



## **TORBAY COUNCIL**

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

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

##### **Main Objectives**

To ensure that students who need help to get to post 16 education are able to access suitable, flexible transport at reasonable cost, so that no student is unable to continue in education.

- To support as much freedom of choice over post 16 establishment as is reasonable.
- To encourage independent travel for all post 16 learners.
- To ensure smooth transition into post 19 travel support arrangements
- To encourage commercial operators to develop discount fare schemes for learners
- To employ bulk purchasing power to use public resources to best effect

##### **Summary of Policy**

To be eligible for assistance:

- Students must live in Torbay Council's area.
- Students must be under 19 years of age at 1 September 2011.
- Students must attend full-time.
- Students must either:
  - a) live more than three miles from the School/College attended in the Torbay area  
OR
  - b) the School/College attended is outside the Torbay Area but within daily traveling distance and the student has a compelling reason as to why they must study at this School/College i.e they cannot find suitable courses within Torbay

#### **2. Details of all concessionary fares, discounts, subsidies, passes or travel cards available for learners aged 16–18 and who provides them.**

##### **Local Authority Post 16 Transport Scheme**

If you are eligible for assistance to Sixth Form or Further Education College APART FROM South Devon College, the Local Authority's Post 16 Transport Scheme provides a travel pass in return for a financial contribution, currently at £445. The contribution reflects that the post 16 policy supports student choice. For students from low income families in receipt of a qualifying benefit the charge is £100. There is also a scheme to remit this charge for students who are estranged from their family and living independently. Students must be able to demonstrate that they are in receipt of a qualifying benefit.

Qualifying benefits are as follows:

- Income Support
- Child Tax Credit but NOT entitled to Working Tax Credit and the household income does not exceed £16,190

- Income-based Job Seekers Allowance (IBJSA)
- Employment Support Allowance (Income Related)
- Guaranteed Element of State Pension Credit
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999.

Bus passes are issued on a termly basis after payment has been made.

The £445 payment can be split into 10 x £44.50 monthly payments, or termly at £149.00 for Autumn, £148.00 for Spring and £148.00 for Summer.

The £100 payment can be split into 10 x £10.00 monthly payments, or termly at £34.00 for Autumn, £33.00 for Spring and £33.00 for Summer.

You can pay by the following options:

- Annually - one invoice will be issued
- Termly - one invoice will be issued with a payment plan set up
- Monthly Instalments - one invoice will be issued with a payment plan set up

You can pay by the following methods:

- Cheque
- Credit/Debit Card
- Direct Debit
- Cash at the Torquay Connections Office.

Replacement passes are issued at a cost of £10.00. If a pass is lost or stolen a payment of £10 must be paid in order for a replacement to be issued.

### **Learners with Learner Difficulties and/or Disabilities**

Post 16 learners with special travel needs may be provided with bespoke journeys using contract minibuses, or taxis by the Local Authority. The standard financial contribution is required from the student unless the student is doing a Special Needs course. For non South Devon College students the £100 charge is applied for students from a low income family. Please indicate on your Post 16 Transport Application if you wish to be considered for a bespoke journey.

### **Individual Schools and Colleges**

Individual Colleges and Schools exercise discretion to assist with students facing hardship where assistance is not available from the LA. Usually, this is through the purchase of a season ticket, or other discount ticket on public networks. Schools and Colleges may seek a financial contribution. Contact the individual schools or colleges for further information.

### **Public Transport Operators**

Public transport operators, Stagecoach Devon, First Bus and First Great Western offer a range of discounted multi-journey fare deals, monthly and season tickets. Visit their websites for further information. Contact details are in section 11.

### 3. What times during the day can learners use their travel pass or obtain concessionary fares?

#### Local Authority Post 16 Transport Scheme

The LA issue 4 different types of bus pass; a **Bronzerider**, **Bluerider**, **SDCRider** and a **Firstrider**. For entitled Torbay students attending an establishment outside of Torbay, which is NOT South Devon College, Rail Passes are generally issued.

A **Bronzerider** pass can be used for **unlimited travel**, 7 days per week on any Stagecoach route within Torbay (excluding Summer holidays). The ticket is also valid for journeys to Newton Abbot, Totnes and Kingswear. This ticket is not given to students attending South Devon College.

A **Bluerider** pass is only valid for school journeys Monday to Friday and is not valid after 19.30pm. This type of ticket is generally issued if the student is attending a school/college outside of the Torbay area, allocated to a school contract route or the public route they are allocated to is not operated by Stagecoach.

A **SDCRider** pass is valid for 1 inward journey and 1 return journey per day to South Devon College. The pass will only be valid on the 3, 4 or 5 days you are in College, which will be stated on your Student SDC ID card. On non College days any travel on the Stagecoach Devon network after 16.00 Monday-Friday and all day Saturday, Sunday & Bank Holidays will cost £1 per single trip, payable on the bus, when your bus pass is shown to the driver.

A **Firstrider** pass can be used for unlimited travel, 7 days per week on any First Bus route within Torbay (excluding Summer holidays). The ticket is also valid for journeys on the X80 to Plymouth and the 64/65 service.

#### Public Transport Operators

Discounted, multi-journey tickets bought through the operators are subject to terms and conditions, but most offer flexible travel arrangements.

#### Learners with Learner Difficulties and/or Disabilities

Bespoke contract arrangements feature an outward and return journey and where possible these are tailored to individual timetable needs.

### 4. Support will continue to be made available to learners who reach 19 whilst continuing on a course?

#### Local Authority Post 16 Transport Scheme

Students supported by the LA who reach 19 during the academic year retain their entitlement to support until the end of the year.

#### Individual Schools and Colleges

Where Colleges and Schools exercise discretion, it is normal for support to continue for the whole academic year.

#### Public Transport Operators

Discount schemes operated by the local public transport providers are available to all age groups.

## **5. How will learners be assessed to see if they are eligible for assistance?**

### **Local Authority Post 16 Transport Scheme**

To be eligible for assistance:

- Students must live in Torbay Council's area.
- Students must be under 19 years of age at 1 September 2011.
- Students must attend full-time.
- Students must either:
  - a) live more than three miles from the School/College attended in the Torbay area  
OR
  - b) the School/College attended is outside the Torbay Area but within daily traveling distance and the student has a compelling reason as to why they must study at this School/College i.e they cannot find suitable courses within Torbay.

### **Local Authority Transport Appeals Procedure**

Students may appeal against the council's decision not to assist with transport if they feel there are exceptional circumstances that merit deviation from normal policy. The appeal will be considered by a panel of officers. If transport is not awarded by the Officer Panel, the council has an Appeals Committee, where elected members will consider representations from parents. Appeals can be made against the implementation of the policy in individual cases, but not against the policy itself.

The Senior Officer Panel Appeal form is available from the Transport Team contact details in section 11. The application will be put forward at the next available Senior Officer Panel date and the decision will be informed to you in writing. If the decision is to not award transport an application form will be included for you to complete if you wish to take forward your appeal to the Appeals Committee where members will consider the case.

### **Individual Schools and Colleges**

School and College schemes are discretionary and assess cases on individual merit. All take into account whether the LA has declined to offer support.

### **Public Transport Operators**

Ticket schemes operated by the public transport operators do not offer reduced fares on financial hardship grounds.

**6. Help provided for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities including those over 19 or learners facing other difficulties in following their courses?**

There is no automatic entitlement to free Post 16 transport. They follow the same learner assessment as other mainstream students. However students are able to appeal for the criteria to be relaxed for their individual case.

With regards to the mode of transport, the Local Authority tries where possible to offer the opportunity for post 16 learners with learning difficulties to travel on public transport with season tickets. Where this is not possible bespoke arrangements are made using contract minibuses or taxis.

Students over the age of 19 are provided with assistance by the Adult Care Trust and there is a planned transition between services during the years in which the student reaches 19.

It is rare for such students to be reliant on the discretion of Schools and Colleges for assistance. Most such students are provided with help by the Local Authority, unless unreasonable expenditure would be incurred as a result of personal choice without sufficient educational justification.

**7. Do you provide mobility/independence training for learners who face difficulty with transport?**

Combe Pafford School a local Special School runs an independent travel training programme for their students in order to encourage them to travel on public transport. The bus passes are provided by the Transport Team.

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

In May 2011 application forms were sent out to all Year 11 students resident in Torbay and students in Year 12 and 13 who had travel passes in the 10/11 academic year and resident in Torbay. Students can also apply online and applications forms can also be requested from the Children's Services Transport Team or downloaded from the Team's website. Please refer to the contact details.

The important dates to remember :

- **30<sup>th</sup> June 2011** – You have sent in your completed Transport Assistance Application.
- **29<sup>th</sup> July 2011** – You should have received your invoice or acknowledgement of free transport.
- **15<sup>h</sup> August 2011** – Transport Team have received your photograph and payment (if you are paying Annually or Termly) has been made.
- **Application submitted after 30<sup>th</sup> June 2011** – May take several weeks to process.

If all these deadlines are met and you haven't received your travel pass in the post by 31<sup>st</sup> August 2011, please contact the Transport Team.

**9. What help can learners apply for if they need to travel to a course that is beyond your LA area?**

Students must either:

- a) live more than three miles from the School/College attended in the Torbay area  
OR
- b) the School/College attended is outside the Torbay Area but within daily traveling distance and the student has a compelling reason as to why they must study at this School/College i.e they cannot find suitable courses within Torbay.

It is not normal for the Council to support students to attend establishments outside Torbay since a full range of courses are available at local 6<sup>th</sup> forms and South Devon College. The student wishing to travel outside Torbay would need to demonstrate a compelling reason why he or she needs to study a particular course at an alternative establishment.

In reaching a decision, the Council will take into account the availability of alternative courses locally, whether the course is key to the student's future career or study plans, whether the chosen course is an entry requirement to subsequent course(s), the cost of the transport arrangements and the length of the journey. The Council will not normally agree to arrangements that appear to be a simple expression of preference for one establishment over another, are excessively expensive or require the student to travel for more than 75 minutes in any direction.

Schools and Colleges outside the Local Authority sometimes offer transport schemes to students from Torbay who do not qualify for support with transport.

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

The Local Authority does not normally support learners who attend an institution outside normal daily travel distance. Rare exceptions are made for some students with learning difficulties who need to access specialist colleges, or courses.

Some specialist Colleges and Schools have boarding facilities and schemes to offer assistance to students facing hardship.

**11. Please provide information about all points of contact for learners seeking transport support, e.g. LA/college, bus company contact. Please include any websites and e-mail addresses.**

Children's Services Transport Team (for advice on LA scheme of assistance, students with special requirements and contact details for schools)

Telephone: 01803 207688

Website: [www.torbay.gov.uk/schooltravelsupport](http://www.torbay.gov.uk/schooltravelsupport)

Email: [cstransport@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:cstransport@torbay.gov.uk)

Stagecoach Devon (main public transport operator)

telephone 01803 664500

website: [www.stagecoachbus.com/devon](http://www.stagecoachbus.com/devon)

First Bus (secondary public transport operator)

telephone 0845 600 1420

website: [www.firstgroup.com/ukbus/southwest/devon/home](http://www.firstgroup.com/ukbus/southwest/devon/home)

First Great Western (local rail operator)

Telephone: 08457 000 125

Website: [www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk](http://www.firstgreatwestern.co.uk)

South Devon College (local FE College)

Telephone: (08000) 380123

Website: [www.southdevon.ac.uk/home/public](http://www.southdevon.ac.uk/home/public)

Email: [enquiries@southdevon.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@southdevon.ac.uk)