 Letters were sent to three local FE colleges at Trafford, Salford and Manchester, neighbouring local authorities, existing transport contractors and Transport for Greater Manchester inviting feedback to the consultation.
- 3.15 Over 600 letters were sent to parents, 152 letters to passenger assistants, plus emails to all contractors, schools and other interested parties.
- 3.16 Adults, Children social care services and Trafford Clinical Commissioning Group were asked for feedback to the proposed changes.

4.0 Consultation Response

- 4.1 A total of 11 responses were received. This included 9 responses submitted via the web page. A further 2 responses were received by email directly to The Executive Member for Constitutional Reform and Resident Engagement from the parents of two children that travel on commissioned transport.
- 4.2 The Executive Member for Constitutional Reform & Resident Engagement and the Trafford Travel Co-ordination Unit Manager attended meetings at Trafford Parents Forum, Brentwood School and College and Delamere School to answer questions on the proposed changes.

5.0 Analysis of Responses

- 5.1 For proposal 1, out of the 9 respondents via the Council's website, 4 stated that they agreed to proposal, 2 disagreed and 3 did not indicate.
- 5.2 For proposal 2, out of the 9 respondents via the Council's website, 4 stated that they agreed to the proposal, 2 disagreed and 3 did not indicate.
- 5.3 Out of the 3 responses that did not indicate if they agreed/disagreed to the proposals; one stated that they do not administer rescue medication due to issues with clinical governance; one stated that even though rescue medication had not been given, it is stated that it is comforting to know that the medication is on the bus. One stated that they agree that it should not be the responsibility of the passenger assistant to administer rescue medications, but there are concerns that the current flexibility may be impacted on.
- 5.4 Overall, there is a slight majority that agreed with both proposals.

6.0 Specific Questions/Comments received during the Consultation and Response

- 6.1 The following themes and queries were derived from the consultation responses and these are listed below with a Council response:

6.1.1 Does the administration of rescue medication require clinical judgement?
Yes it does.

6.1.2 Is the administration of rescue medication classed as a medical intervention?

It is acknowledged that the wording needs to be amended here, as administering buccal Midazolam can be administered by a carer or parent. The wording in the policy has been changed to incorporate this feedback.

6.1.3 It has been suggested that the wording in relation to Appeals is updated further to make it clearer.

The wording in the policy has been updated to make it clear that any applications for travel assistance will still be considered through the school holidays.

6.1.4 Disappointment that the detail of the proposals was not explained in more detail in the original letter or to Passenger Assistants.

The consultation was a proposal and additional information was quickly provided in response to questions that were raised initially. Everyone's views needed to be taken into consideration before making any key decisions, however, endeavours will be made to include more information in future consultations.

6.1.5 Not administering buccal Midazolam could have damaging implications.

It is not the responsibility of the Passenger Assistant to administer buccal Midazolam. If there are concerns regarding a pupil having a seizure on transport the Passenger Assistant will dial 999 straight away.

6.1.6 Not all ambulance/paramedics carry buccal Midazolam.

If they don't carry buccal Midazolam they will carry an alternative.

6.1.7 Rescue medication has never had to be given despite a Passenger Assistant having specific training.

It is acknowledged that in most cases the passenger assistant is not required to provide any type of medical assistance.

6.1.8 Due to issues with clinical governance other North West Authorities do not administer buccal Midazolam.

This is acknowledged by the Council.

6.1.9 Before and after school clubs could reduce the demand for transport.

This feedback is noted and will be passed on to the relevant departments.

6.1.10 Concerns that the proposal removes flexibility of the current system.

There is a need to ensure roles and responsibilities are defined. This does not remove flexibility as each pupil is reviewed/cared for on an individual basis.

6.1.11 Requests to confirm exact plans and funding for transport care for the remaining children.

The outcome of the proposals will be communicated to all parent/carers of pupils receiving travel assistance.

6.1.12 It is felt that there is not enough written in to the policy to say how exactly the Council will go about consulting with the NHS and parents to find suitable, funded alternatives to ensure there is not a gap in provision for any child when the new policy comes in to place.

For any child travelling that currently travels with a Passenger Assistant, who has received basic training, their cases will be reviewed by TTCU, school, Community Nursing Team and parents. If in the meantime a parent has any concerns regarding transport they can get in touch with Trafford Travel Co-ordination Unit. If a parent

has any concerns regarding the medical care of their child they can get in touch with their GP or other professional for further advice and guidance.

6.1.13 It is believed that Passenger Assistants should be trained to administer interventions.

Feedback from the medical profession, other North West Authorities, schools and the majority of parents, agree that it is inappropriate for a Passenger Assistant to be trained to administer healthcare.

6.1.14 Administering interventions should be part of the passenger assistants' job description, the same as teaching staff.

Teaching staff have additional training and salary to reflect their additional responsibilities. School based staff also have the support of others in school and each school has a school nurse. Passenger Assistants do not have the skills or expertise to administer any type of healthcare needs to pupils, they often care for more than one child on transport and the journey times are on average 20 to 30 minutes.

6.1.15 It is believed that parents should not have to transport their children to school as this goes against the Care and Support Statutory Guidance

TTCU have a statutory duty to provide travel assistance in accordance with the DFE guidance. It is not the role of the TTCU to provide medical or social care assistance. If there are medical or social care needs these will be met via social care and/or the CCG.

6.1.16 In Manchester it is expected that parents travel to school with their children.

This is acknowledged by the Council.

6.1.17 For children NHS funding, it is Continuing Care and not Continuing Health Care.

The feedback is noted and the policy will be updated accordingly.

6.1.18 A small number of parents are uncomfortable at the prospect of travelling without someone who is willing and able to administer rescue medication

All cases will be reviewed in conjunction with the Clinical Commissioning Group, Community Nursing Team, schools and the parents to agree a way forward.

7.0 Other Options

- 7.1 Do nothing. The Council would not be meeting its statutory duty to review travel arrangements for service users; the costs and charges, and eligibility to assistance. Travel assistance arrangements for looked after children would not be included in the Policy and minor clarifications in relation to the introduction of universal credit would be excluded. This may adversely affect our most vulnerable children and families.
- 7.2 Maintain existing arrangements for supporting children, young people and adults with complex medical and physical needs. Medical assistance would continue to be provided by Band 2 Passenger Assistants on a voluntary basis and with parental consent. Advice from the CCG's Designated Clinical Officer, Community Nursing Care, Paediatricians and North West Ambulance Service says that Passenger Assistants do not have the required skills and expertise to administer any type of health care needs to passengers. This could place children, young people and adults at risk whilst on transport.

8.0 Reasons for Recommendation

8.1 The revised Policy makes it clearer for children, young people, adults and their families, including low income families, about eligibility for travel assistance. The arrangements for supporting passengers with complex medical and physical needs and pathways of support for passengers in an emergency situation whilst on transport are clarified.

9.0 Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that the Executive notes the content of the Report, in particular:

9.1.1 The methodology and approach used for the consultation process;

9.1.2 The feedback received from the consultation process;

9.1.3 The Equality Impact Assessment in relation to travel arrangements policy 2018/2019; and

9.1.4 That the Policy is approved, the Children, Families and Wellbeing All Age Travel Assistance Policy 2019/2020 as detailed in the report; and

9.1.5 Approves the proposal to implement the above policy with effect from 1st June 2019.

Key Decision Yes

If Key Decision, has 28-day notice been given? Yes

Finance Officer Clearance - PD

Legal Officer Clearance DS

CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE



To confirm that the Financial and Legal Implications have been considered and the Executive Member has cleared the report.