

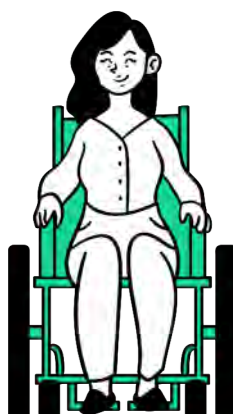
Guide to Post-16 Travel Assistance

STUDENTS AGED 16-25 YEARS

This guide has been co-produced by Family Voice Surrey and Surrey County Council. It is for you as a parent or carer, whose child or young person is in Year 11 or above in education, and may want to enquire about travel assistance under the Council's post-16 travel assistance policy statement.

Here you will find essential information about the home to school travel service (Surrey School Travel and Assessment Team – SSTAT), what you should expect from us, information regarding eligibility, as well as how to apply for travel assistance for 16-25-year-olds.

The Council has produced specific and detailed guidance regarding eligibility for post-16 travel assistance, which is contained within this guide. Please read this carefully before applying, as this will help provide you with information to support you when submitting your application. Some of this guide includes wording from our policy statement. **Please note, this guide is subject to change.**



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General information

Your child's eligibility for travel assistance changes once they reach 16 years of age and/or are in Year 11 at school. Statutory school age includes Year 11, even if they are currently in receipt of travel assistance.

For young people with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) transitioning into post-16 education and applying for travel assistance:

- It is important to be aware that the statutory duty (determined by the Department for Education) of a Council changes when a child or young person transitions into post-16 education (Year 12 onwards).
- Once a young person enters post-16 education, there is no longer a statutory duty for a Council to provide free or subsidised travel assistance.

Further information:

➔ [The Department of Education's post-16 transport statutory guidance \(PDF\)](#)

➔ [Travel assistance policy for ages 16 to 25 \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](#)

If you have a child who is transferring from Year 11 to post-16 education, it is important to think about their potential travel options for September, whether they are continuing at their current setting, or transferring to a new setting.

Due to the change in legal duty once a young person reaches post-16, parents/carers and young people need to take this into consideration when choosing further education placements. Parents/carers will need to plan how they can support their young person to get to and from their placement safely, unless they can demonstrate circumstances to be considered for discretionary travel assistance.

Important to note:

When assessing your application, the SSTAT will need to look at what travel options are available to and from the young person's setting as this will help us determine if travel assistance should be awarded.

The Council will, on occasion, provide travel assistance as a discretionary arrangement, if it feels it is necessary in order to facilitate a young person's attendance at their school, college or other education placement.

It is important that you include as much information and evidence as possible, to show why you need travel assistance provided. This will help the Council to evaluate your circumstances and eligibility for travel assistance, when determining the outcome of your application.

We will offer a Post-16 Independent Travel Allowance (ITA) if travel assistance is agreed.

- Work commitments and/or the implication of siblings at different schools are not circumstances that we would take into account as this affects many families. However, the Council will always consider your holistic family circumstances if you provide the relevant information.



How to apply and our timescales

You can apply online by visiting [travel assistance for students aged 16 to 25](https://surreycc.gov.uk/travel-assistance-for-students-aged-16-to-25) (surreycc.gov.uk).

To request a paper version of the application form, contact the Surrey School Travel and Assessment Team (SSTAT) on 0300 200 1004.

Notify a member of the team if you require extra support with completing the application form.

For families that are already receiving discretionary travel assistance, we may call you to discuss current travel options, and you may be required to re-apply so that the team can review your existing eligibility. We normally contact families in the spring with information regarding the re-application process for travel assistance.

Placements starting in September

If you/your child will be starting at college or another education setting in September, you should apply during the spring. We follow on from the key stage transfer deadline of 31 March, and our soft closing date is normally 2 weeks after this date (you can still submit an application after this date).

If you apply after 30 June, and we agree that discretionary travel assistance can be provided, travel arrangements may not be in place for the start of September. You will need to arrange your own transport until travel arrangements are in place.

In these circumstances, we will aim to provide you with enough time before the start of term and we will contact you to discuss potential alternative options.

Placements starting during the school year

If you are applying for travel assistance to start during the year, our timescales are 6 weeks from when an application is submitted to when arrangements will be in place, if eligible.

This includes 20 working days to assess your application and a further 10 working days to arrange a travel solution for eligible students.

Duration of travel assistance agreement

If we agree that travel assistance should be provided, we will put arrangements in place until the end of the academic year. An application for travel assistance must be submitted if the student's course changes or if you move address.

Travel assistance arrangements

If travel assistance is agreed in the form of an ITA arrangement, payments are normally made one month after the start of term, with the first payment issued at the beginning of October.

If travel assistance is agreed in the form of a shared taxi or minibus arrangement, we aim to confirm the specific details of the arrangements (transport provider, pick-up date and time) at least 7 days before the start of term in September.

Types of travel assistance

During the assessment of eligibility for travel assistance, the Surrey School Travel and Assessment Team (SSTAT) may contact you to discuss potential travel options. Below are some of the examples of modes of assistance that we may agree to provide:

Independent Travel Allowance (ITA)	<p>A Post-16 ITA allows families to have the freedom and flexibility to make their own travel arrangements, rather than travelling on Council organised transport. An ITA can be awarded at the discretion of the Council, it is a sum of money to support the student to travel from home to their school or educational setting. It is not a short-term alternative while a transport application is being processed.</p>
Independent Travel Training (ITT)	<p>We may refer your information to colleagues in Surrey Choices who would undertake an initial assessment for independent travel training.</p>
Private hire vehicle	<p>In some specific exceptional circumstances the Council may assign a private hire vehicle in the form of a taxi or minibus.</p>
Training to cycle independently	<p>Reimbursement of bicycle and safety equipment, subject to agreement by parent/carer.</p>

What else does Surrey offer?

Surrey LINK bus card

The Surrey LINK card is for young people aged 20 and under who live in Surrey. It can be used on any single or return bus journey that starts and/or finishes in Surrey, and allows you to get 50% off the adult fare for your journey. On most routes this is the equivalent of a child fare.

Apply for a Surrey LINK bus card
(surreycc.gov.uk)



Summary of eligibility

To be eligible for a LINK card, you must be:

- Aged 20 or under. You can apply up to 28 days before your 21st birthday.
- Living in one of the administrative boroughs/districts of Surrey
- Starting and/or finishing your bus journey in Surrey.

Successful applications

Your LINK card will be sent to your home address 10 days after you apply. If your card has not arrived at your home within 10 working days from when you applied, please contact us by email: surreylink@surreycc.gov.uk

Using your LINK card

Your card is valid 24/7 all year round. The ticket machines will only recognise the LINK card when you scan it. If this scheme is successful, Surrey County Council might consider moving to an app-based scheme in the future. If you don't have your LINK card with you, you may be asked to pay full adult fare.

Eligibility

Students aged 16 and above

The Council does not have a duty to provide travel assistance for young people in sixth form or further education. However, the Council is able to use its discretion to award assistance where it has been deemed necessary to ensure the young person is able to access their provision, and that without support from the Council the young person would be prevented from accessing education.

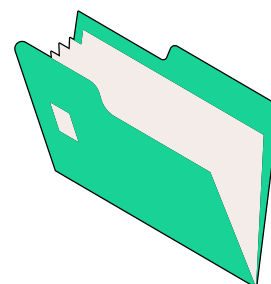
The Council acknowledges that for many families who have young people with SEND, the change in statutory duty to provide travel assistance can feel very overwhelming.

Any travel assistance for non-statutory school age children and young people is discretionary. Surrey's [Travel Assistance Policy for learners aged 16 to 25](#) (surreycc.gov.uk) sets out how the Council might exercise its discretion for the following groups:

- ➔ Young people aged 16 – 19
- ➔ Young people aged 19 – 25 with an EHCP

The Council will consider, and may agree, requests for home to school travel assistance for children and young people who are not of statutory school age where it is considered necessary to provide assistance to ensure the student can access their school, college or learning placement.

If a young person is deemed eligible for travel assistance they may be offered the Post-16 Independent Travel Allowance.



Students aged 19 and over

The post-19 (19 to 25) section of the Travel Assistance Policy explains that:

Travel assistance for post-19 students is focused upon a needs-led approach in which the individual needs of each young adult are assessed to establish whether or not travel assistance is necessary for them to access their education.

We are moving away from standard provision, in favour of a policy which recognises that young people are, in many cases, more capable of achieving independent travel than pupils of statutory school age.

The overall intention of the adult transport duty is to ensure that those with the most severe disabilities with no other means of transportation can undertake further education and training after their 19th birthday to help them move towards more independent living.

While travel assistance for young people in post-16 education is discretionary, the Council does acknowledge its role in supporting young adults over the age of 19 where it may not necessarily be expected that a parent/carers should facilitate their journeys to and from their education setting.

However, being age 19 plus does not automatically mean a young person will be entitled to travel assistance. As this service is discretionary, it is still reasonable for the Council to consider, 'if there is a family member or carer who is willing and able to transport the student and if not, why it would not be possible or reasonable for them to do so', among other things, in line with Surrey's Travel Assistance Policy for Learners age 16-25, with specific regard to learners age 19 and over.

Consideration of requests for travel assistance

The overriding expectation is that parent/carers should take reasonable measures to get their young person to and from college/further education setting. There is an expectation that young people should be able to access education independently, and where this may not be possible, with support from a trusted adult where appropriate.

When discretionary services such as this are requested, the Council will need to be satisfied that the parent, carer or other family member (as well as the young person where appropriate) has demonstrated why they for social, medical, financial, personal (or other) reasons cannot facilitate access to education without support of the local authority.

Work commitments and/or the implication of siblings at different schools are not generally considered to be exceptional circumstances as this affects many families across the county. However, the Council will always consider your holistic family circumstances if you provide information on this.

What the Council will consider during the assessment process

As part of the assessment process, the Travel & Assessment Team will look at the following criteria and follow the relevant steps. This will then be revisited if your application is declined and you wish to appeal.

This criteria does not automatically mean a young person would or would not be entitled to assistance, these are just elements the Team will look at before reaching a decision.

We will look at:

- The most recent Final EHCP or Annual Review.
- Whether the placement is named in Section I of the EHCP (if not the SSTAT will contact the SEN team to find out whether the placement has been confirmed).
- Assessing whether the safe walking distance from the home to the setting is 3 miles or more.
- Consider if there is a parent, other family member or carer who is willing and able to transport the student/facilitate their journeys and if not, why it would not be possible or reasonable for them to do so.
- If you believe you have exceptional circumstances meaning you are unable to facilitate your child's journeys to and from their education setting, and have demonstrated this.
- What other arrangements you have considered or tried and why they are not suitable, for example, if there is a local support network who can assist. Or, you have trialled travel training and/or using public transport and this has not been suitable.
- Any supporting evidence from professionals involved with the young person and their family.

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- The nature of the young person's special educational needs, disability and/or learning difficulty – this includes the physical ability of the young person to walk, accompanied as necessary by a responsible adult to the learning provision or a pickup point as well as the distance and journey time from the young person's home to establishments of education and training.
- Whether public transport is available, and if it is reasonable for the young person to access it (accompanied as necessary). The Council would consider public transport as a reasonable option to consider if it is under the recommended guidance of 75 minutes for one-way travel (including time taken to walk to and from public transport points) and requires up to 2 changes or less.
- Whether the young person has received travel training, is able to travel independently, and their ability to access public transport. If they have not received Independent Travel Training (ITT) and is a suitable candidate for this we may refer them.
- If the young person is attending the nearest appropriate setting and if other possibilities were considered/consulted. Surrey County Council has an ambition for children and young people to live, learn and grow up locally – therefore, as a team it is reasonable to consider whether the young person is attending their nearest appropriate provision (offering the same or similar course), especially in cases where more information/evidence has not been provided as to why nearer provisions were not considered. You may wish to provide evidence that nearer provisions were consulted and that they advised they could not meet your child's specific needs.
- If the young person is attending a provision within reasonable distance to their home. In certain cases, where a young person is attending a provision many miles from their home we may consider if a nearer provision could have met their individual needs.

Travel solutions the Council may award

In what circumstances might a student be considered for the Post-16 Independent Travel Allowance (ITA) if eligible for assistance?

If it has been demonstrated that without assistance the young person would be prevented from accessing education, the Council will first consider whether ITA is a reasonable offer.

The Council may offer an ITA in the following scenarios:

There are no public transport links for the young person to access (that are within 75 mins, involving 2 changes or less)

- The parent/carers has demonstrated why they cannot reasonably be expected to facilitate the journeys (within reason) without financial support from the Council.
- Alternatives have been explored and considered by the application/appellant (within reason, i.e. reached out to local support network).
- The setting is the nearest appropriate offering the course and is also named in the EHCP and is within reasonable distance to the home (but is over 3 miles walking distance).

There are public transport links available

- But the needs of the young person make it unreasonable to expect them to access this even if accompanied.
- The parent/carers has demonstrated why they cannot reasonably be expected to facilitate the journeys (within reason) without financial support from the Council.

Post-16 Independent Travel Allowance (ITA)

If assistance has been awarded in the form of the ITA, the allowance is for you to use in any way you find suitable to support your young person to access their education.

The amount is calculated based on the distance from your home to your young person's education setting and is provided in accordance with banding, taking into account the number of days each week your young person attends their provision, for example:

Banding	5 days a week (10 trips)	3 days a week (6 trips)
Band 1 - (0-5.99 miles)	£1600	£960
Band 2 (6-10.99 miles)	£2700	£1620
Band 3 (11-15.99 miles)	£4200	£2520
Band 4 (16+ miles)	£5000	£3000

You will be asked to specify the number of days attending college on the application for travel assistance. Information on the ITA and banding can also be found in Surrey's [Post-16 Policy Statement \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](http://surreycc.gov.uk)

In what exceptional circumstances might your young person be considered for contracted transport (taxi, minibus etc)

Where the ITA may not be considered suitable, the Council may award contracted transport in the following scenarios:

(Assuming the young person is attending the nearest appropriate setting offering the course that is named in their EHCP, or has been confirmed by the SEN Team)

- Where it has been demonstrated and evidenced that without contracted transport the young person would be prevented from accessing their education and that other options have been tested (within reason).
- The young person has needs that would make it unreasonable to expect the parent/carer to seek support elsewhere. An example may include; evidence that another child in the household has physical, medical, or mental health needs, which require constant monitoring, and it would not be reasonable/safe to include them in the journeys required to an educational setting. Other options have already been considered such as; breakfast clubs, support network, child-minder.
- It has been demonstrated that the young person cannot access public transport or their education independently, and parents/carers cannot use the ITA towards journeys due to their own physical, medical, financial or mental health needs. Examples may include; a single parent with a medical diagnosis, making it unsafe or unreasonable to facilitate journeys; a parent that has a physical need or mental health diagnosis that prevents them from safely providing transport; evidence of financial hardship to show that the ITA does not sufficiently contribute towards costs for transport.

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- The young person has medical needs that mean it would not be safe for the parent to facilitate the journeys, and this has been evidenced and verified.
- The young person has medical and/or behavioural needs that would make it unsafe for the parent to facilitate their journeys if they are also required to assist the journeys of other children at the same time (multiple drop-offs).
- It has been demonstrated that holistic family circumstances would impact the ability of the parent/carer to use the ITA to facilitate the journeys. Examples may include; social care involvement with young person and siblings meaning it is in the best interests of the young person for the Council to provide assistance; or, two or more children in the household in receipt of an EHCP attending different provisions.

Travel delivery

What information will I receive once travel assistance is allocated?

Independent Travel Allowance

Payments of the allowance will be issued in 10 monthly installments. You will be sent a 'BACS' payment form, and upon completion, the first payment will be made in arrears (e.g. at the beginning of October for a September start)

Travel in the form of contracted transport (taxi or minibus)

You will receive an email with a notification to access a letter detailing your transport provider. The notification from gov.uk will include a link to a letter which details the transport company. The transport provider will contact you in advance to confirm the start date and pick-up and drop-off time as well as any specific needs of your child.

College timetables, including shared travel arrangements

For discretionary travel arrangements to college, we keep to strict parameters to ensure that we can efficiently utilise our transport providers so that other eligible students are able to access appropriate travel solutions, while also remaining mindful of overall cost-effectiveness. Shared vehicles will only transport pupils to their college placements at the start of the college day or the child with the earliest start in the vehicle, and the end of the college day or the child with the latest finish time on that day.

Dual placements

Dual placements are where a child or young person attends more than one school/college or where a school arranges a college link placement for a pupil for example. Dual placements may require additional travel assistance, such as transport at earlier or later times of the school day or to a different setting. Schools/parents are responsible for arranging and paying for the cost of such transport. Where a pupil is on the roll at one school/college but visits another provision for inclusion or link purposes, the school/college where the pupil is usually based will be responsible for arranging and paying for transport.

Post-16 contribution (ages 16-19)

Contribution towards the cost of travel assistance

Local authorities can apply a contribution charge to students and their families when discretionary travel assistance is agreed.

If your young person is aged between 16-19 and contracted transport (taxi) is agreed, you will be required to pay a contribution fee. This will usually be paid in 3 instalments (1 per term). We require the first instalment to be paid before transport can be put into place.

Students who start the course at age 18 are liable for the contribution for the whole of that year.

From September onwards:

Standard rate	£908.85 for the academic year 2024/25 (£302.95 per term)
Lower rate	£659.01 for the academic year (2024/25) (219.67 per term)

You may be eligible for the lower rate if any of the following apply:

- ➔ Families who are in receipt of the maximum Working Tax Credit and/or who continue to meet the eligibility criteria for Free School Meals.
- ➔ Students in care
- ➔ Care leavers.
- ➔ Students on Income Support/Universal Credit in their own right.
- ➔ Disabled young people who receive Employment Support Allowance/Universal Credit and either Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment in their name.

Independent Travel Training (ITT)

If you request Independent Travel Training (ITT) on your application, or at stage one of the appeal process, the Council may make a referral to Surrey Choices, who will contact you with further information.

When assessing your application or appeal, the Council may consider if ITT could be suitable for your young person, even if you have not requested it. The assessing officer will consider the information in your application/appeal and the young person's EHCP/Annual Review.

If ITT is considered a suitable option, this may be offered with, or without, the accompanying support of an ITA, or contracted transport. If a referral for ITT is made, you will be informed, but this does not automatically entitle your young person to any other form of travel assistance.

As this offer has only been available since 10 July 2024 – if your application/appeal has been declined already, but you wish for your young person to be considered for Independent Travel Training, please fill out a [Surrey Choices self-referral form \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://surreycc.gov.uk).



Concessionary seats

Students aged 16-19 that are not eligible for travel assistance may consider applying for a concessionary (paid) seat on a contracted vehicle.

While the offer of a concessionary seat has been extended to young people in post-16 education, this does not mean they will automatically be awarded a space.

Cost per year - £908.85 payable in 3 instalments (£302.95 per term)

You must commit to, and pay for, at least half a term of travel. Changes to travel arrangements within that period will not be considered or refunded.

Important information before making an application:

- **A concessionary seat is NOT guaranteed and can be withdrawn at any time and at short notice.** This can happen if it is needed for a pupil entitled to a free seat, or the service is discontinued when it's no longer needed for eligible pupils. Concessionary seats can only be sold if there are spare seats left after all eligible children have been allocated transport.
- Concessionary seats are considered on a priority basis, for more information see [our concessionary seat scheme \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk).
- You will need to make sure that you have alternative arrangements in place to get to and from school if we cannot offer a concessionary seat, or if a seat is withdrawn.

Appealing a travel assistance decision

In line with statutory guidance, authorities should have an appeal process published to ensure that parents/carers understand their right of appeal if they are unhappy with a decision.

Surrey County Council have adopted a 2 stage appeal process. In order for your case to be considered under stage one of the appeal process, you must submit a stage one online appeal form (surreycc.gov.uk).

If you are unhappy with the decision at stage one of the appeal process, you can request for your case to be escalated to stage two for consideration of an Independent Review Panel.

You can appeal our decision if you live in Surrey and any of the following apply:

- ➔ You believe the policy has been applied incorrectly.
- ➔ You believe there may be exceptional circumstances.
- ➔ Your child is attending their nearest available school but does not meet the distance requirement and you believe the walking route is unsafe.

[Appealing the decision](https://surreycc.gov.uk) (surreycc.gov.uk).



Contacting the Council

Online enquiry form

If you have a concern or query regarding any aspect of the travel assistance service, use our [online enquiry form \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://surreycc.gov.uk).

Here you can log a request for a member of the team to contact you directly.

We aim to respond to general enquiries within 5 working days. If the enquiry has been flagged as urgent, we will aim to provide an update within 24 hours.

Contact centre

0300 200 1004

These lines are open 9am–5pm Monday to Friday and will be able to support and direct your calls appropriately.



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What can I do if my application for travel assistance is unsuccessful?

A: To allow the team to review your circumstances, you can submit a stage one appeal (surreycc.gov.uk).

Q: My child is 19, not in education but attends a day care scheme for young adults. Are they eligible for travel assistance?

A: We consider all post-16 requests on a case-by-case basis. For more details on the factors that we consider when assessing eligibility, see travel assistance for students aged 16 to 25 (surreycc.gov.uk).

Q: My child is in Year 11, has travel assistance in place and is continuing their current school until they are 18. Do I need to re-apply for travel assistance, and will they be eligible?

A: You will need to re-apply for travel assistance once they are 16 years old. As local authorities do not have to provide travel assistance for post-16 students, you must demonstrate why it is still required.

Q: My child will be going to a sixth form specialist college at age 16 which is in a remote location and not accessible by public transport. Will they be eligible for travel assistance?

A: All requests are considered on a case-by-case basis, however we do look at accessibility to the chosen education placement, along with journey times.

Q: My child wants to be more independent and use public transport now that they are moving to a post-16 placement. They are currently not an independent traveller, are the Council able to help with this?

A: We can pass on your details to our colleagues in Surrey Choices who undertake independent travel training with children and young people who live in Surrey - Surrey Choices (surreycc.gov.uk)

Q: As a wheelchair user, my child is unable to travel independently and is transitioning from Year 11 to a new setting. Can I assume they are still entitled to their travel assistance in an adapted vehicle?

A: We would recommend submitting an application. Local authorities do not have to provide travel assistance and you must demonstrate why it is still required. We may also require a review of current health and medical needs to ensure appropriate provision is assigned, if eligible for assistance.

Q: My child is 16 and moving into year 12 at their current school. I am aware that the current transport route will be continuing next year, can they just continue with the same route?

A: You will need to re-apply for travel assistance once your child is 16 years old. If eligible, where possible, transport will be the same or similar. There may be occasions where we will need to change a service, or where arrangements may change.

Reasons why we are required to change a service, and what could change include:

- More children and young people being awarded transport to a specific education setting and are added to a specific vehicle/route.
- The operator of a current route changes.
- The type of vehicle.
- A journey time is increased owing to more children in a vehicle.
- The home pick-up and drop-off times.
- A passenger assistant is added to a route

Q: If my child's application for post-16 transport is successful, will I have to pay anything towards the costs?

A: If we offer you contracted transport in the form of a private hire vehicle (taxi, minibus), you are required to pay a contribution towards the cost of travel. Families who accept the Post-16 ITA will not be required to pay the contribution.

Q: Will the Council provide my child with a bus pass that will allow them to get to their new college by 9am?

A: As part of our eligibility assessment, the transport team will contact you to discuss potential public transport options.

Q: My child's new post-16 placement is named in section I of their EHCP. Do they automatically qualify for home to school transport?

A: We would recommend that an application is submitted. Local authorities do not have to provide travel assistance, and you must demonstrate why it is still required, providing evidence if applicable.

Q: I am disabled with mobility issues and would be unable to accompany my child to their educational setting. Would this support my child's need and eligibility for travel assistance?

A: It is important to flag all individual circumstances on your application form so that we can consider these as part of the assessment of eligibility.