

Transport for Students Aged 16-19 in Continuing Education

Academic Year 2009/2010



Oldham
Council

BACKGROUND

1. This policy has been developed in response to responsibilities placed on the LA under the Consolidated version of the Education Act 1996, Learning and Skills Act 2000, Education Act 2002, Education and Inspections Act 2006 and Education Skills Act 2008, in respect of transport arrangements for 16-19 year olds in continuing education..
2. It incorporates guidance issued in:
 - Learning and Skills Council, Post-16 Transport Guidance 2009/2010
3. The policy is also designed to support the objectives of the Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan 2006/07 – 2010/11. As such, it will contribute towards delivering the shared priorities for transport agreed between central and local government of improving accessibility, reducing congestion, improving road safety and improving air quality.

SCOPE AND COVERAGE OF THE POLICY

4. The policy relates to provision planned for the academic year 2009/10, i.e. from 1st September 2009 to 31st August 2010.
5. The policy has been developed in consultation with a range of key players through the Oldham 16-19 Local Transport Partnership (hereafter called “The Partnership”) – see also the section on Consultation below. It is in two parts: the main body provides background and context; the support available to students, which is provided through the partners, is described in detail in the Annex.
6. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the detail contained in the Annex, the partners reserve the right to modify the detailed arrangements over the life of this policy.
7. In line with the legislation, this policy is primarily aimed at **full-time students aged 16-19 inclusive**, with support continuing to the end of the course, where the course started before the student had reached the age of 19. In this context, a full-time education means a programme of education provided by a recognised provider such that the young person’s timetable taken across all courses would require him or her to be in a class, or other taught or guided study session, (including practical work), for at least twelve hours per week. A learning programme means full time education (as defined above), or; an LSC-funded Entry to Employment programme (“E2E”), or; a Programme Led Pathway (“PLP”). This corresponds to the definition used in the Education Maintenance Allowance: Guidance for Schools and Colleges 2009/10.
8. However, subject to the terms and conditions used by the partners, some of the benefits set out in the Annex are also available to part-time students and to students aged 19+. Students should refer to the Annex for more detailed information.

9. Financial support through the Learner Support Fund for school sixth forms, and transport funded through the Council's People Communities and Society Department are exclusively for **Oldham residents**. All other benefits set out in the Annex are available to **all students studying at schools and colleges in Oldham**, subject to the terms and conditions of each scheme (e.g. UK residence and means-testing arrangements).

CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIP

10. This policy has been drawn up by the LA in consultation with the Oldham 16-19 Local Transport Partnership, whose membership includes representation from the following bodies:
- Oldham Council's People Communities and Society
 - Oldham Council's Regeneration Directorate
 - Representatives from post-16 schools
 - The Greater Manchester Learning and Skills Council

CURRENT TRANSPORT PROVISION

11. Oldham Sixth Form College and The Oldham College are situated in the western sector of the town centre; within a few minutes walk from the main bus station. Some bus services also stop on King Street close to the Sixth Form College. The location of the railway station in the eastern section of the town centre means that the colleges are not well served by rail. However the future Metrolink extension through Oldham town centre will include stations in the western sector of the town, providing improved public transport to colleges. Under the aegis of the Local Transport Plan pedestrian access to the town centre and the educational establishments located there has already been improved, notably by the provision of the Oldham Way footbridge, near the Sixth Form College. Further improvements are currently being considered as part of the West End Masterplan. In terms of creating cycle routes to enable students to cycle in greater safety, Oldham Council has set out a long-term vision to create a network of cycle routes across the Borough that is accessible to everyone in the community. This vision is set out in the Oldham Cycle Network, which provides a masterplan for the future development of cycle routes in the Borough whilst also showing those cycle routes that already exist. This can be viewed on the Council's website and is also available in a paper format.
12. A number of infrastructure measures have been introduced to improve pedestrian access to the town centre and the educational establishments located there, notably by the provision of the Oldham Way footbridges at Union Street West and King Street Roundabout. Further Improvements will be identified as part of the development of a Sustainable Transport Strategy for Oldham Town Centre planned in 2009/2010. In terms of creating cycle routes to enable students to cycle in greater safety, Oldham Council has set out a long-term vision to create a network of cycle route across the Borough that is accessible to everyone in the community. This vision is set out in the Oldham Cycle Network, which provides a masterplan for future development of cycle routes in the Borough whilst also showing those cycle routes

that already exist. This can be viewed on the Council's website and is also available in a paper format.

13. Students who are eligible for support under the LA's policy can apply to the LA for a cycling allowance if they opt to use a bicycle. The amount payable is 80p per day and will be publicised alongside other aspects of provision in 2009/10.
14. Oldham schools are well served by local buses, including dedicated services to schools.
15. Oldham is currently served by 3 rail routes, from which colleges and schools in Oldham and the adjacent areas can be reached, although as stated above the town centre colleges are not particularly well served by rail due to rail stations being located on the periphery of the town centre:
 - A. Manchester Victoria to Rochdale (the Oldham Loop), calling at Oldham Werneth and Oldham Mumps, serving the town centre, including the two colleges, and at Shaw and Crompton, serving Crompton House CE School.
 - B. Manchester Victoria to Rochdale, via Moston, Mills Hill and Castleton.
 - C. Manchester to Huddersfield / Wakefield, via Ashton Under Lyne and calling at Greenfield.
16. The Greater Manchester Metrolink system is to be extended to Oldham. This will involve converting the existing rail line between Manchester, Oldham and Rochdale to Metrolink operation. The current Oldham Loop train line will close in October 2009 and be replaced with a new tramway. Existing rail stations will be upgraded to Metrolink stops and new Metrolink stops will be built, including stops at South Chadderton, Freehold and Derker. Trams will be running from Manchester to Oldham Mumps by Autumn 2011 and to Rochdale by Spring 2012. Replacement bus services will be provided while the line is closed.
17. A Metrolink line through Oldham Town Centre is also proposed and would include Metrolink stops in Oldham Town Centre at King Street and Union Street (Oldham Central), which will provide much better access to the town centre colleges.
18. The Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPTE) offers a range of concessionary fare schemes throughout Greater Manchester, making it possible for students to travel across local authority boundaries to access colleges in neighbouring local authority areas. These include special schemes for students, young people and people with disabilities. A range of tickets allows mixed modes of transport, using bus, rail and the Metrolink tram system. This will become particularly beneficial to students when the Metrolink is extended to Oldham. In addition individual transport operators offer their own schemes: in Oldham the primary bus operator is the First Group.
19. The LA funds the second and subsequent fare(s) for eligible students who are required to undertake more than one bus journey to the nearest suitable school or college.

20. Young people with disabilities or learning difficulties, who have a Statement of special educational needs and qualify for home to school transport, or who had this on leaving Year 11, continue to receive support with transport from the LA between the ages of 16-19. The mode of transport is determined by the LA and, wherever possible, students are encouraged and supported to become independent travellers. For details of support at 19+, please see the Annex to this policy, question 5.
21. Support for travel is also available through the Learner Support Funds in school sixth forms and colleges.
22. Full details of concessionary fares schemes and support to students are included in the Annex.

GAPS IN PROVISION

23. Consultation within the Partnership indicates that the majority of students find it straightforward to travel to and from college. There is no evidence that students are deterred from enrolling at a particular establishment because of travel difficulties, or that this is a factor in withdrawals from courses.
24. Oldham Sixth Form College had previously identified some timetabling anomalies, for example where buses were leaving the college just prior to the end of the teaching day. However this has now been resolved by adjustments to the college timetable.
25. The Partnership's view is that school leavers are generally well informed about transport provision to post 16 providers. However colleges and the Connexions Service have now made arrangements to include more information on travel in their prospectuses and handbooks.
26. The Partnership supports the Local Authority's commitment to promoting sustainable transport. The Authority is already receiving funding from the Government via the Local Strategic Partnership to work with the Borough's schools to encourage them to develop sustainable travel plans and reduce the number of school journeys made by car. This work is being undertaken by The Unity Partnership on the Council's behalf. Unity could also work with the Partnership to inform Post 16 transport choices within schools, where pupils continue their education beyond year 11. Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Authority also has a duty to promote sustainable travel to schools to pupils of all ages, including the 16-19 age group.
27. An investment of over £30 million is required to complete the Oldham Cycle Network and provide cycle routes that are accessible to everyone in the community. The completion of this network will ensure that every education establishment in the Borough will be linked to a high quality cycle network. Current estimates suggest that the completion of the Oldham Cycle Network will not be achieved before 2032 and therefore there will be issues in the short to medium term concerning the ability of students to be able to access education establishments safely on a bicycle. However, priorities are being given to creating the

strategic traffic free cycle routes that link in to Oldham Town Centre providing high quality routes from Ashton, Lees and Chadderton. The Local Authority, with additional funding from Cycling England, has recently been able to increase the level of cycle training in the Borough by targeting schools that have approved travel plans. In 2009/10 this funding will enable over 2,400 children to be cycle trained, equivalent to 75% of pupils aged 10-11.

28. In 2003/04 the Partnership identified as a key priority for development the provision of mobility and independence training to enable young people with disabilities and/or learning difficulties to become, where possible, independent travellers. Two Independent Travel Trainer posts were created to work with pupils in developing these skills. In 2008/2009 the Partnership agreed that these posts would be re-advertised following a period in which both posts were vacant. A recruitment and selection process has been set up to fill 2 term time only posts. It is hoped that the posts will be filled by the start of the academic year 2009/2010. The following target groups have been identified by the partnership as the initial groups to access the training: Key Stage 4 pupils and pupils and students with SEN in mainstream schools.

SUPPORT AVAILABLE IN 2009/10

29. Using the format set out in the guidance, the Annex summarises the range of transport assistance that will be available to students for the 2009/10 academic year.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

30. The Partnership will continue to meet over the coming year, and will monitor the implementation of the policy. A review of the policy for the 2010/11 academic year will be conducted by the Partnership and 14-19 Group.
31. Financial monitoring will be carried out in line with the requirements of the DCSF terms and conditions for Learner Support Funds and the guidance on Transport Support Arrangements.