

Travel Assistance Policy 2020

Southwark Council consulted on their revised Travel Assistance Policy between 14 February 2020 and 27 March 2020. The consultation was shared, via the Local Offer and direct communication, with all parents/carers of those in receipt of travel assistance, relevant schools/colleges, Transport for London and parent groups. On 3 March, we held a focus group for parents, Headteachers and young people.

We received 37 responses to the consultation. We have considered each individual response, which is set out below and as a result, have applied changes to the policy document. These changes have been approved by our Lead Member, Councillor Jasmine Ali.

The revised policy will be published on Southwark's website by 31 May 2020, and any new applications for assistance will be assessed in line with the revisions. Due to Covid-19, we will not be currently asking those remaining at the same school for Year 12 to reapply, or for those that are post 19+ and already in receipt of assistance to reapply. We will continue to monitor the situation and will write to all relevant parents/carers once we are in a position to accept re-applications from this group.

1: We asked: Are the circumstances under which the Local Authority would consider providing travel assistance to a child aged under 5 years old clear from the example given?

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	22	59%
No	9	24%
Not Answered	6	16%

You said: People told us that the policy was mostly clear. We received eight specific comments, which are outlined below. Against each comment we have either provided clarification and/or an explanation of the changes we have made to the policy as a result.

Comment	Response
1. No examples of 'severe conditions' provided	Changes have been made to pages 7 and 15 of policy. No reference is now made to severe conditions. Policy now reads <i>'the council may decide that a child should receive travel assistance if because of their needs, they are unable to walk or travel by</i>

	<i>public transport, accompanied or unaccompanied, and there is no other transportation available to them.'</i>
2. I don't think it would be very practical or convenient for a tax/minibus to be transporting a child under the age of 5 with buggy and car seat	Local Authorities have a duty to adhere to all health and safety requirements when transporting children in one of their contracted vehicles.
3. My daughter is 16 years old and autistic	This section of the consultation relates to children under five years old.
4. If child has special needs and cannot go alone but just supervised by an adult, then it is not clear, if they can get travel assistance. Going by public transport supervised by parents becomes challenging.	If a child's needs do not prevent them walking a reasonable distance safely when accompanied, they will not be eligible for assistance. If, because of their needs, they are unable to walk accompanied, full consideration will be given to whether their needs prevent them travelling safely (and without risk to others) when accompanied on public transportation.
5. Could you expand or explain why there is no duty on the Local Authority to provide assistance. As well as perhaps looking into a possible alternative. To offer a service which can be potentially offered and is accessible. More so, the eligibility/criteria explained in more context. The context is not visible. I acknowledge the importance of declaration and ensuring that the person has the right level of support. I am a bit confused in relation to the 'Revised Travel Assistance Policy'. In particular, the part where it mentions no other form of transport available. But, what if one other mode of transport is required. Would it be worth reviewing this. For example, taking into account the sole carer(s). How much the person(s) may earn. Whether, it means by income, annually. The	The Education Act 1996 does not include a duty on Local Authorities to provide travel assistance to children under five years old. As there is no duty on Local Authorities to provide travel assistance to children under five years old, it is left to their discretion whether or not to do so. Southwark Council will provide assistance to under fives in exceptional circumstances only. The Travel Assistance Team will consider a full range of family circumstances when deciding whether a child under five meets the exceptional circumstances threshold. For example, they will look at whether or not it is reasonable, in view of the child's needs, to expect the parent/carer to accompany their child to their nursery/school.

<p>value of the transport. For example, a car or van. Check if they are under any other authority or benefit.</p> <p>Maybe not all of this is necessary. But, it may be worth pursuing. How long have they been a part of the area. Medical notes or other related documentation.</p>	<p>When applying for assistance, parents/carers should submit for consideration any information they believe is relevant to their child's needs, or their own situation. This includes recent medical information.</p>
<p>6. This does not appear to account for the personal circumstances of the 'family unit'. A car may be available but due to the make up of the family (other siblings etc), the parent/carer may not be available to drive</p>	<p>When assessing whether there are exceptional circumstances, reasonable consideration will be given to the personal circumstances of the family.</p>
<p>7. Although it is discretionary, I believe reducing the transport services to those with disabilities and medical conditions will cause immense stress on families who have other children and need to get them to school to, combined with getting to work. I do not agree with this reduction at all.</p>	<p>Under the current Travel Assistance Policy that is in place, Southwark Council only provides travel assistance to those under five years old who have disabilities and/or medical conditions. This will not change under the revised policy.</p>
<p>8. What does this mean? Can you give an example?</p>	<p>Changes have been made to pages 7 and 15 of policy. No reference is now made to severe conditions. Policy now reads <i>'the council may decide that a child should receive travel assistance if because of their needs, they are unable to walk or travel by public transport, accompanied or unaccompanied, and there is no other transportation available to them.'</i></p>

2: We asked: Does the wording of this section make clear when new applications for travel assistance for the next academic year must be made to the Local Authority by?

Option	Total	Percent
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Yes	33	89%
No	3	9%
Not Answered	1	3%

You said: People told us that the policy was mostly clear. There were four specific comments, which are outlined below. Against each comment we have either provided clarification and/or an explanation of the changes we have made to the policy as a result.

Comment	Response
1. Could you all state that in BLOCK CAPITALS. Or send a text, email, letter etc.	<p>Page 26 of policy has been revised so that requirement to apply by last Friday of June is in CAPITAL LETTERS.</p> <p>The Travel Assistance Team will issue reminders to all parents/carers of those already in receipt of assistance when they need to reapply.</p>
2. The wording above implies an annual application process. I am assuming, as other may be too, that if awarded 2 years of funding we do NOT need to reapply until this matures.	<p>When we write with our decisions on applications, we will inform parents/carers of eligible children/young people when they will be required to reapply. Reapplications only need to be submitted when there is a change in school/college and/or transitioning between Year 11 and 12, and/or turning 19 years of age and starting a new course and thereafter when changing course.</p>
3. There will always be exceptions where children are placed at a later stage than that cut-off point through no fault of the family. There needs to be flexibility in the system.	<p>Applications received after the last Friday of June will be accepted and assessed. There will however, be no guarantee that assistance will be in place for the start of term for those assessed as eligible.</p>
4. You do not always know by June if a school will take a child. It puts parents under pressure. Could you put an asterisk next to this to say: 'You can apply as soon as you get your EHCP. If you do not have a school named by June, [what should they do?]	

3: We asked: Does the wording of this section make clear the point from which any eligible children will be assessed for Independent Travel Training?

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	33	89%
No	4	11%
Not Answered	1	3%

You said: People told us that the policy was mostly clear. There were five specific comments, which are outlined below. Against each comment we have either provided clarification and/or an explanation of the changes we have made to the policy as a result.

Comment	Response
1. It does, but could you explain or give an idea of what is to come or expected	A section has been added to the policy (page 28) to explain the objectives of the independent travel training programme and the assessment process
2. No definition of what 'Independent Travel Training' is or how training will be done	
3. Are individuals assessed on an annual basis between Year 6 and 9 as to their needs	
4. It is not clear on what criteria you will be judging from Year 9 to progress to independent travel. Most children with disabilities, however mild and hidden would struggle to travel safely on transport. Perhaps SOME might progress to independent travel but MOST implies your criteria will be too strict and put immense stress on those children and their families. We need to protect the most vulnerable in our society as much as possible, as COVID-19 crisis has shown. There needs to be safety nets.	
5. Felt that 'in most cases' would lead to a defensive approach from the parent. 'Will be expected' already carries implications that this is the default	

<p>Could you write 'where appropriate' instead? It suggests you are thinking about the child as an individual</p>	<p>assessment process</p>
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4: We asked: Does the wording of this section make clear in which circumstance assessment for Independent Travel Training from year 6 will not take place?

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	30	83%
No	5	14%
Not Answered	1	3%

You said: People told us that the policy was mostly clear. There were five specific comments, which are outlined below. Against each comment we have either provided clarification and/or an explanation of the changes we have made to the policy as a result.

Comment	Response
<p>1. It is not specific enough. It would be more helpful for parents to be given clearer examples as to who and who will not qualify</p>	<p>A section has been added to the policy (page 28) to explain the objectives of the independent travel training programme and the assessment process</p>
<p>2. It does not state the circumstances</p>	
<p>3. 'Not appropriate for their needs' is tricky as it must be interpreted – who makes the decision?</p>	
<p>4. This should be communicated to all parties (parents/carers/teachers) and rationale provided so that everyone is on the same page</p>	
<p>5. It is all vague and I worry that this is just an excuse to make criteria stricter and exclude more children from school transport which is essential for some families and will put them in an enormously stressful and difficult situation</p>	

5: We asked: Does the wording of this section make clear the point at which all children will have their travel needs reviewed?

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	33	92%
No	2	6%
Not Answered	1	3%

You said: People told us that the policy was mostly clear. There were three specific comments, which are outlined below. Against each comment we have either provided clarification and/or an explanation of the changes we have made to the policy as a result.

Comment	Response
1. It does make sense. But you could elaborate why the travel needs to be reviewed	We have added to wording on page 27 of policy - <i>Reviews are carried out because as a child/young person gets older, their needs can change. The Travel Assistance Team needs to ensure that the type of assistance in place remains appropriate to meet needs and/or to look at ways in assisting the child/young to achieve independence.</i>
2. This does not state who has input into the review – schools/parents/carers/other professionals	Page 27 of the policy has been amended to read - <i>The review may involve meeting with the parent/carer and/or accompanying the child/young person on public transport, or walking with them. It may also involve seeking information from the school and other relevant professional bodies.</i>
3. It just sounds to me that the council is trying to pare back transport assistance as much as possible. These are the most vulnerable in our society. Using climate crisis and independence as an excuse/cover for cutbacks is cynical and manipulative. Different families travelling in different cars would cause more pollution. What about electric minibuses?	We have added to wording on page 27 of policy - <i>Reviews are carried out because as a child/young person gets older, their needs can change. The Travel Assistance Team needs to ensure that the type of assistance in place remains appropriate to meet needs and/or to look at ways in assisting the child/young to achieve independence.</i>

6: We asked: Does the wording of this section make clear the stage at which point all young people must submit a new application for travel assistance?

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	31	86%
No	3	8%
Not Answered	2	6%

You said: People told us that the policy was mostly clear. There were three specific comments, which are outlined below. Against each comment we have either provided clarification and/or an explanation of the changes we have made to the policy as a result.

Comment	Response
1. This section is unclear as it is uncertain to me what the implication of if a person who is listed on EHC plan as a young person or a family member will assist in travel as it is not clear cut slightly ambiguous (it may be grounds for refusal).	When assessing eligibility for travel assistance, the travel assistance team will consider whether the child/young person's family are able to assist them getting to school/college, and deciding, on the basis of all available information whether it is reasonable to expect them to assist.
2. It just sounds as if you are cutting back transport for those in need to only exceptional. This is basically just a cutback to save money. I do not agree with it and I am horrified that you are doing this. I understand councils are under immense financial pressure but these are the most vulnerable in our society.	The revised policy is aimed at ensuring that funding is targeted at those who are most vulnerable in society.
3. Will they always know where they are going by this point? 'Exceptional circumstances' might be misinterpreted by parents. Perhaps 'on an individual basis if agreed by the LA.' Every parent likely to regard theirs as an exceptional circumstance, so this is unhelpful language.	Applications received after the deadline will still be assessed, but without the guarantee that assistance will be in place for eligible young people by the beginning of the new term. The council believes that it is important to maintain 'exceptional' circumstances'. The wording makes it clear that assistance for this group is by exception only. The full wording in the policy is: <i>Decisions on the provision of travel assistance will be considered on an</i>

<p>Need to make sure schools are clear about the change and able to give informed advice to people/parents. Otherwise risk of conflicting advice.</p>	<p><i>individual basis and applications should be made under the Exceptional Circumstances criteria, as set out in Section 2 of this policy. In most cases young people with special educational needs and disabilities are expected to progress towards more independent travel training. If the young person was in receipt of assistance prior to Year 12, there is no automatic right to it continuing.</i></p> <p>We have consulted with schools over the proposed revised policy</p>
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7: We asked: Does the wording of this section make clear that assistance will only be provided in exceptional circumstances?

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	30	83%
No	4	11%
Not Answered	2	6%

You said: People told us that the policy was mostly clear. There were six specific comments, which are outlined below. Against each comment we have either provided clarification and/or an explanation of the changes we have made to the policy as a result.

Comment	Response
1. Exceptional circumstances is too vague and ambiguous	<p>Section 2 of the revised policy provides examples of exceptional circumstances for each of the relevant age groups</p>
2. No examples of circumstance	
3. The wording regarding exceptional circumstances is unclear and this is an ambiguous and wide statement which does not actually help a parent feel confident or engage in the process of these changes	
4. Nothing is said what exceptional circumstances are	
5. Please provide the definition of	

exceptional circumstances	
6. I do not agree with this. What does exceptional mean? It is only vague and also implies just a few children would qualify whereas there would be many families struggling to get their children to special schools without transport assistance. This reduction and cutback is shocking	

8: We asked: Does the wording of this section make clear that all young people will be assessed for Independent Travel Training and that, if appropriate, it will be the Council's only offer?

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	32	89%
No	2	6%
Not Answered	2	6%

You said: People told us that the policy was mostly clear. There were three specific responses to this part of the question, which are outlined below. Against each response we have either provided clarification and/or an explanation of the changes we have made to the policy as a result.

Comment	Response
1. I do feel this needs a little more explanation – I believe it means you cannot appeal the decision. Is this the correct interpretation?	Page 29 of revised policy has been amended to read - <i>If a parent/carer does not agree with the [ITT] decision, they may appeal.</i>
2. Please clarify the factors considered in this decision-making process. Is input considered from teachers/other professionals/parents/carers etc?	A section has been added to the policy (page 28) to explain the objectives of the training programme and the assessment process
3. It just sounds to me as if you are being stricter and stricter when these children are mostly in need of transport assistance. By all means, a few could access independent travel training but not many.	Individual assessments for Independent Travel Training will be made on their own merit and only those deemed suitable, after a rigorous assessment process, will be put forward for the programme. If training starts, and the child does not meet the required milestones because of their needs, the training will be postponed and

	the Travel Assistance Team will continue to support the child/young person to get to and from their education provision.
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9: We asked: Does the wording of this section make clear in which circumstances direct payments to enable attendance at education and/ or training will be made?

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	30	83%
No	4	11%
Not Answered	2	6%

You said: People told us that the policy was mostly clear. There was one specific comments, which is outlined below. Against the comment we have either provided clarification and/or an explanation of the changes we have made to the policy as a result.

Comment	Response
1. I do not understand what kind of transport would be used with DP and how an escort would be available. Surely having lots of different children travelling in taxis is more congestion than one electric minibus	The Travel Assistance Team will decide on the type of assistance eligible children and young people receive, and decision will be taken on a case by case basis according to needs. In making the decision, the Travel Assistance Team will firstly consider what is suitable to accommodate the needs of the child/young person. They will then go on to consider costs and environmental factors. In some cases, direct payments can be utilised by the family to pay for carers/escorts.

10: We asked: Does the wording of this section make clear on which grounds a place on/ in a contracted vehicle will be offered to an eligible young person?

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	31	86%
No	2	6%
Not Answered	3	8%

You said: People told us that the policy was mostly clear. There were two specific

responses to this part of the question, which are outlined below. Against each response we have either provided clarification and/or an explanation of the changes we have made to the policy as a result.

Comment	Response
1. The criteria is vague and just indicates cutbacks	The criteria were reviewed and where possible to do so were made clearer so that resource is targeted at those most in need..
2. Is what a parent says when under [pressure/stress in a tribunal legally binding? If it is, then we/someone needs to make parents aware at the tribunal stage What does it mean when the policy says the council 'may' consider ay SEN tribunal hearings	At tribunal it is made clear to parents what agreements have been reached during the proceedings. In addition, once a parent signs an amended EHCP, they are made aware that the contents are legally binding. When considering applications for assistance, the Travel Assistance Team will take into account, but will not necessarily be influenced by, a range of considerations, including decisions made at tribunal.

11: We asked: Does the wording of this section make clear the additional grounds under which an application for travel assistance may be refused?

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	30	83%
No	4	11%
Not Answered	2	6%

You said: People told us that the policy was mostly clear. There were three specific comments, which are outlined below. Against each comment we have either provided clarification and/or an explanation of the changes we have made to the policy as a result.

Comment	Response
1. Really because I am not fully aware of the situation or the circumstances surrounding this it is unclear to me what refusals for travel assistance may apply	Please refer to Page 29 of the revised policy under 'Circumstances where Southwark Council will NOT normally provide travel assistance.'

2. Can these additional grounds be listed in bullet points?	A bullet point has been added to page 29 of the revised policy under 'Circumstances where Southwark Council will NOT normally provide travel assistance.'
3. I understand this.	No response

12: We asked: Do you think the Local Authority should apply a charge to all users in this 16-18 year old category, who do not require, because of their needs, a specialised vehicle?

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	12	33%
No	22	61%
Not Answered	2	6%

You said: People told us that they mostly disagreed with this proposal. There were two specific comments, which are outlined below. Against each comment we have either provided clarification and/or an explanation of the changes we have made to the policy as a result.

Comment	Response
1. Concern about the transition – i.e. potential for abrupt shift from having transport in ear 11 to not having transport after the break – can we work on passed withdrawal of support for individuals	When writing decisions to parents for new eligible children, the Travel Assistance Team will outline to the parent/carer the key milestones for when assistance will be reviewed. They will explain how assistance may change when a child transitions from Year 11 to Year 12.
2. Be clearer about means-testing parents wages	At this stage, we are merely gathering views on means testing. No decisions have been taken on how we would means test if implemented

13: We asked: Do you think there should be a means-testing process to assess who should be charged?

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	20	56%
No	14	39%

Not Answered	2	6%
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You said: People told us that they mostly agreed with this proposal. No specific comments were provided.

14: We asked: Does the wording of this section make clear when a new application for travel assistance must be submitted?

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	31	86%
No	0	0%
Not Answered	5	14%

You said: People told us that the policy was mostly clear. There was one specific comment, which is outlined below. Against the comment we have either provided clarification and/or an explanation of the changes we have made to the policy as a result.

Comment	Response
1. How will these restrictions cause an additional strain of parents were always talking of child has special needs	Southwark Council has requested that applications for September starters be submitted by the last Friday of June so that it assists with managing the throughput of work and ensures that they are able to inform parents of their decision within 20 working days. Parents/carers will have the reassurance of knowing the decision prior to the summer break.

15: We asked: Does the wording of this section make clear that travel assistance from the Council will only be provided to young people with the most severe needs and who need a specialist vehicle to get to their education/ training provision and have no other form of transport (a motability vehicle is considered to be a form of transport) to get them there?

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	27	73%
No	5	14%
Not Answered	5	14%

You said: People told us that the policy was mostly clear. There were five specific comments, which are outlined below. Against each comment we have either provided clarification and/or an explanation of the changes we have made to the policy as a result.

Comment	Response
1. It is questionable	
2. This section implies that 'severe needs, only relates to those with a physical disability and not one such as an ASD. Individuals with ASD often suffer when traveling on public transport	
3. What does 'severe' mean? I do not agree with the reduction of transport assistance in your new draft policy. I believe it is a cyclical and manipulative excuse of climate crisis and independence, which patronises the disabled young people in our community, some of the most vulnerable people in our society, when this is merely an excuse for cutbacks to save money. BE HONEST. Do not patronize us with climate emergency. You must protect these young people and give them the opportunities you need. You are not making them more independent, you are depriving them of independence opportunities of college.	
<p>The wording below has been recommended:</p> <p><i>Applications for travel assistance for 19 to 25 year olds, starting a new course at an educational establishment stated in their EHCP, will only be provided travel assistance if they meet one of the following</i></p>	<p>As a result of your comments, changes have been made to page 13 of policy. There is now no reference to severe conditions. The new wording reads <i>'The young adult has the most severe disabilities and is unable to walk or travel by public transport, even when accompanied, and has no other means of transportation to assist with them getting to</i></p>

<p><i>criteria:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>The use of public transport to and from the educational establishment (either accompanied or unaccompanied) is either impractical or unreasonable given the young adult's stated disability; or</i> 2. <i>The young adult cannot use public transport as they require a specialist vehicle and the young adult is not the recipient of a vehicle provided under the Motability scheme; or</i> 3. <i>The young person is attending residential provision arranged by the authority which commenced after the young person's 19th birthday.</i> <p>From my perspective it appears that a young adult at (2) that can drive should use the vehicle and if they cannot this appears a difficult issue as fundamentally expecting parents to drive children long distances to and from an educational establishment each day is very problematic. I wonder if the distance should be used within the criteria i.e. the policy distinguishes between someone travelling 1 mile and 10 miles. In essence this would I think come into the test at (1) above. What is practical and/ or reasonable depends upon the journey length/ time.</p>	<p><i>their provision.'</i></p>
<p>Even if they change course, but in same provision, how does that make a difference to their travel</p>	<p>The Department for Education has advised Local Authorities that they need to re-assess eligibility for travel assistance whenever a young adult changes their course, regardless of whether they are remaining in the same provision. The reason for this is because by moving course the young adult should be demonstrating progression, which means they may also be ready to progress towards more independent travel.</p>

<p>'Once a person is aged 18 or over, the council does not have a duty to consider whether there is anyone available to accompany the young person to their provision' - can we get legal to check this</p>	<p>We have amended the wording on Page 29 of the policy to read <i>Once a young person is aged 18 or over, whilst the council does not have a duty to provide or pay for someone to accompany a young person to their education provision, each case will be considered on its own merit.</i></p>
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16: We asked: Please write any other comments you may have on the proposed changes in this box:

You said: There were 14 specific comments provided. Against each comment we have either provided clarification and/or an explanation of the changes we have made to the policy as a result.

Comment	Response
<p>1. It is difficult that these changes are taking place after 31 March 2020 when the provision has to be named in an EHCP according to the council's own processes as it may influence the choice of education provider and limit the choice made due to travel difficulties for the young person</p>	<p>In line with Government guidance, Local Authorities are required to publish their post 16 travel assistance policies no later than 31 May. The reason for the deadline is so that parents/carers are able to make informed choices about the school/college they wish their child to attend from September.</p> <p>For compulsory aged school children, schools are named in Section I of EHCPs by the end of February.</p>
<p>2. I do not think that people should be charged for transport whatever their disability</p>	<p>Local Authorities are only able to consider charging those that are within the 16 to 18 age group, and then only those that are unlikely to require assistance once they reach 19 years of age. Southwark Council does not currently have a charging system in place.</p>
<p>3. No comments</p>	

<p>4. I do not agree that it is not the council's responsibility with regards to help with travel unless the most severe case. Help should be available to all disabled young people to help them get out and about in the community. This is indeed why people pay taxes and these young adults are entitled to live the best life that they can with the help of the council and the government.</p>	<p>Southwark Council will continue to provide assistance to those of compulsory school age who meet the statutory eligibility criteria. Assistance for those aged 16 to 25 will be targeted at those who are most vulnerable.</p>
<p>5. We need two assistants on the bus as one assistant is not enough. If something happens who would be responsible</p>	<p>The ratio of assistants per bus is calculated on the number of children travelling, their ages and the severity of their needs</p>
<p>6. Why is the council considering to make it impossible to get travel assistance and they have not seem to consider that most of the kids may not have physical disabilities requiring wheelchairs and stuff but they may have mental disability that puts them at risk of using public transport do not forget that some of us using this facilities because we work and pay taxes and would not want to stay at home all because of one child with a disability the council is just going to put more pressure on us than we are already coping with</p>	<p>In light of the comments the council has received as part of this consultation, the wording in the policy has been amended make clear that it includes both physical and mental disabilities.</p>
<p>7. When a young adult with autism reaches 19 years old and cannot travel independently and the sole carer is unable to take them to school due to medical health issues On what grounds would the council help on this grounds?</p>	<p>When assessing applications for assistance, consideration will be given to family circumstances. This includes any health issues that the parent/carer may have.</p>
<p>8. For parents of children special needs I think this additional pressure which causes more anxiety and stress on parents struggling. I feel that these policies and changes, additional clauses and exceptions to ambiguous</p>	<p>In light of comments made as part of this consultation, the council has made amendments to the wording in the policy as explained in the responses we have made earlier in this document..</p>

<p>wording is causing the greater distress for a service which is meant to provide support and safety on a child's journey to and from school.</p>	
<p>9. What I do not understand is that a couple of years back a lot of money was spent in changing Statement of Special Educational Needs to Education Health and Care Plans that served if annual reviews determined to the age of 25. If those plans deemed a young person to need this assistance why do parents and carers have to go through the pain of this proposed system?</p>	<p>Both Statements for Special Educational Needs and EHC Plans are written to ensure the child/young person has appropriate educational and health support. Decisions on travel assistance are not part of the EHCP process, though the needs that are outlined in the EHCP form part eligibility assessment.</p>
<p>10. I think that the proposal is clear, but does not take into account the possible anxiety of students and parents about travel training and this needs to be thought about. Yes to be independent from end of year 6/7 is good but some children may be ready with their skills but not so emotionally</p>	<p>When assessing a child/young person's suitability for travel training, the Travel Assistance Team will take a range of factors into account. This will include meeting with the child and parent/carer, information from the school and other professional bodies.</p>
<p>11. I think there could be more clarity on mental health disabilities which are just as big a barrier to getting to school as physical disabilities</p>	<p>In light of the comments received as part of this consultation, the wording in the policy has been amended to make clear that it covers those with both physical and mental disabilities.</p>
<p>12. My concern is the no other mode of transport For some, family is essential or seen as a safe option. In terms of sustainability and ease. It may be worth reviewing the policy, terms and conditions.</p>	
<p>13. When making changes the authority needs to consider both physical and mental disabilities. It appears from reading this that the former has much greater weighting. In addition, the individual circumstance of the individual needs to be considered – family</p>	<p>In light of the comments received as part of this consultation, the wording in the policy has been amended so that it covers those with both physical and mental disabilities.</p>

<p>structure etc and input from all parties involved should be considered to enable an appropriate decision</p>	
<p>14. As I've already explained, I do not agree in any way with this draft transport policy and I am actually disgusted that you would introduce it as a policy for climate emergency and encouraging independence when we know from examples around the UK that boroughs have started charging 16-18 year-olds and cutting back for other ages ONLY for the reason of financial cutbacks. Legally, councils should not use money as an excuse to not provide a service to disabled children and young people and to enable them to meet their education, health and social care needs. You are using the excuse of climate and independence and concealing the financial aspects. This is cynical and manipulative. To reduce transport assistance to those with only very severe or exceptional needs is to put an enormous strain on families with young people with SEND and put them in financial hardship and even prevent them from meeting their EHCP needs with the right educational provision. Minibuses could be made electric to meet climate emergency. To take away responsibility for escorts is downright dangerous - how would you offer transport assistance to my son but not an escort if this is a safeguarding issue? Are you expecting parents to travel in a minibus or taxi? During the COVID-10 crisis, under the Coronavirus Bill, families are having to take on the bulk of education and care of our disabled children and young people at home. We have had to accept a temporary reduction in their rights as disabled citizens.</p>	<p>The aim of the revised policy is to ensure that limited resources are targeted at those most in need.</p>

<p>This is an extremely difficult time for vulnerable disabled children and young people and those with SEND to go through. I would recommend that this transport policy that was penned before the COVID-19 crisis, should revert back to its former transport assistance support now that we have seen how vulnerable people fall through the safety net so quickly. This crisis has shown that as a society we need to help those vulnerable and disabled AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, not make cutbacks. I would recommend you halt this draft policy and after the COVID-19 crisis is over, you can review the situation and ensure there is adequate travel provision for all the children and young people who truly need it. This is not a good legacy for the leader of Southwark Council Peter John to leave to his vulnerable residents. All families are scared of this policy Transport department has always worked as its own entity, putting out its own rules and not liaising well with either parents or schools, which has been frustrating and devastating for some for years. Under the Children and Families Act, departments are supposed to work together in a joined-up manner to meet EHCP needs. Now we are facing the COVID-19 temporary legal setbacks in rights, it is even more important they are reinstated in full after this crisis. Please I ask you to review this policy and not make these cutbacks. I understand central government has made cutbacks to local authorities for years and the pressures you are under but this is not the way to go. I am copying my response here to other departments and the outgoing council leader. Thank you for reviewing this policy.</p>	
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17: Please indicate below which group you belong to:

Option	Total	Percent
Parent/carer	29	80%
Child/young person	1	3%
Headteacher/SENCO	6	17%
Social services	0	0%
Local authority	0	0%
Governing body of school/place of further education	0	0%
Other	1	3%
Not Answered	0	0%

If other, please specify:

There were 0 responses to this part of the question.

18: What is your name?

There were 26 responses to this part of the question.

19: What is your email address?

There were 26 responses to this part of the question.

20: What is your contact address?

There were 22 responses to this part of the question.

21: Would you prefer to remain anonymous if your comments are published?

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	27	74.29%
No	9	25.71%

22: How did you hear about this consultation?

Option	Total	Percent
Southwark's Local Offer	5	14.29%
Southwark's Travel Assistance Team	26	71.43%
A school/ place of further education	2	5.71%
Word of mouth	0	0%

A parents' group (e.g. Southwark Independent Voice)	1	2.86%
A transport contractor	1	2.86%
Other	4	11.43%
Not Answered	0	0%

There were 4 responses to this part of the question.

23: What did you think of this consultation?

I found the consultation information clear and easy to understand

Option	Total	Percent
Agree	22	60.00%
Neither agree nor disagree	7	20.00%
Disagree	6	17.14%
Don't know	0	0%
Not Answered	1	2.86%

I found the consultation easy to find on Southwark Council's website

Option	Total	Percent
Agree	21	60.00%
Neither agree nor disagree	6	17.14%
Disagree	2	5.71%
Don't know	6	14.29%
Not Answered	1	2.86%

I had enough information about the consultation topic

Option	Total	Percent
Agree	21	60.00%
Neither agree nor disagree	8	20.00%
Disagree	5	14.29%
Don't know	1	2.86%
Not Answered	1	2.86%

24: Is there anything you would like us to improve or do differently for future consultations? If so, please use this space to tell us.

There were 5 responses to this part of the question.

25: Age

Age

Option	Total	Percent
Under 16	0	0%
16 - 17	0	0%
18 - 24	1	2.86%
25 - 34	2	5.71%
35 - 44	13	37.14%
45 - 54	12	31.43%
55 - 64	3	8.57%
65 - 74	0	0%
75 - 84	0	0%
85 - 94	0	0%
95+	0	0%
Not Answered	5	14.29%

26: Are you disabled?

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	6	17.14%
No	25	68.57%
Prefer not to say	1	2.86%
Not Answered	4	11.43%

Type of disability

Option	Total	Percent
Hearing / Vision (e.g. deaf, partially deaf or hard of hearing; blind or partial sight)	1	2.86%
Physical / Mobility (e.g. wheelchair user, arthritis, multiple sclerosis etc.)	4	11.43%
Mental health (lasting more than a year. e.g. severe depression, schizophrenia etc.)	4	11.43%
Learning disability (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia etc.)	2	5.71%

Long-term illness or health condition (e.g. Cancer, HIV, Diabetes, Chronic Heart disease, Rheumatoid Arthrities, Chronic Asthma)	4	11.43%
Other	0	0%
Prefer not to say	1	2.86%
Not Answered	25	71.43%

Specific disability

There was 1 response to this part of the question.

27: Ethnic background

Option	Total	Percent
White British	13	34.29%
White Irish	0	0%
Other White	2	5.71%
Black British	8	22.86%
Black Caribbean	4	11.43%
Black African	3	8.57%
Other Black	0	0%
Mixed white/Black Caribbean	0	0%
Mixed White Black African	0	0%
Mixed White/Asian	0	0%
Other Mixed	0	0%
Indian	0	0%
Bengali	0	0%
Chinese	0	0%
Pakistani	1	2.86%
Bangladeshi	0	0%
Any other Asian	0	0%
Latin American	0	0%
Traveller	0	0%
Eastern European	0	0%
Any other ethnicity	0	0%
Not Answered	5	14.29%

28: Preferred language

Option	Total	Percent
English	33	91.43%
Other	0	0%
Not Answered	3	8.57%

29: Religion or belief

Option	Total	Percent
Christian	17	48.57%
Sikh	0	0%
Hindu	0	0%
Muslim	2	5.71%
Jewish	0	0%
Buddhist	0	0%
No religion	9	22.86%
Other	3	8.57%
Not Answered	5	14.29%

30: Marriage or civil partnership status

Option	Total	Percent
Married	11	31.43%
Registered in a civil partnership	0	0%
Other (please specify if you wish)	10	28.57%
Prefer not to say	5	11.43%
Not Answered	10	28.57%

31: Sex

Option	Total	Percent
Male	6	17.14%
Female	28	74.29%
Not Answered	3	8.57%

32: Is your Gender Identity the same as the sex you were assigned at birth?

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	29	82.86%
No	1	2.86%
Prefer not to say	1	0%
Not Answered	5	14.29%

33: Pregnancy or maternity

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	1	2.86%
No	29	82.86%
Not Answered	5	14.29%

34: Sexual orientation

Option	Total	Percent
Heterosexual/straight	25	71.43%
Lesbian/Gay woman	0	0%
Gay man	0	0%
Bi-sexual	0	0%
Other (please specify if you wish)	0	0%
Prefer not to say	4	11.43%
Not Answered	6	17.14%