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# Your views on changes to the cost to families of Norfolk County Council’s Post-16 Travel Scheme

## Overview

Norfolk County Council, along with its partners, has an ambition that Norfolk is a place where all children and young people can flourish. By investing in young people, we can support them to achieve their full potential and develop skills which prepare them for life and work. This ambition is set out in our [Better Together, For Norfolk strategy available on our website.](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.norfolk.gov.uk%2Fwhat-we-do-and-how-we-work%2Fpolicy-performance-and-partnerships%2Fpolicies-and-strategies%2Fcorporate%2Fcouncil-vision-and-strategy&data=05%7C01%7Cchristine.mawson%40norfolk.gov.uk%7C4890297a3bba4fd73c6d08daa2d1daa0%7C1419177e57e04f0faff0fd61b549d10e%7C0%7C0%7C638001319434715256%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=wEKgWDxmyns1%2FjvJxve%2BfuHlKFaH3gEj8wwzQGQ2Ra8%3D&reserved=0)[[1]](#footnote-1)

As part of this ambition, Norfolk County Council offers subsidised travel for eligible students aged between 16 - 18 years old, and for students aged 16 - 25 years old who have Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND), to access education at a school sixth form, sixth form college or further education learning establishment. This is known as the Post-16 Travel Scheme.

We review our Post-16 Transport Policy annually to make sure we offer the best value for money, ensure that our Post-16 Travel Scheme remains financially sustainable and meets the needs of our families and young people. [Download our Post-16 Transport Policy](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/-/media/norfolk/downloads/education-learning/school-and-college-transport/college-and-sixth-form-transport/post16-transport-policy-statement.pdf).[[2]](#footnote-2)

As a council, we continue to face significant challenges which includes higher costs and demand for services, after more than a decade of reduced funding. To help us deal with our cost pressures and invest in vital services, we are identifying various options to balance our budget. We are proposing £52.2m of new savings for the council in 2024-25.

The council spent approximately £3.8m on the Post-16 Travel Scheme in 2022-23, of which the parental contribution represented £456,831. Year-on-year the cost of providing Post-16 Travel has increased, this is due to several factors including inflation, rising fuel costs, a growing number of eligible pupils and a shortage of specialist school places for SEND children which means young people often have to travel further for their education.

Like household bills, the cost of the services that the council provides are impacted by the level of inflation. The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) in December 2023 confirmed inflation is currently running at 4%.

We usually increase the cost of the Scheme each year in-line with inflation. This year, we have outlined two options for increasing parental contributions (how much families/young people pay) for Post-16 Travel for the academic year 2024/25. The 3% option is based on current inflation levels and the 6% option is based on our inflationary forecast for 2024-25. The 6% figure more likely represents the cost uplift that the council will face in the coming year.

**Norfolk County Council first consulted on an inflationary increase for the parental contribution to the Post-16 Travel Scheme in 2023. The Council reserves the right to make inflationary uplifts in line with the CPI without consultation in future years.**

## Why your views matter

We want to find out what people think about our proposal to increase the annual parental contribution for the Post-16 Travel Scheme by either 3% or 6%, with the option remaining to pay daily\*, half termly, termly or annually (\*daily payer option not available on all routes).

We are consulting through:

* Emails to current users and potential users of the Post-16 Travel Scheme (young people and their families) to make them aware of proposals and asking them to feedback
* Emails to key partners and stakeholders
* This online consultation, which is also available as a paper copy

**We are consulting from 30 January to midnight on 27 February 2024**. Please note that if we receive any consultation responses after this date, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to take them into account.

We will feed back the findings from our consultation to the Executive Director of Childrens Services as part of the evidence they will use to help them come to a decision about our budget proposals.

**If you need a copy of this consultation document in a different format please email** [**haveyoursay@norfolk.gov.uk**](mailto:haveyoursay@norfolk.gov.uk)**, call 0344 800 8020 or Text Relay on 18001 0344 800 8020 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.**

The consultation should take about 10-15 minutes to complete.

The questions start on page 17 of this document.

## Personal information, confidentiality and data protection

We will use any personal information to understand how different groups of people feel about our budget proposals.

We will process any personal information we receive from you in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (Regulation (EU) 2016/679), the Data Protection Act 2018 and Norfolk County Council’s data protection policy and guidelines. This means that Norfolk County Council will hold your personal data and only use it for the purpose for which it was collected, being this consultation. [You can find a copy of our privacy statement on the Norfolk County Council website.[[3]](#footnote-3)](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/privacy)

We won't identify individuals when reporting back our findings and under our record management policy we will keep this information for five years. We will also, under normal circumstances, not pass your personal data on to anyone else. However, we may be asked under access to information laws to publish or disclose some, or all, of the information you provide in response to this consultation. We will only do this where such disclosure will comply with such relevant information laws which include the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

You can choose not to take part in the consultation, to stop responding at any time, or to ignore any personal questions that you do not want to answer.

## Introduction

The council spent £3.8m on its Post-16 Travel Scheme in 2022-23, providing travel assistance to 1,320 students across Norfolk. To reflect the current and forecasted level of inflation for the next year, we are considering increasing the parental contribution for the Post-16 Travel Scheme. This would help contribute towards the councils costs for delivering this service and ensure it remains sustainable.

In 2015 the Government increased the age at which young people must continue in education or training to 18. Although young people must now remain in education or training until they are 18, the Government has not increased the age range of free transport available to eligible young people in line with this. Free transport is still only available to eligible children up to age 16. [For further information on raising the participation age please see the Department for Education website](https://www.gov.uk/know-when-you-can-leave-school).[[4]](#footnote-4)

Local authorities do not have to provide free or subsidised post-16 travel assistance but do have to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement, specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport or other assistance that the authority considers necessary to make, to facilitate the attendance of all persons of sixth form age receiving education or training.

‘Sixth form age’ refers to those young people who are over 16 years of age but under 19 (years 12,13 and 14). Local authorities also have a duty to encourage, enable and assist young people with learning difficulties / disabilities to participate in education and training, up to the age of 25. The [Post-16 Transport Policy Statement 2023-24 is available on our website](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/-/media/norfolk/downloads/education-learning/school-and-college-transport/college-and-sixth-form-transport/post16-transport-policy-statement.pdf).[[5]](#footnote-5)

## Our current approach

We currently work with 15 bus and train operators across Norfolk to offer subsidised travel for eligible students, who are travelling to sixth forms, sixth form colleges and further education colleges across the county.

We receive payments from students/their families through this scheme which provides young people with a ticket to use on a bus or train service. This service is operated by the provider, and therefore students need to use the routes/timetable available.

Under specific circumstances we also offer subsidised specialist transport, fuel allowance, subsidised moped loan and cycle allowance.

**All students qualifying for support under the County Council’s Post-16 Transport Policy are required to pay an annual contribution towards the cost of their transport.**

**The financial contribution does not apply to students who have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan, who are in years 15 and above (i.e. usually the year in which they are 19 years old). Free transport will continue for these students up to the end of the year in which they become 25 years old, as long as they have a current EHC Plan.**

There is also an option for young people who can travel independently to travel for free using their Disability Bus Pass issued as part of the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme.

**FACT BANK: Who is eligible for the Post-16 Travel Scheme**

To qualify for the Post-16 Travel Scheme students must:

* **Live in Norfolk**
* **Live at least three miles** from the sixth form or college (this is measured by the nearest walking route)
* **Be under 19 years of age on 1 September**. Transport will be provided up to the end of the course year in which the student reaches the age of 19.
* **Be attending a full-time course** (for example, at least 540 hours per year supervised study – approximately 14 hours per week)
* **Be attending a state-funded** sixth form, sixth form college, further education college, specialist college or specialist training provider.
* **Travel** on a route determined by the County Council.
* Students who meet the above criteria can live anywhere in the county and still receive support, as long as they can get to a pick-up point on a core route that serves their sixth form or college.
* If your child has an EHC Plan there is no need to apply for travel assistance as the Travel Independence Training Team (TITAN) are already assessing who is entitled to travel assistance.

**For young people with special educational needs:**

* Be aged 16 - 25 and have an EHC plan
* Be attending the nearest educational establishment which can meet their needs. The educational establishment is named in the EHC Plan.
* Transport will be provided up to the end of the course year in which the student is 25, as long as they retain a current EHC Plan.

Through the Post-16 Travel Scheme, the subsidised amount can currently be paid in the following ways:

* One annual payment for the full amount
* Three instalments, one for each term
* Six instalments, one for each half term
* Daily Payer Pass, no costs upfront and pay the driver a subsidised fare each day (only available on local buses which charge fares)

Discounted rates are also offered by some education providers.  Most local operators offer discounted fares for students, and they are often cheaper than Norfolk County Council’s Post-16 Travel Scheme. [Visit our website for more information on the Post-16 Travel Scheme](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-and-college-transport/post16-travel-scheme).[[6]](#footnote-6)

## Our proposal

We are proposing two options to consider: to increase the cost of all payment options by 3% or by 6% as part of our annual increase. If approved, the preferred option would come into place for the 2024/25 academic year.

**Impact of 3% increase on the cost of travel**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Payment option** | **Current cost** | **Proposed costs for 2024/25 (with 3% increase)** | **Difference in cost** |
| Annual payment | £594 | £611.82 | +£17.82 per year |
| Three termly instalments | £198 | £203.94 | +£5.94 per term |
| Six half-termly instalments | £99 | £101.97 | +£2.97 per half-term |
| Daily (using Daily payer pass) | £3.40 | £3.50 | +£0.10p per day |

**Discounted rate for those on a qualifying benefit.** [**For more information about payment options please visit our website.**](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-and-college-transport/post16-travel-scheme/cost-and-payment)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Payment option** | **Current cost** | **Proposed costs for 2024/25 (with 3% increase)** | **Difference in cost** |
| Annual payment | £444.00 | £457.32 | +£13.32 per year |
| Three termly instalments | £148 | £152.44 | +£4.44 per term |
| Six half-termly instalments | £74 | £76.22 | +£2.22 per half-term |
| Daily (using Daily payer pass) | £2.90 | £3.00 | +£0.10 per day\*  \* is rounded to the nearest 10p |

**Impact of 6% increase on the cost of travel**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Payment option** | **Current cost** | **Proposed costs for 2024/25 (with 6% increase)** | **Difference in cost** |
| Annual payment | £594 | £629.64 | +£35.64 per year |
| Three termly instalments | £198 | £209.88 | +£11.88 per term |
| Six half-termly instalments | £99 | £104.94 | +£5.94 per half-term |
| Daily (using Daily payer pass) | £3.40 | £3.60 | +£0.20 per day |

**Discounted rate for those on a qualifying benefit.** [**For more information about payment options please visit our website.**](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-and-college-transport/post16-travel-scheme/cost-and-payment)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Payment option** | **Current cost** | **Proposed costs for 2024/25 (with 6% increase)** | **Difference in cost** |
| Annual payment | £444.00 | £470.64 | +£26.64 per year |
| Three termly instalments | £148 | £156.88 | +£8.88 per term |
| Six half-termly instalments | £74 | £78.44 | +£4.44per half-term |
| Daily (using Daily payer pass) | £2.90 | £3.10 | +£0.20p per day  \*is rounded to the nearest 10p |

Students will continue to be able to use bus and train providers’ own subsidised schemes, which are often cheaper than Norfolk County Council's Post-16 Travel Scheme. Students will also be able to continue to access discounted offers from colleges, sixth forms and education providers directly.

**FACT BANK**

### Information about travel for students with an EHC Plan

The proposals affect 16 – 18 year olds with or without an EHC Plan. Students aged 19 – 25 years old with an EHC Plan, going to their named education provider, receive free transport.

More information about Post-16 Transport and our Money Support Service:

* [Visit our website for more information on travelling to school or college](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-and-college-transport) [[7]](#footnote-7)
* [Visit our website for more information on our Money Support Service](https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/care-support-and-health/support-for-living-independently/money-and-benefits/money-support-service) [[8]](#footnote-8)

## How you use the Post-16 Travel Scheme

Please answer the following questions.

1. **Are you a…?**

Please select **all** that apply:

Student aged 16-18 currently in Further Education using the Post-16 Travel Scheme

Student aged 19-25 currently in Further Education with an EHC Plan and using the Post-16 Travel Scheme

Year 11 student starting further education in September 2024

Parent/guardian of a child that uses the Post-16 Travel Scheme

Parent/guardian of a child that may use the Post-16 Travel Scheme in the future

School governor

Education establishment staff member

Bus/taxi/transport driver

Passenger assistance/chaperone

Prefer not to say

1. **What type of education provider do you, or your child, currently attend?**

Please choose **one** answer only from the list below:

Sixth form/college

Independent school

Independent Training Provider

Special Education Needs (SEN) school (including Post-16)

Special Education Needs (SEN) Independent school (including Post-16)

Education Other Than at School (EOTAS)

Free school

Short Stay School for Norfolk

Specialist Resource Base (SRB)

Post-16 education outside Norfolk

Prefer not to say

1. **How far would you agree or disagree with increasing the parental contribution for post-16 transport by 3% in 2024-25?**

Please choose **one** answer only from the list below:

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree or disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Don’t know

## How far would you agree or disagree with our proposal to increase the parental contribution for post-16 transport by 6% in 2024-25?

Please choose **one** answer only from the list below:

Strongly agree

Agree

Neither agree or disagree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Don’t know

**Q.5 If we increased the cost of the scheme by 3%, how likely would you be to continue using the Post-16 Travel Scheme?**

Please choose **one** answer only from the list below:

Very likely

Somewhat likely

Somewhat unlikely

Very unlikely

Not sure

**Q.6 If we increased the cost of the scheme by 6%, how likely would you be to continue using the Post-16 Travel Scheme?**

Please choose **one** answer only from the list below:

Very likely

Somewhat likely

Somewhat unlikely

Very unlikely

Not sure

**Q.7 If you answered, ‘somewhat unlikely’ or ‘very unlikely’ to either of the previous questions, what alternative mode of transport would you use?**

Please choose **one** answer only from the list below:

Bus operator’s own subsidised scheme/full price

Train operator’s own subsidised scheme/full price

Bike

Car

Taxi

Walk

Unsure

I wouldn’t be able to afford to travel to my education provider

Other

If you selected ‘other’, please share in the box below:

Please write your answer here:

**Q8.** **We welcome any further comments you may have.** **Please share more information about how the proposed change would impact you, or your family?** **(max 150 words)**

Please write your answer here:

## How we will make our decision and report back to you

Consultation responses will be carefully analysed, and a report will be produced showing the results of the consultation. The report, which takes into account the responses to this consultation, will be considered by the Executive Director of Childrens Services, who has delegated authority to make a final decision on which proposal to take forward.

# About you

To make sure we are learning from a wide range of people – we would like to ask some questions about you. These are optional questions (so you may choose not to give this information), but this information is helpful to understand who is responding to our consultations.

1. **Are you responding as...?**

Please choose **one** answer only from the list below:

An individual / member of the public

On behalf of a voluntary or community group

On behalf of a statutory organisation

On behalf of a business

A Norfolk County Councillor

A district or borough councillor

A town or parish councillor

A Norfolk County Council employee

If you are responding on behalf of another organisation, what is the name of the organisation, group, or business?

Please write your answer here:

1. **How did you hear about this consultation?**

Please choose **one** answer only from the list below:

Local media (e.g., newspaper, radio)

From a social media post (e.g., Facebook)

From a friend

From a group I belong to

From my place of work or education

The Norfolk Residents' Panel

District council web page

Norfolk County Council web page

My parish council

From an email I received

By post

1. **Are you...?**

Please choose **one** answer only from the list below:

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

Prefer to self-describe (please specify below)

If you prefer to self-describe, please specify here:

1. **How old are you?**

Please choose **one** answer only from the list below:

Under 18

18-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55-64

65-74

75-84

85 or older

Prefer not to say

1. **Do you have any long-term illness, disability or health problem that limits your daily activities or the work you can do?**

Please choose **one** answer only from the list below:

Yes

No

Prefer not to say

1. **If yes which of the following best describes your condition or disability?**

Please choose **all** answers that apply from the list below:

Blind or partially sighted

Deaf or hard of hearing

Limiting health condition *e.g., heart disease, asthma, stroke, osteoarthritis, Rheumatoid arthritis, fibromyalgia and magic encephalomyelitis (ME)*

Learning Disabilities

Neurodiversity *e.g. autistic spectrum disorders, dyslexia, dyspraxia*

Mental health conditions e.*g. depression, schizophrenia, bipolar affective disorders, eating disorders, obsessive compulsive disorder*

Physical disability *e.g. limb disorder, amputee, wheelchair user, cerebral palsy, motor neurone disease, muscular dystrophy*

If you have another type of disability not listed above, please write here:

Prefer not to say

1. **How would you describe your ethnic background?**

Please choose **one** answer only from the list below:

**Asian or Asian British**

Asian British

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Any other Asian background, please describe here:

**Black, Black British, Caribbean, or African**

Black British

Caribbean

African

Any other Black, Black British, or Caribbean background, please describe here:

**Mixed or multiple ethnic groups**

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other mixed or multiple group, please describe here:

**White**

English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British Irish

Gypsy or Irish Traveller

Roma

Other White background, please describe here:

**Another ethnic group**

Arab

Any other ethnic group please describe here:

Prefer not to say

1. **Which district/borough/city do you live in?**

Please choose **one** answer only from the list below:

Breckland

Broadland

Great Yarmouth

Kings Lynn and West Norfolk

North Norfolk

Norwich

South Norfolk

Other

1. **Do you have caring responsibilities?**

Please choose **one** answer only from the list below:

No

Yes – for children with additional needs

Yes – for older family members/ Adults

Yes - Parent Carer

Yes – for a disabled adult(s)

Yes, other. Please write here:

1. **Which of the following best describes you?**

Please choose **one** answer only from the list below:

Employed (full time)

Employed (part time)

Self-employed

Unemployed

Student

Looking after the family home

Long term sick

Retired

1. **What is your first language?**

English

Other, please write here:

**Your opinions are valuable to us. Thank you for taking the time to read this and respond.**

**You can fill in our online feedback form at:** [www.norfolk.gov.uk/consultation](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.norfolk.gov.uk%2Fconsultation&data=05%7C02%7Csamantha.brown%40norfolk.gov.uk%7Ce59f0f70d90343b0f25208dc18e6b41c%7C1419177e57e04f0faff0fd61b549d10e%7C0%7C0%7C638412626366019927%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=dFqswXp3LwiOrpjWBzY%2Fpuee%2B0RMdNGsipxjsVjxuGQ%3D&reserved=0)

**You can email return your feedback form to:** [haveyoursay@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:haveyoursay@norfolk.gov.uk)

**You can send back a paper feedback form to:**

Post-16 Travel Consultation 2024/25

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Norfolk County Council, Ground floor - south wing, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich NR1 2DH.

However, if you want to help the council save money please use a stamp and send to this address: Stakeholder and Consultation Team, Norfolk County Council, Ground floor - south wing, County Hall, Martineau Lane, NR1 2DH.

You may wish to keep a copy of your response to our consultation for your own records.

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1. https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/policy-performance-and-partnerships/policies-and-strategies/corporate/council-vision-and-strategy [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/-/media/norfolk/downloads/education-learning/school-and-college-transport/college-and-sixth-form-transport/post16-transport-policy-statement.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/open-data-fois-and-data-protection/data-protection/privacy-notices/norfolk-county-council-privacy-notice [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/-/media/norfolk/downloads/education-learning/school-and-college-transport/college-and-sixth-form-transport/post16-transport-policy-statement.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-and-college-transport/post16-travel-scheme [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-and-college-transport [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/care-support-and-health/support-for-living-independently/money-and-benefits/client-hardship-service [↑](#footnote-ref-8)