



North Somerset Post-16 Travel Policy SEN Statement 2020 – 2021

1.0 Introduction

Context:

This is one of a suite of North Somerset policies for students applying for travel support.

The policy is based on the [Statutory guidance produced by the Department for Education](#). It sets out the travel assistance North Somerset Council will provide for students of sixth form age and SEND young adults aged 19 to 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in education and training.

'Sixth form age' refers to those young people who are over 16 years of age but under 19 or have SEND and are continuing learners, who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday (years 12,13,14).

There are separate policy documents for mainstream and SEND students of compulsory school age (aged 5-16) which can be found on the Council website [here](#).

Scope:

Local authorities do not have to provide free or subsidised post 16 travel support. However local authorities do have a duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport (or other support that the authority considers it necessary to make) to facilitate the attendance of all persons of sixth form age receiving education or training.

All young people carrying on their education post 16 must apply for travel support on an annual basis in all circumstances. Travel support will not be awarded until this process has concluded. Applications for Post 16 travel can be found [here](#).

2.0 Aims & Objectives

The aim(s) of the policy are to outline:

- The different types of support available and who provides it
- How to apply for travel assistance
- How to appeal a transport decision

North Somerset Council continues to support Post 16 further education to ensure that all children and young people have the opportunity to access education, employment, training and essential services across the county. As such, most young people are able to access Post 16 provision without requiring additional transport support.

However, we recognise that the rural nature of some parts of the county can require young people to travel outside of their immediate community to access further education opportunities. This travel policy statement therefore applies to students aged 16-19 who attend their nearest education establishment (or provider) that provides the elected course.

Consideration will also be given to 19-25-year olds who are continuing to progress and meet criteria under low income policy to enable participation.

North Somerset Council's objective is to determine how travel support is provided to those aged 16 and above. The council support the Government initiative to promote sustainable travel such as walking, cycling and use of public transport.

3.0 Transport and Travel Assistance

There are a range of options for support available to young people and their carers to support their travel and support and enable their continuing education and training. The following sections provide guidance on what is available:

3.1 Concessionary tickets for young people

Young people (aged 16-21) and students (of any age in full time education) can get up to 30% discount on all bus tickets across West of England (including Bristol, Bath, Weston-super-Mare and Wells) with First Bus. There are also railcards available for discounted rail travel for students aged between 16 - 25.

Within this Travel Policy statement examples of other concessionary schemes that are available from bus companies and those provided by schools and colleges are provided.

Students will be expected to purchase concessionary tickets themselves, North Somerset Council do not manage this scheme.

3.2 Concessionary tickets for young people (Registered Disabled)

Young people (11 years old and above) who are registered as disabled are able to apply for a concessionary bus pass through the council. Those unable to travel independently due to the nature of their disability may also be entitled to apply for a

bus pass for a companion to travel with them. All relevant details can be found on the council's website [located here](#):

Young people in receipt of a disability concessionary bus pass through the council can access free transport between 09:00 – 05:00 Monday to Friday and at any times on weekends and Bank Holidays.

The council understands the importance of helping young people with disabilities to lead an independent life as possible and can be contacted to discuss individual cases where some additional support in accessing, or fully benefiting from, a concessionary bus pass may be required.

3.3 The 16 – 19-Year-Old Bursary

The 16-19 Bursary Fund provides financial support to help young people overcome specific barriers to participation so they can remain in education. Schools and colleges are responsible for managing both types of bursary. Young people who want to apply for support from the bursary fund should contact their chosen school or college to make an application.

Further information can be found at www.gov.uk/ search for post 16 bursaries.

There are two main types of 16 to 19 bursaries:

A. Vulnerable Groups Bursary.

A vulnerable groups bursary of up to £1,200 a year for young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups below:

- in care
- care leavers
- in receipt of Income Support, or Universal Credit in place of Income support, in their own right
- in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit and Disability Living or Personal Independence Payments in their own right
- discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals books and equipment

B. Discretionary Bursaries.

Discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment

To be eligible for the discretionary bursary young people must:

- be aged 16 or over but under 19 at 31 August 2020 or
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2020 and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- be aged 19 or over at 31 August 2020 and continuing a study programme they began aged 16 to 18 ('19+ continuers')
- be studying a programme that is subject to inspection by a public body which assures quality (such as Ofsted), the provision must also be funded by either a Government funding agency or the local authority

3.4 Young Parents/Care to Learn (C2L)

C2L provides funding for childcare to help young parents (defined as those aged under 20) continue in education after the birth of a child. The scheme provides funding for childcare whilst the young parent is engaged in a study programme and is not able to provide care for their child. It can also help the young parent with any additional travel costs involved in taking the child to the childcare provider.

C2L provides funding for childcare whilst young parents are on work placements or industry placements, where these are a defined part of the study programme.

Further information and to apply for the scheme, information can be found [here](#).

4.0 Local Authority Support for Learners with Special Educational Needs or Disability.

4.1 Who is eligible for support with travel?

The Local Authority will consider travel support for students who meet *all* of the following criteria:

- 1. Students are under 19 on 31st August immediately preceding the start of the academic year**
- 2. Students who attend their nearest education establishment (or provider) that provides the elected course.**
- 3. Students with a current statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP)**
- 4. Students who reside outside of 3 miles (accompanied as necessary)**
- 5. Students are studying a full-time course**
- 6. Students who are enrolled a course which qualifies under the definition of 'Qualifying Education or Training'.
and provide satisfactory evidence to the LA:**
- 7. That the applicants have applied to their school or college for financial assistance (Bursary), with details of the level of support offered.**

The Local authority will consider individual applications where or medical or physical difficulties, mean they are unable to walk the distance of 3 miles (accompanied as necessary)

Students who are completing a course funded by North Somerset Council (using the high needs top-up funding available for the individual) will continue to receive support until the end of the academic year in which they reach 25 years of age.

5.0 What **does** Local Authority Support **look like**?

The nature and mode of travel support will be determined by the Local Authority and will

be one that is consistent with the Local Authority's duty to secure value for money. There will be a presumption in favour of shared travel arrangements.

Contracted transport services will be provided only where there is no appropriate alternative. The desired outcome of this approach is to actively encourage young people to travel as independently and inclusively as possible and to develop confidence and vital travel and social skills to support options for post 16 training and employment thereafter

In cases where the **Local Authority** agrees assistance, it will be for a "main road" type of service, **unless otherwise agreed**. Parents will be expected to make their own arrangements for transport to a specified pick up point. Transport assistance will not necessarily be for a door to door service.

Any assistance offered will be to the **school/college** start and finish times, based on one inward and **one outward** journey each day. Travel assistance will not be tailored to meet individual timetables, i.e. where contract vehicle timetables are not in line with that of the student. In such **circumstances parents** are expected to make suitable adjustments to travel arrangements.

Where there is no statutory duty to do so, the Authority will not provide a Passenger Assistant where this a requirement to meet individual need. Where Passenger Assistants are travelling as part of shared travel arrangements, the Authority will consider sharing this resource where the wider needs of the service continue to be met.

Where the journey time is lengthy or requires changes of vehicle as a result of the course chosen by the student, (whilst assistance may still be offered), the parent will be responsible for managing that journey.

6.0 What transport support will the Local Authority provide?

Where the eligibility criteria have been met, the Authority shall provide the following travel support in order of:

6.1 Sustainable Travel

The Local Authority will provide, where appropriate:

- **Provision of a Vacant Seat on an existing Local Authority contracted vehicle under the Vacant Seat Payment Scheme (VSPS). Successful applications will be subject to the published parent/carer contribution charges. Details concerning the VSPS scheme together with the application form can be found [here](#).**
- **Provision of a season ticket where the use of is deemed by the Local Authority as appropriate. The parent shall be responsible for providing the access to the pickup/drop off point**

6.2 Parental Travel Budget (PTB)

- **A financial allowance to assist with travel costs to and from college**

The Parental Travel Budget (PTB) will be the council's contribution towards the cost of the learner's travel arrangements (where determined by the Authority as appropriate), but by mutual agreement of both the parent/carer and the Local Authority. The payment will be tailored to the application and made directly to the learner or their family. It will be the responsibility of the learner or their responsible carer(s) to make the travel arrangements that are best suited to their needs and circumstances, which can be adapted later if necessary.

Any offer by the Authority will include the value of the budget together with terms of contract and payment schedule.

A PTB will be considered where the market will not be able to supply a suitable solution.

In all cases the Parental Travel Budget value will not exceed the cost of commercially provided services.

6.3 Contracted Transport Services

Contracted transport services will be provided only where there is no appropriate alternative and where the market will be able to supply a suitable solution.

The Authority will consider the provision based on exceptional circumstances which the application will evidence within. Any award will reflect this as an effective use of Authority cost and resource, determined by a consultation with relevant stakeholders

6.4 Learners who attend a residential further education institution

Learners receiving education or training at an independent specialist provider on a residential basis (when this placement is arranged by the council and funded by the High Needs Top Up Funding) will receive travel assistance until July, or the end of their last term (whichever is earlier), in the academic year that they reach the age of 25. These learners are not required to contribute towards the cost of their transport.

Term-time boarders at residential colleges will normally only be provided with travel support at the beginning and end of terms and half terms (12 journeys in total) to reflect the residential provision.

6.5 Parental Contributions

In any discretionary award, the Local Authority may exercise its discretion, where they believe it appropriate, to ask students, parents and carers for a contribution towards

travel costs. Contributions will reflect the Vacant Seat Payment Scheme (VSPS) costs published at the time of application.

7.0 Local Authority support in other circumstances

Consideration will be given for students who:

- Have a temporary disability or illness which means they cannot attend education via their usual method
- Have wider family circumstances such as parental disability, which prevents their ability to access education
- Have medical or physical difficulties, which means they are unable to walk the distance of 3 miles (accompanied as necessary)
- Have demonstrated vulnerability or socially exclusion that impacts directly on their ability to study a full-time course.

All discretionary applications will be considered when made in writing and accompanied with the relevant supporting information. Parents, carers and students have the responsibility to disclose any information which may influence the travel support provided.

8.0 Applying for Local Authority transport support

To complete an application form, students or their parent/carer will need to create a login via the home to school travel assistance page on the council website:

<http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/schools-learning/financial-support-for-pupils/home-to-school-transport/free-home-school-transport/>

The application will be assessed to determine eligibility and travel provision.

Upon receipt of the application form, the Integrated Transport Unit will normally process the application within 20 working days. We will inform you in writing of the outcome of your application.

It is the duty of the parent/ carer or student to disclose any information which may influence the travel support we provide. North Somerset will consider discretionary applications on a case by case basis.

9.0 Appeals and Complaints

If a student or parent/carer wishes to raise a complaint regarding an application for travel support, they can do so via the following link:

<https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-council/complaints/complaining-council-services/>

If the council refuses travel assistance or a student/parent/carer is unhappy with the transport arrangements offered, they have the right to appeal the decision. There are two stages to the appeals process:

9.1 Stage one: (Review by Senior Officer)

The parent/carer within 20 working days upon receiving the offer or refusal for travel assistance should submit a written request (by email or post) to the appeals officer within the Integrated Transport Unit for a review of the transport decision. This should detail why the decision should be reviewed and include any information which should be considered alongside the review.

A Senior Officer within the council will have 20 working days (on receiving the parent/carers request) to review the decision in light of the information provided against the home to school travel assistance policy and respond, this will include; whether or not the transport decision has been upheld, why that decision has been reached and the factors taken into account in reaching the decision.

9.2 Stage two: (Appeals Panel)

If a parent/carer feels the stage one appeal has not resolved the matter, an impartial re-consideration of the case can be undertaken through a stage two appeal. A parent/carer should submit written notification that they wish to escalate this to stage two within 20 working days of receiving the outcome of the stage one appeal.

Within 40 working days of receiving the parent/carers request for a stage two appeal an independent transport appeal panel will review the case. <The composition of the panel is detailed within Appendix 3. The decision of the appeals panel will be sent to the parent/carer within five working days of the appeal panel hearing.

9.3 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

If following an appeal, you believe that North Somerset Council has refused help unfairly, made a mistake or not handled your appeal correctly, you may be able to complain to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

For more information please visit <https://www.lgo.org.uk/>

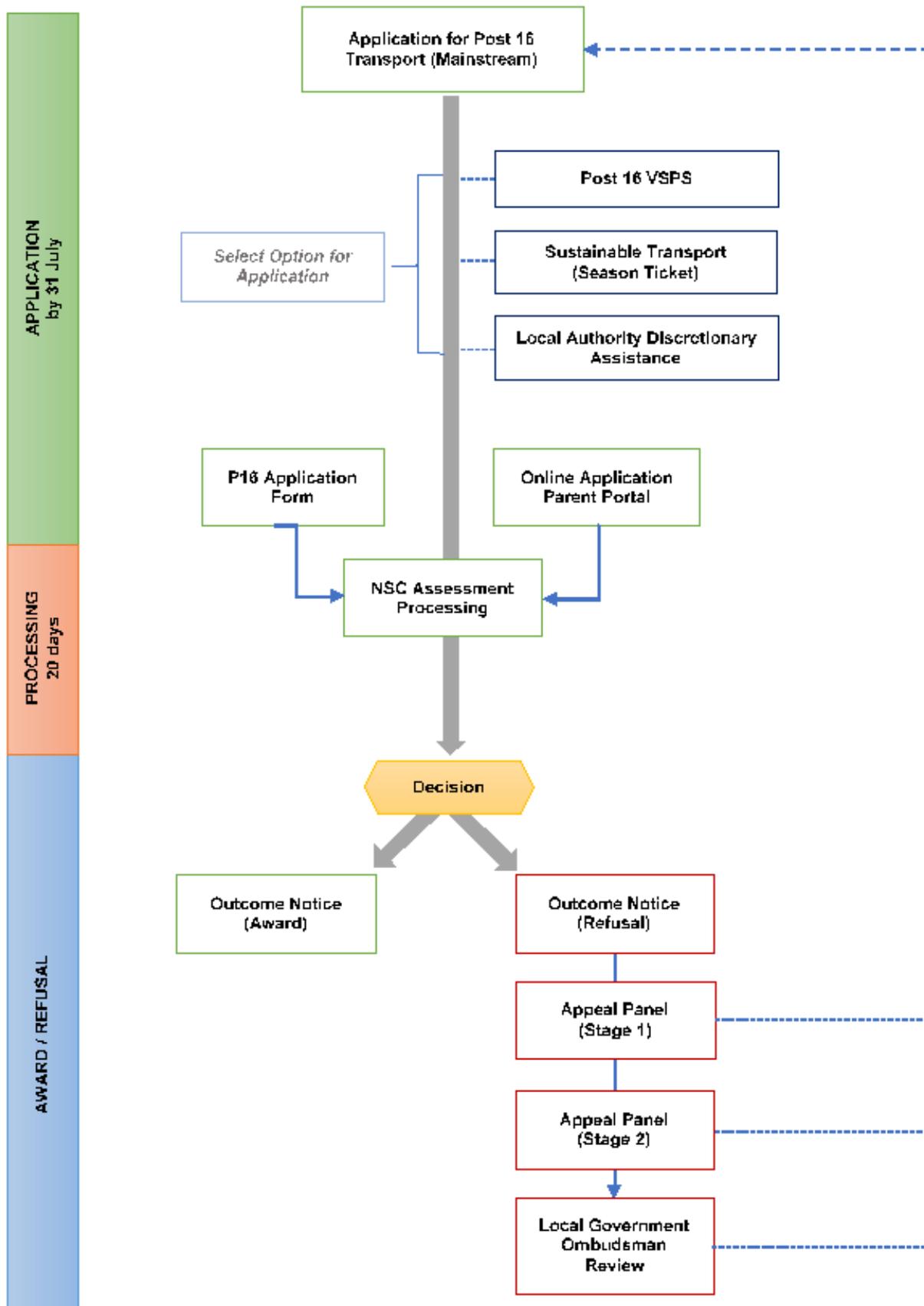
10.0 Useful Contacts Table:

Scheme	User Group	Discount	Times Available	Registration cost	Details
First Bus Concessionary Scheme	16 – 21-year olds (excluding students) which have valid First photo ID pass All students (in full time education) with valid photo ID	Up to 30% off all tickets	Any time of the day	None	Photo ID pass: Free of charge and valid for a year from the date of issue. Can apply via the link below: Valid ID for students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ NUS cards ◦ University ID cards ◦ International Student ID cards https://www.firstgroup.com/bristol-bath-and-west/tickets/ticket-types/young-person-16-21-students
16 – 25 Railcard	16 – 25 or older in full time education	Up to 1/3 on journeys	Can be used on: standard Anytime or Off-Peak trains Standard Class and First Class Advance tickets	£30 for a year's railcard £70 for a 3-year railcard	For further information on savings and to apply: https://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/
16 – 17 railcard	Valid for students aged 16 up to their 18 th birthday	Up to half price on rail fares	Outside of peak time	£30 per year	
Diamond Travelcard	Disabled persons	Free bus journeys	n/a	Free	NSC Website
Baytree School	https://www.baytreeschool.co.uk/parents/#transport				
Ravenswood School	Nothing on the website				

Weston College	https://www.weston.ac.uk/travelling-to-college
Bridgewater and Taunton College	https://www.btc.ac.uk/students/essential-information/transport/
City of Bristol College	Nothing on website for 'travelling to college'
Bath College	https://www.bathcollege.ac.uk/college-life/getting-to-college
St Brendan's Sixth Form College	https://www.stbrn.ac.uk/info/travelling-to-college/getting-to-college/
South Gloucestershire and Stroud College	http://www.sgscol.ac.uk/subsidisedbus/

11.0 Appendices

11.1 Entitlement Flow Chart

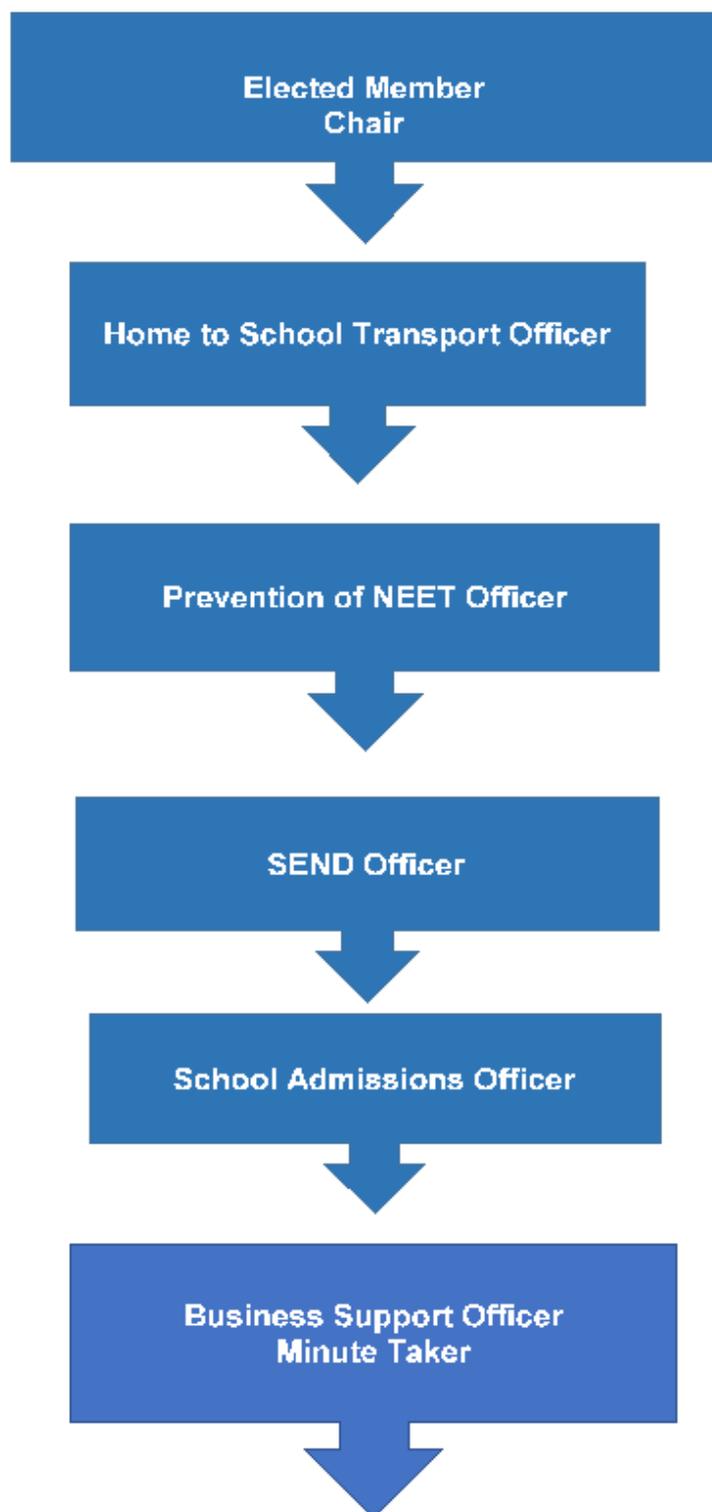


11.2 Application Form

Application forms are located here:

<https://www.mpsnsc.com/SchoolTransportApp/P16SEN.aspx>

11.3 Composition of Stage 2 appeals Panel



12.0 Glossary

Qualifying Education or Training – Definition

Education or training refers to :

- a school;
- a further education institution;
- a local authority maintained or assisted institution providing higher or further education;
- a 16 to 19 Academy; or
- at any establishment (not falling within the above categories) at which the authority secures the provision of education or training under section 15ZA of the Education Act 1996.

Travel assistance is not provided to students undertaking work placements, apprenticeships or traineeships. In these circumstances, young people are advised to contact their employer or learner provider.