

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

Transport Policy Statement For Learners Aged 16-19

1 Statement Of Policy

Contracted transport from home to school/college is provided for all learners living within Rhondda Cynon Taf who live more than 2 miles from the nearest school or college where the course that they wish to study is offered.

Transport is not normally from each individual learner's home but from approved pick up points on main transport routes. (Where a learner lives at a remote address, exceptional arrangements may be made for a connecting taxi to be provided between the home and pick up point).

There are no costs to learners who meet the 2-mile eligibility criterion who enrol for study courses at the nearest learning provider offering the appropriate course. Learners within the 2-mile distance are expected to make their own travel arrangements.

Learners who wish to pursue a study course other than at the nearest school/college at which the relevant course is available will be responsible for their own transport arrangements.

2 Learners With Disabilities And/Or Learning Difficulties

Learners with mobility problems and/or learning difficulties, whether or not as a consequence of a severe medical problem, should be entitled to assistance with transport from home to an appropriate school/college irrespective of distance. Such provision is subject to referral to, and approval by, the LEA's Access and Inclusion Service. Any referrals for learners who do not have statements of Special Educational Needs must be supported by medical evidence.

3 Additional Support For Learners With Disabilities And/Or Learning Difficulties

Learning providers offer a range of mobility/independence training and support in line with the assessed needs of individual learners (e.g. Coleg Morgannwg have Vocational Access Support Workers; the special and secondary schools in the County Borough, supported by specialist staff from the LEA's Access & Inclusion service, provide systematic training and support to meet the needs of their learners).

All transport provided for learners with disabilities and/or learning difficulties includes an escort, if specified by the appropriate learning provider.

4 Eligibility

There is no means testing to assess whether or not a learner is eligible for the provision of transport. The only eligibility criterion is the 2-mile qualifying distance (other than learners with disabilities and/or learning difficulties).

5 Other Forms Of Assistance

Where contract buses operate below vehicle capacity, spare seats may be available to learners who are not eligible for free transport at a charge of £30 per term.

In many parts of the County Borough learning providers operate consortia arrangements for post-16 provision. In these circumstances learners remain enrolled at their existing schools and are transported to partner learning providers free of charge.

Some learning providers operate, or contract, their own transport provision – in addition to that which is legally required – for which a charge is made.

In some exceptional cases, where no other arrangements are viable or cost effective, petrol costs may be reimbursed.

Careers Wales may be able to offer assistance to clients in its Youth Gateway programme if transport is a barrier to accessing education, employment or training. Such provision is assessed on an individual needs basis.

The University of Glamorgan provides a range of assistance to learners including bus discounts, free transport (for limited periods) with some transport providers, rail discounts, cycle purchase discounts and an on line car-sharing scheme. Details can be accessed at <http://www.glam.ac.uk/travelplan>.

The Welsh Assembly Government's Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DELLS) may provide financial assistance to support the travel costs of persons in work-based learning settings.

6 Applying For Assistance With Transport

There is no formal 'application' process for learners themselves. Schools/colleges formally provide the Council with details of learners who require transport in accordance with agreed policies and eligibility criteria.

Bus passes are then provided to all eligible learners along with information packs including travel times, pick up and drop off points etc.

7 Learners Who Reach 19 Whilst Continuing On A Course

Transport is made available for all eligible learners until the end of the academic year in which they attain their 19th birthday. Travel arrangements in respect of any subsequent attendance are at the discretion of the learning provider.

8 Support For Transport To Learners Studying Outside Rhondda Cynon Taf

Contract buses or season tickets for rail or commercial bus services are provided free for learners who are accepted for courses of study that are not offered at schools/colleges within Rhondda Cynon Taf.

9 Help For Learners Attending Study Courses Beyond Daily Travelling Distance

If a learner pursues a course of studies at a learning provider beyond daily travelling distance as a result of no comparable course being available closer to the learner's home, any assistance for travelling provision (including reimbursement of petrol costs) is considered on the individual circumstances of each learner.

10 Quality Assurance and Complaints Procedures

All vehicles will be available for random checks by the Traffic Commissioners or other appropriate body, when required. The council will, on unspecified days, undertake random checks on contracts, to ensure that the contracts are being complied with, and in a manner acceptable to the Council. As a part of the monitoring exercise, performance indicators will be built into the contracts. These will, among others, relate to punctuality and client satisfaction.

Any complaints received by the Council from learners concerning services or vehicles will be immediately investigated. In the event of the complaint being upheld, the necessary and appropriate steps will be taken in accordance with the contract or as a matter of priority.

11 Work Experience

Where, as part of a course of study, learners follow a work experience placement they are normally required to make their own transport arrangements.

Where such arrangements are arranged through Careers Wales, or if a learner faces particular difficulties accessing a work experience placement, transport costs may be reimbursed by the learning provider.

12 Consultation

School staff and Governors have been consulted on this policy statement as part of the Authority's statutory annual consultation on the council's admission policy and arrangements.

Similarly, voluntary aided schools and neighbouring local authorities have also been consulted (via the Rhondda Cynon Taf Admissions Forum) as part of those consultation arrangements.

The Rhondda Cynon Taf Governors Association and Coleg Morgannwg have also been consulted, separately and specifically, on the development of this policy.

13 Availability and Accessibility of This Policy Statement

The policy statement is available as a hyperlink on the home page of the Council's Internet site.

Arrangements are also being made for the policy to be made available to learners, and their parents/guardians, during Year 11 at all of the Secondary Schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

14 Points Of Contact For Learners Seeking Transport Support

Rhondda Cynon Taf Education & Lifelong Learning Directorate

Graham Thomas (01443 744041)

Graham.Thomas@rhondda-cynon-taff.gov.uk

Rhondda Cynon Taf Environmental Services Group (Corporate Transport Unit)

Caroline.Harries (01443 494833)

caroline.j.harries@rhondda-cynon-taff.gov.uk

Coleg Morgannwg

Student Services (01443 662800)

www.morgannwg.ac.uk

Bro Dysg (Rhondda Cynon Taf Community Consortium for Education & Training)

Julia Carvell (01443 744000)

Julia.Carvell@rhondda-cynon-taff.gov.uk

University of Glamorgan

Student Services (01443 480480)

www.glam.ac.uk

Other Sources of Information

LEA – ‘Starting School’ Booklet

Rhondda Cynon Taf Web Site (www.rhondda-cynon-taf.gov.uk)

Rhondda Cynon Taf Ednet website (www.rctednet.net)

School/College prospectuses

Careers advice information

Corporate Transport Unit – (01443 494700)

Traveline Cymru (www.traveline-cymru.org.uk)

Bus companies. -Contact details available from Rhondda Cynon Taf Corporate Transport Unit (01443 494700)

Footnote

This Transport Policy Statement has been prepared by Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Education Authority and partner organisations involved in the provision of learning and training to persons aged between 16 and 19 who reside within the County Borough.

The provisions of the policy apply, for the most part, to learners pursuing courses of study at the Authority’s 19 secondary schools, 4 special schools and at Coleg Morgannwg.

Transport is also provided to eligible learners attending courses of study outside the County Borough where such attendance is consistent with the LEA’s admission policy (Pencoe Comprehensive School for students living in Dolau, Llanharan and Brynna).

Learners residing in Rhondda Cynon Taf who attend the Bishop Hedley Roman Catholic High School, (Merthyr Tydfil), the Bishop of Llandaff Church in Wales High School, (Cardiff) and St David's Roman Catholic Sixth Form College, (Cardiff) also receive transport in accordance with the Authority's policy.

Free transport is not generally available to students who choose to attend courses outside Rhondda Cynon Taf unless the course that the learner wishes to study is not available within the County Borough or the location at which the course is available is closer to the learner's home than the alternative location of the Coleg Morgannwg campus at which the course is available.

At present, contract transport provision is made for learners to access such courses at the Merthyr Tydfil, Ystrad Mynach, Bridgend and Pencoed Colleges.

Transport (season tickets for use on commercial bus or rail routes) is also available for learners pursuing study courses of a specialist nature that are not available within Rhondda Cynon Taf (e.g. the NVQ courses in Aeronautical Engineering at Barry Further Education College.)

(This Transport Policy Statement has been prepared in accordance with the guidance set out in Welsh Assembly Government Circular 05/2007 "Transport Policy Statements for Learners Aged 16-19 2007/08")