

Personal Transport Budget – Information for Parents/Guardians

The Council is committed to providing the best and most appropriate system of transportation that will carry learners safely, comfortably and without unreasonable levels of stress.

If your child is eligible for transport to school, as set out in the Council's Learner Travel Policy, Information and Arrangements, you may be entitled to receive a Personal Transport Budget (PTB). PTBs are granted at the discretion of the Council where it is cost effective and in line with the efficient use of resources.

When considering a PTB application, the Council will investigate whether there is any transport currently in place that your child could be placed onto at no additional cost or where the cost of providing your child with transport assistance would be less than providing you with a PTB. There will be a review at least annually to evaluate whether it remains cost effective.

What is a Personal Transport Budget?

A PTB is a payment that will help you to make your child's home to school travel arrangements in a way that suits your personal circumstances. A PTB is provided to parents or guardians of children who are eligible for transport to school. It allows families to make flexible arrangements, monitor the quality of their child's transport directly or they could work with other families to achieve the best possible travel arrangements for their children.

What are the benefits of Personal Transport Budgets?

- It provides freedom and flexibility for your family to choose the most appropriate travel arrangements for your child that best fit with your personal circumstances.
- It provides choice and control over how funding is used to get your child to and from school on time in a way that suits you, your child and your family.
- It allows you to explore opportunities to share with other parents or guardians.

How much will my Personal Travel Budget be?

The PTB is calculated based on the distance between home and school for the days that your child attends school and takes account of your child's current travel requirements. This means each PTB will be tailored to the needs of each family. It is based on there being 190 school days in an academic year. Should your child be absent from school, a reduction will be made to reflect the absenteeism. Where a parent or guardian enters into a PTB, it should be noted that it is their legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at school.

Who can get a Personal Travel Budget?

You can get a PTB if your child is eligible for transport to school. If you apply for a PTB, the Council will need to be satisfied that you have a suitable plan in place to get your child to/from school. Additionally, when deciding to offer a PTB, we would look at your child's attendance record at school. A suitable plan provides appropriate transport that allows your child to get to school on time, safely and ready to learn. It is important that you ensure the travel arrangements that you make for your child are reliable.

How do I get a Personal Travel Budget?

If you decide to take up a PTB we will ask you to sign an agreement that will require you to ensure that your child's safety, attendance and ability to learn are not negatively affected by their travel to and from school. The Council would then make the arrangements to transfer the PTB to your bank account. You will then be free to arrange and manage your child's travel arrangements in a way that best suits you, your child and your family.

What can the Personal Travel Budget be spent on?

Parents or guardians can spend the PTB how they like, as long as children get to and from school on time, and in a way that ensures their safety, encourages their attendance and does not negatively affect their ability to learn once they are at school. Parents must ensure that any travel arrangements secured with the PTB are appropriately taxed and insured.

Some ideas for spending the PTB include:

- Purchasing a travel pass for yourself or a trusted adult to accompany your child on public transport.
- Paying for an escort with an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service clearance for your child to walk to school or to travel by public transport, or arrange to do this yourself.
- Covering the cost of driving or cycling with your child to school, including maybe leasing a car if you don't have one.
- Arranging shared travel arrangements with other parents or guardians, such as shared driving responsibilities, walking buses or joint taxi bookings.
- Arranging for a family member, friend or someone you trust to take your child to school.
- Paying a child minder with an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service clearance to take your child to school.
- Overcoming barriers that may prevent you accompanying your child to school, for example travel or childcare arrangements for siblings.

How will the Personal Travel Budget get paid?

Payments would be made by the Council in advance into the parent's or guardian's designated bank account each term. The parents or guardians would need to provide us with the appropriate bank details when they sign the agreement. If your circumstances change, for example your family moves house or your child's school placement changes, the PTB may need to be re-calculated. Any transport arrangements, until your child has been re-assessed, will be the parent's or guardian's responsibility. Where it is later established that there had been no notification of the change, payments made in error will be recovered by the Council.

Can I stop the Personal Travel Budget if it doesn't work out?

Parents or guardians can stop their PTB if circumstances change substantially but we will need a month's notice to arrange alternative forms of travel assistance. We can also help with advice on how to use the PTB. We want to make PTBs work for families. If you find that you are having difficulties with your travel arrangements, we would encourage you to discuss the problems with us before deciding to leave the scheme, as we may be able to help.

Will it have an impact on other benefits?

No. PTBs have no impact on any other benefits but it is your responsibility to check that this is the case in your personal circumstances. Payments are not taxed as they are made in relation to the child not the parents or guardians.

Will I regularly need to show the Council how I am spending the Personal Transport Budget?

The Council is responsible for ensuring that public funds are spent on the intended services. In order to receive the PTB, you need to keep records, eg receipts and invoices, and surrender them for monitoring purposes when requested.

Your key responsibilities

You must ensure that your child gets to and from school each day in a way that ensures:

- They are kept safe on the journey
- They get to school on time
- Their journey is without such stress and strain that their ability to learn is affected
- They meet the average level of attendance for the school.

It is for you to decide what travel arrangements are right for your child. However, your PTB may be withdrawn if the Council feels that the arrangements you have made do not meet the above requirements. We will always discuss this with you first.

You are responsible for ensuring that anyone employed by you maintains an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service clearance, the necessary insurance cover in respect of the provision of the service(s) agreed and also for ensuring the suitability and safety of the services they provide e.g. a valid MOT (if applicable), road tax, a valid policy of motor insurance, and a valid driving licence for that type of vehicle.