

# **Draft 0-25 travel assistance policy.**

## **Summary of consultation activity outside of the Be Heard survey.**

This report summarises the activity that took place as part of Birmingham City Council's consultation on a draft 0-25 travel assistance policy.

The draft travel assistance policy and a document which summarised the changes proposed were used as part of the consultation which ran from 15 February 2019 to 2 April 2019.

A consultation survey was posted on Be Heard and the feedback received to this is summarised in a separate appendix.

In addition to the Be Heard survey, consultation activity

### **Councillors and MPs**

- An email was sent to all Birmingham councillors and MPs on the day the consultation launched, Friday 15 February, to inform them of the consultation and provide information on opportunities for them to be briefed.
- Officers were available before the Full Council meetings on 26 February and 2 April for any councillors who had queries about the consultation.
- Three briefing sessions were arranged for councillors and one of these included MPs.
- A meeting took place with opposition shadows.
- A meeting took place with members of the Children's Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- The Cabinet Member for Children's Wellbeing also offered to meet with councillors individually or in small groups and sent emails to this effect.

### **Schools**

- In advance of the consultation launching, officers worked with special schools to arrange dates for parents' meetings.
- An email was sent to all Birmingham headteachers (including special schools) on Friday 15 February to let them know the consultation had been launched and ask them to share with parents and carers.
- Information was also included in the weekly School Noticeboard bulletin which is sent to all Birmingham schools.
- Information about the consultation was shared with 171 special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) working in Birmingham schools as part of the regular SENCO network meetings that took place in March 2019.
- Council officers also discussed the consultation with headteachers as part of the regular primary, secondary and special forum meetings.

### **Parents and carers**

- A letter was sent to all families currently receiving assistance from Travel Assist. This informed them of the consultation, provided the link to respond on Be Heard and also listed the sessions that had been arranged at special schools.
- Meetings took place at eight special schools during the consultation period (Hunters Hill, Langley, Wilson Stuart, Selly Oak, Pines, Hamilton, Fox Hollies and Priestley Smith).
- A total of 179 parents attended these meetings and notes were taken at each session.
- The main themes raised by parents at these meetings were:

- Concerns over charging for transport at Post 16. Some parents felt their children's needs were such that employment or training at age 16 would not be possible and so education was their only option. As such, some parents felt that transport should be provided as it is for children of compulsory school age and not charged for.
- Some parents felt that the way the policy had been written was confusing as they found it difficult to distinguish between the application for assistance for children and young people with SEND and the application under the low income/distance criteria.
- Many parents said they would welcome more information and clarity about the assessment process, particularly what 'exceptional circumstances' meant.
- Parents welcomed the opportunity to attend Stage 2 appeal hearings in person and said they felt this would give them the opportunity to explain their circumstances to the panel.
- Parents felt the information provided about personal transport budgets (PTBs) was not very clear as they were not sure how they worked.
- Parents were positive about independent travel training but asked for assurances that ITT would only take place if/when it was appropriate for the young person's needs.
- A meeting was held with 15 members of Birmingham Parent Carer Forum to discuss the consultation.

### **Colleges and sixth forms**

- Information about the consultation was shared with all college/sixth form heads/principals on Monday 25 February.

### **Staff**

- A letter was sent on 25 February 2019 to all guides employed by Travel Assist to let them know about the consultation.
- Information about the consultation was sent to all staff working in Education and Skills by Tim O'Neill on 15 February 2019.
- The consultation was included in the Chief Executive's weekly bulletin email and sent to all Birmingham City Council staff on 22 February 2019.
- The consultation was shared with Adults Social Care staff in Graeme Betts' fortnightly bulletin twice during the consultation period.
- Information was shared with staff working in Birmingham Children's Trust.

### **Governors**

- Information about the consultation was shared with governors in the Friday Update that is issued by School and Governor Support.
- A presentation was also delivered to Chairs of Governors at the Chairs Network meeting at the mac on 18 March.

### **Other local authorities**

- An email was sent to 16 local authorities (Coventry City Council, Derby City Council, Derbyshire County Council, Dudley MBC, Lincolnshire County Council, Nottingham City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Sandwell MBC, Shropshire County Council, Solihull MBC, Staffordshire County Council, Telford & Wrekin Council, Walsall MBC, Warwickshire County Council, Wolverhampton MBC and Worcestershire County Council) on 25 February 2019 notifying them of the consultation.

### **Transport providers**

- Information about the consultation was sent to all 24 transport providers on Friday 15 February when it launched.

### **Transport for West Midlands**

- Information about the consultation was provided to Transport for West Midlands who confirmed they would share it.
- TfWM also provided a detailed written response to the consultation.

### **Young people**

- As part of the consultation, the views of children and young people were sought via the schools they attend.
- 323 children and young people responded and their feedback is summarised in a separate appendix.

### **Department for Education**

- A formal notification about the consultation was sent to the DfE on 26 February and an email was received confirming it would be directed as appropriate and they would be providing a response.
- A response from the DfE was received on Tuesday 9 April. Despite being received after the consultation ended, the detailed comments provided by the DfE will be considered along with the rest of the feedback received.

### **Community and voluntary groups**

- Engagement with these groups was arranged via Birmingham Voluntary Service Council who included it in their bulletin.
- Separate engagement was carried out with Midland Mencap.

### **Other**

- During the consultation period a meeting was held with members of staff from Birmingham's Special Educational Needs & Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS). They were also notified of the consultation as soon as it launched.
- Birmingham Education Partnership were notified of the consultation by email on Friday 15 February (email sent to the Chief Executive, the Head of Continuous School Improvement and the office).

### **General public**

- Information about the consultation was included in the Birmingham Bulletin on 22 February 2019. This was sent by email to approximately 82,000 Birmingham residents.
- Social media was used to promote the consultation with the wider public (Council facebook and twitter accounts).

### **Training providers**

- Details of the consultation were sent to the Protocol Group on Friday 15 February for them to circulate to their network.