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# NOTICE OF MEETING

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## CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

THURSDAY, 22 FEBRUARY 2024 AT 5.00 PM

Telephone enquiries to Karen Martin, Tel: 023 9284 1704  
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If any member of the public wishing to attend the meeting has access requirements, please notify the contact named above.

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## CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

Councillor Suzy Horton (Liberal Democrat)

### Group Spokespersons

Councillor Ryan Brent, Conservative  
Councillor Chris Dike, Portsmouth Independents Party  
Councillor George Fielding, Labour

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(NB This Agenda should be retained for future reference with the minutes of this meeting.)

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## AGENDA

- 1 Apologies
- 2 Declarations of Members' Interests
- 3 DSG Budget 2024-2025 (Pages 5 - 18)

### Purpose

To inform The Cabinet Member of the progress towards the initial determination of the schools budget (including individual schools budgets for 2024-25) and to seek the necessary approvals and endorsements required.

**RECOMMENDED - that the Cabinet Member:**

- a) Approves the determination of the Schools Budget for 2024-25 as set out in Appendix 1.
- b) Approves the proposal to use carry forward balances to fund the shortfall in 2024-25 and manage any potential financial pressures during the financial year.
- c) Approves the 2024-25 Element 3 Top-up values for Special Schools, Inclusion Centres, Alternative Provision Settings and Mainstream, Schools as set out in Appendix 2.
- d) Notes the decision by the Maintained School members of Schools Forum to approve the de-delegation of the Education functions related the Monitoring and Brokering grant for 2024-25 at £10.42 per pupil.

**4 Carers' Fees and Allowances Policy for Portsmouth Fostering Service (Pages 19 - 62)**

Purpose

To inform the Cabinet Member of the Carers' Fees and Allowances Policy for Portsmouth 2024-25 as seen in Appendix A, and to seek approval for the proposed financial increases to the Foster Carers Fees and Allowances.

**RECOMMENDED that the Cabinet Member:**

- a) Approves the proposal to change the payment structure and increase the Skills Fees for Foster Carers and related Allowances. It is proposed that that this updated policy takes effect from 7 April 2024.
- b) Agrees that delegated authority is with the Deputy Director, Children & Families (in conjunction with the Section 151 Officer) to approve an annual uplift to the standard fostering allowance in line with the national minimum guidance. This will include the following which are linked to the standard fostering allowance:
  - Birthday & Religious Festival Allowance;
  - Foster Carers Leave;
  - Family Link; and
  - Activities Allowance

**5 School Travel Assistance Policies (Pages 63 - 102)**

Purpose

To approve the updated Travel Assistance Policy for children of statutory school age (5-16) and the Travel Assistance Statement for post-16 learners for 2024/25.

**RECOMMENDED - that the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education agrees the attached Travel Assistance Policy for children of statutory school age (5-16) and the Travel Assistance Statement for post-16 learners for 2024/25.**

**6 Appointment to UTC Board (Pages 103 - 104)**

Purpose

To seek agreement to the appointment of Portsmouth City Council's Chief Executive, Natalie Brahma-Pearl, to the UTC Portsmouth as a member of the company.

**RECOMMENDED - that Natalie Brahma-Pearl, Portsmouth City Council's Chief Executive, be appointed by the Council to the UTC Portsmouth as a member of the company.**

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# Agenda Item 3



**Title of meeting:** Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education

**Date of meeting:** 22 February 2024

**Subject:** Dedicated Schools Grant Budget 2024-25

**Report by:** Sarah Daly, Director of Children Families and Education

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Suzy Horton, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education

**Wards affected:** All

**Key decision:** Yes/No

**Full Council decision:** Yes/No

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## 1 Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

1.1.1 Inform The Cabinet Member of the progress towards the initial determination of the schools budget (including individual schools budgets for 2024-25) and to seek the necessary approvals and endorsements required.

## 2 Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet Member:

- 2.1.1 Approve the determination of the Schools Budget for 2024-25 as set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.1.2 Approve the proposal to use carry forward balances to fund the shortfall in 2024-25 and manage any potential financial pressures during the financial year.
- 2.1.3 Approve the 2024-25 Element 3 Top-up values for Special Schools, Inclusion Centres, Alternative Provision Settings and Mainstream, Schools as set out in Appendix 2.
- 2.1.4 Note the decision by the Maintained School members of Schools Forum to approve the de-delegation of the Education functions related the Monitoring and Brokering grant for 2024-25 at £10.42 per pupil.

### **3 Background**

- 3.1 The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is a ring-fenced grant for education and can only be used for the purposes of the Schools Budget as defined in the School and Early Years Finance and Childcare (Provision of information about Young Children) (Amendment) (England) Regulations
- 3.2 The School and Early Years Finance and Childcare (Provision of Information About Young Children) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2024 require each local authority, by no later than 29 February 2024, to:
  - 3.2.1 Make an initial determination of the schools budget, and
  - 3.2.2 Give notice of that determination to governing bodies of the schools it maintains.
- 3.3 In January 2024 the Cabinet Member and Schools Forum approved and endorsed several decisions regarding the Schools Block, including mainstream school, budgets, the Central Schools Services Block and High Needs places for Special Schools, Inclusion Centres and Alternative Provision settings.
- 3.4 On the 7 February 2024 Schools Forum endorsed, the 2024-25 Early Years funding arrangements and hourly funding rates for providers. These were subsequently approved at a special Cabinet Member Decision Day on 9 February in line with the Governments request to inform providers of the hourly rates no later than 20 February 2024.
- 3.5 This report provides the Cabinet Member with an update on the disapplication request regarding the local authority monitoring and brokerage grant de-delegation along with the background and proposed changes to the remaining High Needs Block.

### **4 Dedicated Schools Grant**

- 4.1 The determination of the 2024-25 Dedicated Schools Grant for 2024-25 is set out in Appendix 1.
- 4.2 On the 19 December 2023 the ESFA announced the initial Dedicated Schools Grant Allocation for Portsmouth for 2024-25. Details of which were reported to the Cabinet Member and Schools Forum in January 2024.

### **5 Maintained Primary and Secondary de-delegation of Education Functions**

- 5.1 At Schools Forum meeting in December 2023 Primary and Secondary maintained school members voted by Phase on the de-delegation of funding in relation to the Monitoring and Brokerage Grant. Primary schools voted to de-delegate and secondary schools voted not to de-delegate.

- 5.2 On submitting the disapplication request against the secondary vote, the DfE have informed the Authority that the vote is not a phased vote but should cover all maintained school representatives by majority vote (and is not by Phase). The DfE have been informed about the lack of clarity in the legislation and the operational guidance around this subject.
- 5.3 The authority has been advised to go back to Schools Forum and run the vote again to de-delegate the Education Functions funding at £10.42 per pupil for Primary and Secondary maintained schools. This was done at the Schools Forum meeting on 7 February 2024 and the result was (to be inserted following the Schools Forum meeting).

## **6 High Needs**

- 6.1 In December 2024 the authority received the initial 2024-25 High Needs Block allocation of £37.4m, an increase of £1.7m on 2023-24. The final amount will be announced in July 2024 once the movement of pupils between authorities is known (called the import/export adjustment).
- 6.2 Whilst the overall funding for the High Needs Block has increased, but this has not been able to cover the increase the Authority has seen in terms of numbers or need. As set out below and in Appendix 1, the Authority is seeing a budget requirement for 2024-25 of £40.0m compared to income of £37.6m providing a £2.5m shortfall.

	<b>£m</b>
Revised Budget 2023-24	36.8
Net budget Growth 2024-25	3.2
<b>Proposed Original Budget 2024-25</b>	<b>40.0</b>
Funding 2024-25	(37.4)
Previously agreed use of carry forward	(0.2)
<b>Total funding</b>	<b>(37.6)</b>
<b>Funding Shortfall 2024-25</b>	<b>2.5</b>

- 6.3 The Education and Early Years colleagues have reviewed the forecast pupils numbers for each of the budgets and financial forecasts reflect these.
- 6.4 Whilst the budget proposed to Schools Forum and Cabinet Member can be supported by using the DSG balances in 2024-25, it is not sustainable. Officers are now reviewing all the areas to come up with a programme of work.

## **Place Funding**

- 6.5 In January 2024 Schools Forum endorsed and the Cabinet Member approved the number of places for High Needs settings, and the budget is reflected in Appendix 1.

### **Element 3 Top-up funding**

- 6.6 The Element 3 top-up rates for 2024-25 for Special Schools, Inclusion Centres, Alternative Provision settings and Mainstream Schools are set out in the relevant tables in Appendix 2. Inflation of 1.84% has been applied to all funding bands in line with the average increase seen in mainstream school budget shares for 2024-25.

#### **Special Schools**

- 6.7 The budget for 2024-25 includes the full year impact of The Wymering School increase from 30 to 66 places from September 2023, and the impact of the place numbers previously reported. The authority has seen an increase in the level of assessed needs during the 2023-24 financial year and the 2024-25 budget assumes that this pressure will continue.
- 6.8 For the 2024-25 financial year the DFE have set a zero minimum funding guarantee (MFG) for special schools on the combined Place funding and Element 3 funding, when compared to the 2023-24 baselines. However, they have advised that local authorities should consider applying an increase of between zero and plus 0.5%, and the inflationary increase of 1.84% on Element 3 values is greater than this.
- 6.9 The band values for 2024-25 are set out in Tables A and B of Appendix 2.

#### **Inclusion Centres and Alternative Provision**

- 6.10 The budget includes the full year impact of the new places agreed from September 2023 and the additional places for September 2024.
- 6.11 The number of places used by the Authority at Alternative Provision settings has been lower than budgeted in recent years, and the Element 3 top-up budget has been reduced accordingly.
- 6.12 The value for each band is set out in Tables C (Alternative Provision) and D (Inclusion Centres) in Appendix 2.

#### **Mainstream Schools**

- 6.13 The budget for 2024-25 includes growth in the number of EHCP assessments based on known pupils and projections for future EHCPs. The number of full time equivalent pupils supported through this budget is expected to increase by 32% over the financial year which will lead to future pressures in 2025-26 as the full year effect of the growth is felt.
- 6.14 The band values, for 2024-25, as set out in Table E in Appendix 2.



### **Post-16 High Needs**

- 6.15 The place funding budget contains provision for 193 places and the associated Element 3 Top UP funding for students who are the responsibility of Portsmouth City Council.
- 6.16 An inflationary element of 1.84% has been included within the Element 3 Top-up.

### **Out of City placements**

- 6.17 This budget contains funding for pupils who are placed in independent and specialist provision out of the City and those in receipt of services from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).
- 6.18 The budget reflects the pupils currently placed in independent and specialist providers who are expected to continue in those placements and their projected costs. This is a hard area to forecast, and should numbers increase this will cause further pressure on the budget.

### **Hospital and medical education**

- 6.19 The authority commissions the Harbour School to provide tuition to those pupils who are in hospital, or unable to attend school due to a decision made by a medical practitioner. The funding for 2024-25 remains at £660,000 for this provision.
- 6.20 In May 2021 a report was brought to Schools Forum which reported the success of the AV1 robots in supporting remote learning and engagement of pupils unable to attend school for medical reasons. The budget contains the annual maintenance cost for previously purchased robots, in addition to funding to purchase further robots during 2024-25.

### **Early Years Complex Needs Inclusion Fund**

- 6.21 The Early Years Complex Needs Inclusion Fund was established in September 2019 to support those early years' pupils with complex needs in mainstream settings, enabling a wider provision of services following the closure of Willows Centre for Children.
- 6.22 Since the budget was set up, the demand on this budget has continued to grow. The proposed budget includes funding for those children already in receipt of funding, new children assessed for the funding, and children leaving for school.

### **Other High Needs DSG Budgets**

- 6.23 The following budget increases are proposed:
- Outreach: £123,900 to reflect the increase in the offer to schools.
  - Sensory Impairment: £168,400 includes the known increases in numbers of pupils requiring support



- Relational Practice: £10,100 continuing support for the project that is due to complete in December 2025.

6.24 The budget also contains funding for the Teacher pay and pensions grants for Academy Special Schools and non-Maintained special schools. The budget has been increased in line with increased pupils. The per pupil funding remains at the 2022-23 levels in line with the funding received by the authority.

### **Supplementary Funding 2024-25**

6.25 As reported when setting the 2023-24 budget, the supplementary funding provided to Special Schools in 2022-23 has been included in the Element 3 Top-up. Funding for Alternative Provision settings cannot be added to the Element 3 Top-up values as these are paid by schools rather than the authority. Funding will continue to be paid to Alternative Provision settings and Post-16 colleges in the City as a separate grant in 2024-25.

### **Additional Grant 2024-25**

6.26 In 2023-24 the DfE asked authorities to pay an additional grant to special schools based on specific criteria. For 2024-25 the DfE have specified that authorities should continue to pay additional funding to special schools and alternative provision settings using the same amount per place funding in 2023-24 using the 203-24 places, multiplied by the number agreed places for 2024-25. The budget increase reflects the full year effect of the increase in Wymering places and the increased number of Special School and Alternative Provision places from September 2024.

## **7 Dedicated Schools Grant Balances**

7.1 Current forecast modelling suggests that the final carry forward balance from 2023-24 will be in the region of £9.1m, however this could change before the end of the financial year.

7.2 The balances include the £0.6m relating to the planned underspend on the Schools Specific Contingency and the Growth Fund, which has been approved to be carried forward to 2024-25 for the same purposes. Along with funding to support the Relational Practice project previously endorsed by Schools Forum and approved by the Cabinet Member. This has been included in the Budget as set out in Appendix 1.

7.3 In addition to the proposal to use the carry forward balance to support the revenue implications of the additional high needs places and the growth in pressures, it is prudent to ensure there are enough balances to manage in year cost pressures. Particularly in the high needs sector as both pupil numbers and complexity are expected to continue to increase. A reasonable balance would be considered 1% of overall DSG funding. This would provide a contingency of £2.21m on overall DSG funding of £221m.

7.4 The table below sets out the proposed use of the 2023-24 forecast carry forward in 2024-25.

<b>Table 6: Estimated 2023-24 Carry forward</b>		
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
Forecast carry forward as of 31 December 2023		9.127
<b>Impact of decisions on 2023-24 carry forward</b>		
Schools specific contingency	(0.124)	
Carry forward of Growth Fund balance	(0.503)	
Relational Practice	(0.179)	(0.806)
<b>Sub total</b>		<b>8.321</b>
High Needs Block funding gap	(2.467)	
Contingency to manage in-year pressures	(2.210)	(4.676)
<b>Forecast carry forward available for use</b>		<b>3.644</b>

7.5 Any residual balance carried forward would be a one-off funding source to manage the lag in funding of high needs places and any in year pressures. The implications of the level of growth predicted for 2024-25 will translate to full year impacts in 2025-26 and beyond which will potentially put the DSG into a deficit by 2026-27.

7.6 In recent years Portsmouth City Council has been able to manage the DSG effectively and the windfall savings have been held to manage the lag in funding for any increase in High Needs places. This has enabled the deficit budget to be managed in 2024-25. As previously mentioned, the authority is developing a DSG five year management plan and reviewing services to see what could be delivered differently for less. The outcomes of both exercises will be brought to future Schools Forum and Cabinet Member meetings.

## **8 Reasons for recommendations**

8.1 The recommendations within this report seek to allocate DSG resources appropriately and fairly, and to provide the best possible outcomes for pupils in Portsmouth City. They are consistent with the requirements contained within the updated School and Early Years Finance and Childcare (Provision of Information about Young Children) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2024. Local Authorities are required to make an initial determination of their schools' budget no later than the 29 February 2024.

## **9 Integrated impact assessment**

9.1 This report and the proposals within form part of, and are consistent with, the national implementation of the schools and high needs National Funding Formula as directed by the Department of Education and set out in the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2024.

9.2 The funding system does not seek to target funding by reference to particular protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, but instead targets funding to those groups which the evidence demonstrates face barriers to their educational achievement.

## 10 Legal implications

10.1 Regulation 5 of the School and Early Years Finance and Childcare (Provision of Information About Young Children) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2024(coming into force on 13 February 2024) requires local authorities to (a) make an initial determination of their Schools Budget and (b) give notice of that determination to the governing bodies of the schools which they maintain, by no later than 29 February 2024. The recommendations in this report are consistent with the requirements contained in those updated regulations, based on operational guidance published by central government, and in particular identify elements of the proposals in respect of which the Cabinet Member's specific approval or endorsement is required.

## 11 Director of Finance's comments

11.1 Financial comments and implications are included in the body of this report.

Signed by: Sarah Daly, Director of Children, Families and Education.

### Appendices:

Appendix 1: Dedicated Schools Grant Original budget 2024-25

Appendix 2: Element 3 Top-up Tables 2024-25

### Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

<b>Title of document</b>	<b>Location</b>
School and Early Years Finance and childcare (Provision of Information about Young Children) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2024	<a href="#">The School and Early Years Finance and Childcare (Provision of Information About Young Children) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2024 (legislation.gov.uk)</a>
The National Funding Formulae for Schools and High Needs 2024-25 (published 6 October 2023) - Policy Document	<a href="#">National funding formula for schools and high needs 2024 to 2025 (publishing.service.gov.uk)</a>
Schools revenue funding 2024 to 2025: Operational Guide (published December 2023)	<a href="#">Schools operational guide: 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>
High Needs Funding: 2024 to 2025 Operational Guidance (published January 2024)	<a href="#">High needs funding: 2024 to 2025 operational guide - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>



Early Years Entitlements: local authority funding operational guide 2024 to 2025 (published 29 November 2023)	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1141227/early_years_entitlements_local_authority_funding_operational_guide_2024_to_2025.pdf">Early years entitlements: local authority funding operational guide 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a>
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The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by ..... on .....

.....  
Signed by Councillor Suzy Horton, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education:

**Appendix 1: Dedicated Schools Grant Original budget 2024-25**

	Approved 2023-24 Budget - Oct 2023 (inc. Academies)	Proposed Budget Revisions	2024-25 Schools Budget Feb 2024 (Including Academies)	2024-25 Schools Budget Feb 2024 (Excluding Academies)
	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Schools Block</b>				
<b>Individual Schools Budgets (ISB)</b>				
Primary	75,555	4,083	79,638	26,135
Secondary	70,347	6,149	76,496	16,421
<b>Total ISB</b>	<b>145,902</b>	<b>10,232</b>	<b>156,134</b>	<b>42,556</b>
<b>De-Delegated and Central Budgets</b>				
Growth Fund	1,294	699	1,994	1,994
De-delegated Budgets	204	0	205	205
Academy Conversions	0	0	0	0
<b>Other Schools Block Sub Total</b>	<b>1,499</b>	<b>699</b>	<b>2,198</b>	<b>2,198</b>
<b>Total Schools Block</b>	<b>147,401</b>	<b>10,931</b>	<b>158,332</b>	<b>44,754</b>
<b>Central School Services Block</b>				
Schools Forum	16	1	17	17
Admissions	346	16	362	362
Licences (negotiated by DfE)	146	17	162	162
ESG retained duties	498	12	510	510
Central Teachers Pay /pensions grant	49	1	51	51
<b>Central School Services Block Total</b>	<b>1,055</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>1,102</b>	<b>1,102</b>
<b>Early Years Block</b>				
3 & 4 Year Old Provision <sup>1</sup>	12,237	2,190	14,427	14,427
2 Year Old Provision	1,910	4,590	6,500	6,500
Under 2s	0	2,644	2,644	2,644
Central Expenditure on under 5's	718	480	1,198	1,198
<b>Early Years Block Total</b>	<b>14,865</b>	<b>9,903</b>	<b>24,769</b>	<b>24,769</b>
<b>High Needs Block</b>				
<b>Individual Schools Budgets</b>				
Special School Place Funding	6,990	318	7,308	67
Resource Unit Place Funding	897	54	952	226
Alternative Provision Place Funding	1,337	33	1,370	97
<b>Total ISB</b>	<b>9,224</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>9,630</b>	<b>389</b>

	Approved 2023-24 Budget - Oct 2023 (inc. Academies)	Proposed Budget Revisions	2024-25 Schools Budget Feb 2024 (Including Academies)	2024-25 Schools Budget Feb 2024 (Excluding Academies)
<b>High Needs Block cont.</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Element 3 Top-up funding	16,142	3,377	19,519	19,519
Out of City Placements	5,020	(1,055)	3,965	3,965
SEN Support Service	1,098	161	1,259	1,259
Medical Education	675	6	681	681
Outreach Services	196	124	320	320
Turnaround Project	100	0	100	100
Fair Access Protocol	60	0	60	60
Early Years Complex Needs Inclusion fund	1,224	386	1,609	1,609
Post-16 high needs places	1,072	114	1,186	0
Teachers Pay/Pension grants High Needs	603	47	650	650
Relational Practice	169	10	179	179
Wymering Pre Opening Grant	260	(260)	0	0
Special Schools Additional Grant 2023/2024	672	14	685	685
High Needs supplementary funding	349	(155)	194	194
<b>Other High Needs block sub total</b>	<b>27,640</b>	<b>2,768</b>	<b>30,408</b>	<b>29,222</b>
<b>Total High Needs block</b>	<b>36,864</b>	<b>3,174</b>	<b>40,038</b>	<b>29,612</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>200,185</b>	<b>24,056</b>	<b>224,241</b>	<b>100,236</b>
<b>Income</b>				
Schools Block <sup>2</sup>	(146,852)	(10,852)	(157,705)	(44,127)
Central Schools Services Block	(1,055)	(47)	(1,102)	(1,102)
Early Years Block	(14,865)	(9,903)	(24,769)	(24,769)
High Needs Block	(35,680)	(1,712)	(37,393)	(26,966)
DSG Income <sup>3,4</sup>	<b>(198,453)</b>	<b>(22,515)</b>	<b>(220,968)</b>	<b>(96,964)</b>
One-off use of Carry Forward	<b>(1,732)</b>	<b>(1,540)</b>	<b>(3,273)</b>	<b>(3,273)</b>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(200,185)</b>	<b>(24,055)</b>	<b>(224,241)</b>	<b>(100,236)</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes early years pupil premium

<sup>2</sup>Excludes National Non Domestic Rates recoument

<sup>2</sup> 2024-25 per ESFA allocations December 2023

<sup>3</sup> Includes reimbursement of Growth funding for Academy schools

**Appendix 2: Element 3 Top-up values 2024-25**

<b>Table A - Solent Academies Trust - Element 3 Top-up values 2024-25</b>								
	<b>Cliffdale</b>		<b>Cliffdale Nursery</b>		<b>Mary Rose</b>		<b>Redwood</b>	
	<b>Element 3 Top up rates 2023-24</b>	<b>Element 3 Top up rates 2024-25</b>	<b>Element 3 Top up rates 2023-24</b>	<b>Element 3 Top up rates 2024-25</b>	<b>Element 3 Top up rates 2023-24</b>	<b>Element 3 Top up rates 2024-25</b>	<b>Element 3 Top up rates 2023-24</b>	<b>Element 3 Top up rates 2024-25</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Band A	12,530				23,270	23,700		
Band B					13,680	13,930		
Band C		All Pupils are now on the new bands as set out below	All Pupils are now on the new bands as set out below	All Pupils are now on the new bands as set out below	11,790	12,010	All Pupils are now on the new bands as set out below	All Pupils are now on the new bands as set out below
Band D								
Band E								
Band F								
Band G								
Band H								
Core	6,780	6,900	10,350	10,540	10,470	10,660	5,000	5,090
Enhanced	11,780	12,000	13,560	13,810	13,620	13,870	11,550	11,760
Exceptional	22,620	23,040	23,340	23,770	23,200	23,630	23,870	24,310
Highly Exceptional <sup>1</sup> - 3+	-	-	-	-	35,580	36,230	-	-
Highly Exceptional <sup>2</sup> - 1/2	-	-	-	-	53,100	54,080	-	-

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<sup>1</sup> Element 3 Top-up paid for any subsequent pupils (3+) attending the highly exceptional class (where agreed by the local authority)

<sup>2</sup> Element 3 Top-up paid for the first two pupils attending the highly exceptional class (where agreed by the local authority)



**Appendix 2 Continued**

<b>Table B: Delta Academy Trust</b>				
	<b>The Harbour School</b>		<b>The Wymering School</b>	
	<b>Element 3 Top up rates 2023-24 £</b>	<b>Element 3 Top-up rates 2024-25 £</b>	<b>Element 3 Top up rates 2023-24</b>	<b>Element 3 Top-up rates 2024-25</b>
Band A	25,340			
Band B				
Band C				
Band D				
Band E				
Band F				
Band G				
Band H				
Stamshaw				
Core	10,390	10,580	14,850	15,120
Enhanced	13,610	13,860	18,040	18,370
Exceptional	25,590	26,060	25,460	25,930
Highly Exceptional	33,940	34,560	31,260	31,840

<b>Table C: Alternative Provision</b>		
	<b>Element 3 Top-up rates 2023-24 £</b>	<b>Element 3 Top-up rates 2024-25 £</b>
Flying Bull	9,010	9,180
The Harbour	9,020	9,190

<b>Table D: Inclusion Centres</b>		
<b>Funding Band</b>	<b>Element 3 Top-up rates 2023-24 £</b>	<b>Element 3 Top-up rates 2024-25 £</b>
Ordinarily Available Provision	0	0
Core	2,440	2,480
Enhanced	5,010	5,100
Exceptional	6,970	7,100
Highly Exceptional	9,140	9,310

**Appendix 2 Continued**

<b>Table E: Mainstream Schools EHCP pupils</b>		
<b>Band</b>	<b>Element 3 Top-up rates 2023-24</b>	<b>Element 3 Top-up rates 2024-25</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Ordinarily Available Provision EHCP	0	0
Core	650	660
Enhanced	2,440	2,480
Exceptional	5,010	5,100
Exceptional plus	6,970	7,100
Highly Exceptional	9,140	9,310

# Agenda Item 4



**Title of meeting:** Cabinet Member Meeting Children, Families and Education

**Date of meeting:** 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024

**Subject:** Carers' Fees and Allowances Policy for Portsmouth 2024-25

**Report by:** Mark Jowett, Head of Service, Children We Care For

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Suzy Horton, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education

**Wards affected:** All

**Key decision:** Yes/No

**Full Council decision:** Yes/No

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## 1. Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to:

1.2 Inform the Cabinet Member of the Carers' Fees and Allowances Policy for Portsmouth 2024-25 as seen in Appendix A, and to seek approval for the proposed financial increases to the Foster Carers Fees and Allowances.

## 2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet Member:

2.2 Approve the proposal to change the payment structure and increase the Skills Fees for Foster Carers and related Allowances. It is proposed that that this updated policy takes effect from 7<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

2.3 Agree that delegated authority is with the Deputy Director, Children & Families (in conjunction with the Section 151 Officer) to approve an annual uplift to the standard fostering allowance in line with the national minimum guidance. This will include the following which are linked to the standard fostering allowance:

- Birthday & Religious Festival Allowance;
- Foster Carers Leave;
- Family Link; and
- Activities Allowance

### 3. Background

#### National Context

- 3.1 Nationally foster carer shortages are deepening in England with one in eight fostering households having quit, and more leaving than joining. Ofsted's most recent fostering statistics showed that in 2021-22, 5,435 mainstream fostering households deregistered compared to 4,035 previously, that were approved to care and still active as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022. Those deregistering represented 13% of all those who had been approved during 2021-22.
- 3.2 This was combined with 2021-22 seeing the lowest number of applications to foster in several years, at 8,280. The number of newly approved mainstream households still active as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 was 18% lower than in 2018, while there were 4% fewer such households, and 5% fewer available places for children, than four years prior. Ofsted's National Director for Social Care Yvette Stanley warned the sector would reach "breaking point"<sup>1</sup> if more carers were not recruited.
- 3.3 In its final report<sup>2</sup>, published in May 2022, the Independent Review of Children's Social Care urged the government to recruit 9,000 more foster carers over the next three years, to tackle "an immediate and pressing shortage". Since then, charities have warned that retention problems are getting worse due to the cost-of-living crisis. Fostering Network research<sup>3</sup> published in May 2023 raised similar concerns about the impact of rising prices on carers' ability to continue in their role.

#### Local context

- 3.4 Portsmouth has a strong and thriving fostering community and has been able to recruit and retain foster carers consistently, and we want to continue to support this. As at 31/03/23, Portsmouth had 225 fostering households, with 283 (73%) children in our care living with our own fostering family households.
- 3.5 In May 2023, Ofsted completed an inspection of Portsmouth's Children's Services which was judged as 'good'. The inspection included the fostering service which was highlighted as a strength. In summary, the report highlighted that children coming into care benefited from effective foster carers and stable homes.
- 3.6 Since 2021, the Mockingbird model of care has boosted foster care retention and grown to five constellations (ten fostering households per constellation). The approach has received excellent feedback from carers, children and social workers, who appreciate the strong relationships that have formed where mutual support is valued.

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<sup>1</sup> Ofsted press release: Lack of foster carers mean children missing out on support (November 2021)

<sup>2</sup> Josh MacAlister, Independent Review of Children's Social Care (May 2022)

<sup>3</sup> Centre for Evidence and Implementation, Foster carer retention and recruitment in England. A research report for The Fostering Network (May 2023)



3.7 Whilst the foster carers of Portsmouth provide high quality care and support, there is worry from some Portsmouth foster carers who do not feel that they receive sufficient financial recompense for the increasingly complex work that they do.

#### 4. Reasons for recommendations

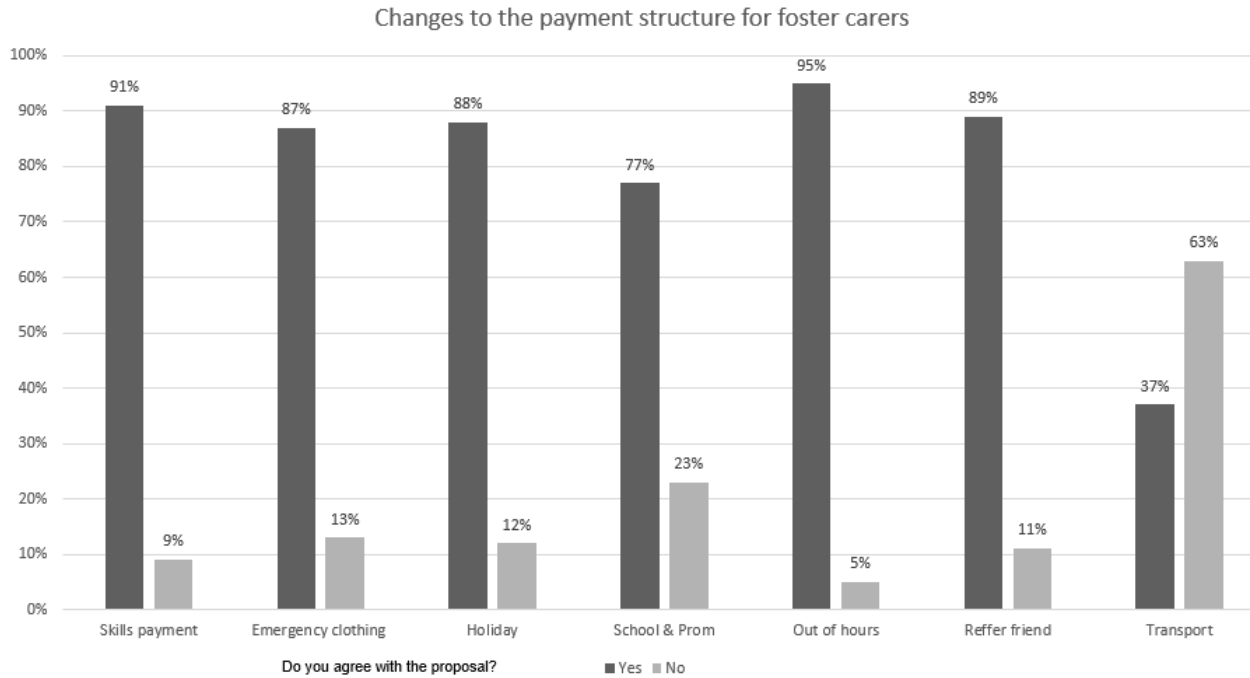
4.1 Having reviewed Portsmouth's foster carers allowances and skills and considered other local authorities' payments, several financial increases are proposed costing a total of £535,000 per annum.

Fee or Allowance	Estimated Annual Cost Increase £
Skills Fees	325,000
Emergency Clothing	4,000
School Uniform/Prom Outfit	5,000
Holiday Allowance	80,000
Out of Hours Carers	48,000
Day time Only Foster Care	1,000
Supported Lodgings	79,000
Staying Put	48,000
Refer a friend	5,000
Respite	(36,000)
Travel	(24,000)
<b>Total</b>	<b>535,000</b>

#### Consultation

4.2 To inform the key changes made to the policy, the Foster Carers Liaison Group were consulted with, and a survey was sent out to all foster carers<sup>4</sup>. Feedback in relation to the changes was generally very positive, though proposed changes to expenses relating to an increase in the travel threshold (see 4.17) received varied views. Some foster carers (37%) were of the view that this would not be an issue as they did not often need to transport children in their care and/or did not see the need to make additional travel claims. 63% of foster carers did not agree with the proposal, noting that the cost of fuel was high (and at times over the year had been even higher), and that some foster carers were required to transport children long distances, whilst some did not need to travel at all. For those foster carers experiencing high mileage this was felt to be unfair.

<sup>4</sup> 82 responses (35% of foster carers as at 12/12/23)



**Key changes to the policy (see policy for detail, appendix A)**

4.3 Overall, the majority of proposed key changes have been positively received and will benefit carers. To enable the significant investment in key areas and make the proposal affordable some savings have been made, with changes to respite care which will provide fairness and equity, and to travel which will bring Portsmouth in line with other local authorities.

**Exceptional Payments**

4.4 It is acknowledged that there may be occasions where exceptional payments are made under circumstances that are not fully covered by the policy. Requests for exceptional payments will be considered and agreed at a new monthly Supporting Children & Carers' Panel, chaired by the Head of Service for Children We Care For. This will ensure a more consistent approach to considering such requests and provide an audit trail which will then help inform future reviews of the policy.

**Skills Fees**

4.5 The skills fee is paid weekly to the foster carer (in addition to the weekly fostering allowance) once they have been approved at the fostering panel. As the foster carer progresses in skills and training, they have the opportunity of moving up a skill level. The current skills fee structure is overly complex and has a pay differential, dependent on the age of the child that is being cared for. The recommended skills fee simplifies the current payment structure and brings the offer and approach more in line with neighbouring local authorities.

#### Emergency Clothing

- 4.6 Occasionally, a child will come into foster care without adequate clothing. There was previously an initial clothing allowance with immediate payments of up to £50.00 if required. The previous amount is insufficient in some circumstances and so the maximum amount that can be claimed has been increased, with the allowance greater for older children (11-17 years old).

#### Holiday Allowance

- 4.7 The previous allowance was a discretionary payment per child per financial year and required the foster carer to request it. The recommendation is that the allowance is no longer discretionary, and it will now be available to all children we care for.

#### Family/Friends Relief Carers

Currently, if a foster carer wishes to ask a friend or family member to care for a foster child whilst they are away for a few days, the friend/family member needs to be assessed as a temporary foster carer. There are no statutory requirements for this, and it is proposed that arrangements are informal and that delegated authority<sup>5</sup> can be used (alongside risk assessment/DBS check and home safety check).

#### School Related Clothing

- 4.9 The school related clothing allowance (when a child joins a new school, changes school), has increased. In addition, there is a new provision for costs towards a year 11 prom outfit. Payment for school related clothing will only be paid for clothes bought from the point that the policy is live and will not be back dated.

#### Parent and Child

- 4.10 The payment structure for parent and child foster placements has been simplified and now differentiates between an assessed and non-assessed placement<sup>6</sup>.

#### Out of Hours Carers

- 4.11 It has been challenging to attract foster carers to be on-call and to provide emergency placements out of hours. The proposal is that the on-call fee is increased, and that on-call foster carers are also given a new emergency one off payment if a child is placed with them out of hours.

#### Day Time only Foster Care

- 4.12 This is where a foster carer is asked by the fostering service to care for a child or children during the day with no overnight stay. The previous structure was age band related which meant that foster carers received more for older children. This was not fair and equitable and has been changed to be based on skills level only.

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<sup>5</sup> The process that enables foster carers to make common sense everyday decisions about the children they care for.

<sup>6</sup> Assessed placement - Where foster carers have been trained to assess and supervise parents who have a new baby. Non-assessed placement - where there is no assessment element.



#### Supported Lodgings

- 4.13 The recommended payment structure simplifies the calculations and provides the supported lodgings carer with an increased payment in line with other local authorities.

#### Staying Put

- 4.14 The proposed staying put structure now aligns with the supported lodgings payments.

#### Refer a Friend

- 4.15 We currently offer £500 if a foster carer introduces someone who goes on to be approved as a Portsmouth foster carer. It is proposed that this payment also includes the newly approved foster carer once the first child has been placed.

#### Overnight Fostering Respite Care

- 4.16 Respite care is agreed when the needs of the child are assessed as being at such a level that the primary foster carers need a break to boost placement stability. The payment arrangements remain the same, however for equity, the respite carer will no longer receive the clothing, savings, and pocket money element of the fostering allowance as this remains with the main foster carer.

#### Travel

- 4.17 The fostering allowance covers an element towards the cost of travel expenses which arise from the need to make trips relating to the child (eg school, nursery transport, health, medical appointments, family time, and meetings). Currently the foster carer absorbs the costs of the first 25 miles driven each week, and mileage over this can be claimed for. Other local authorities (including neighbouring authorities) expect all travel expenses to be covered by the fostering allowance or they have a higher threshold. The proposal is to raise the threshold to 63 miles.

### **5. Integrated impact assessment**

- 5.1 See Appendix B.

### **6. Legal implications**

- 6.1 There has been a significant increase in difficulties in finding placements over the past 2 years. This puts an added strain on the care proceedings taken in respect of vulnerable children who the Local Authority seeks to remove from their parents due to significant risk of harm. This has seen cases where children (who would have been removed from their parents by the Court) have had to remain in placement with parents during proceedings because of lack of placements. This could result in future challenges from those children when they reach adulthood due to a failure to protect them from harm at the earliest opportunity.





6.2 The new policy regarding fees is not to be retrospective and so does not include those existing Special Guardianship Carers. Foster carers who take on an SGO are entitled to their foster carer payments for up to 2 years following the making of an Order - SGO Regulations 2005 Chapter 2 Regulation 7. This policy relates only to a skills element of the foster carer allowance. SGO carers are not subject to the obligations of a foster carer, as such they would not be entitled to an enhancement of this payment post the making of an SGO.

**7. Director of Finance's comments**

7.1 The table in paragraph 4.2 details the annual financial implications of the specific changes to the different allowances, based on the carers and children and young people in the financial year 2023/24. The additional budget the policy requires will be met from a mixture of any inflation given in 2024/25 and existing 2023/24 budgets.

7.2 The implementation date of 7 April 2024 for the weekly allowances will be dependent on the project plan which will include changes to processes, the Fostering Handbook and system reconfiguration. If the changes are made after 7 April, the increases to the weekly allowances will be backdated accordingly.

7.3 The annual increases to the standard weekly age related fostering allowances and associated allowances, have been quoted in the 2024/25 policy, which is line with the national increases. The financial implications of these increases are always dealt with separately once the budget is agreed by the City Council, and this will be the same process for the financial year 2024/25.

Signed by: Sarah Daly, Director of Children, Families & Education

**Appendices:**

Appendix A - Carers' Fees and Allowances Policy 2024/25

Appendix B - Integrated Impact Assessment

**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location



The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by ..... on .....

.....  
Signed by: **Councillor Suzy Horton, Cabinet Member Children, Families and Education**

# Carers' Fees and Allowances Policy 2024/25



## FosterPortsmouth



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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out the foster carers' (and related carers) allowances and skills fees and other payments that may be provided with guidance relating to how they are applied. The Allowances and Fees are summarised in Appendix A.
- 1.2 The document does not cover the situation where any carer subsequently obtains an Adoption, Child Arrangement or Special Guardianship Order. If such Orders are made, the Fostering Allowances will cease to apply, and the respective allowance policy should be referred to.

## 2. Allowances

### 2.1 Fostering Allowance

- 2.1.1 All Portsmouth City Council foster carers receive the weekly National Minimum Fostering Allowance for the South East which is reviewed annually. It should be noted that Portsmouth has combined the two lower bandings age banding into one (0-2; 2-4), paying the higher rate. This payment covers all costs in relation to looking after individual children and young people.

2024/25	Age 0 to 4	Age 5 to 10	Age 11 to 15	Age 16 to 17
Total	£189.00	£208.00	£238.00	£278.00
Savings	£6.26	£6.26	£9.87	£9.87
Pocket money	£3.97	£10.11	£16.28	£21.81
Clothing	£30.79	£37.59	£56.40	£59.45
Travel	£28.35	£28.35	£28.35	£28.35

- 2.1.2 The fostering allowance is expected to cover the day-to-day costs of caring for a child.
- 2.1.3 Guidance is given in the table above for the proportion of clothing and pocket money. The amounts in the table for savings must be set aside for the child as a minimum. The travel element is transport costs related to supporting the child being cared for.
- 2.1.4 As part of moving towards independence, the foster carer can hand over the clothing and pocket money allowances directly to young people aged 16 and 17 with the agreement of the child, social worker, and foster carer.
- 2.1.5 A more detailed breakdown by expenditure of the fostering allowance has not been produced. This is based on the principle advocated by Fostering Network that an exact breakdown of allowances is overly prescriptive, and the expenditure should be made on the needs of the specific child and the foster carer using their professional judgment. Foster carers are not

expected to spend the total fostering allowance each week and should use some discretion to allocate proportions of the allowance depending on the needs of the child over the course of the year, for example holidays.

2.1.6 Whilst not an exhaustive list, the fostering allowance contributes towards costs such as:

2.1.7 The Fostering Home:

- New/replacement equipment and all general household wear and tear
- Household costs including utilities i.e., gas, electric, water, telephone, internet, home maintenance
- Home Insurance
- Car insurance (fully comprehensive)

2.1.8 Food:

- All food requirements
- Special dietary needs
- School meals/packed lunches

2.1.9 Toiletries and Personal Needs:

- All basic toiletries
- All basic skin and hair products
- Hairdressing
- Nappies
- Glasses and contact lenses

2.1.10 Clothing:

- All clothing needs, appropriate to season
- School uniform for primary and secondary school children
- Party/Celebration clothes, including prom costs
- Cultural Dress

2.1.11 Religious/cultural Needs:

- Prayer books/equipment
- Clothing for religious events
- Dietary needs
- Travel to place of worship

2.1.12 Telephone:

- Calls to child's family, friends
- Calls to Children's Services and other professionals
- Mobile contracts/top ups/Phone cards
- Internet

2.1.13 Travel:

- All transport costs related to supporting the child being cared for

2.1.14 Leisure and Out of School Activities:

- Recreational outings (including travel and entrance fees)
- Cinema and theatre tickets
- Clubs, hobbies, and leisure activities
- Musical equipment
- Play schemes, play group, holiday activity costs
- Toys, games and reading materials
- School day trips and activities
- Books, pens, pencils, crayons, paint, paper, etc
- Sports clothing and equipment \*
- Basic play/toddler group and nursery fees outside of Government funded hours
- Family holidays (excluding the annual contribution for summer holiday activity which is included in the fostering allowance)

\*Some sports clubs require specific named/branded kit and equipment which may incur an additional cost. A request for an exceptional payment may be made to the Supporting Children and Carers panel.

2.1.15 Other:

- Appropriate luggage i.e., suitcase
- Photos (including school prints)
- Presents for child's family and friends
- Babysitters if foster carers need to attend their own personal or recreational activities
- Pets
- Pocket money
- Savings

## **2.2 Exceptional Payments**

2.2.1 The policy refers to all carer costs and expenses covered in the fostering allowances and skills fees. However, it is acknowledged that there may be some anomalies for which an exceptional payment will be considered and may be made.

2.2.2 Requests for any exceptional payments must be made in advance of the payment and will be considered and agreed at the Supporting Children and Carers' Panel held monthly and chaired by the Head of Service for Children We Care For.

## **2.3 Emergency Clothing**

2.3.1 When a child initially becomes cared for or changes carer, it is the responsibility of the child's social worker to ensure that the child has adequate clothing brought from their home when placed. If the child does not have sufficient clothing, then an emergency clothing allowance can be considered, and the sum will be agreed with the social worker on an individual basis.



Age band	Emergency clothing (up to)
0–10 Years	£100.00
11-17 Years	£200.00

2.3.2 Any purchases using this allowance should be noted by the foster carer and receipts kept. The foster carer is responsible for maintaining and replacing the child's clothing (from their ongoing weekly fostering allowance) on an ongoing basis.

## 2.4 Birthday & Religious Festival

2.4.1 An amount equivalent to one week's age-related fostering allowance is paid to foster carers two weeks prior to a child's birthday, and one month prior to the relevant festival which for the majority of children we care for will be at Christmas. The allowances should be used to cover all associated expenses such as travel, a birthday party, special meal, trip out and to buy a gift for the child. Cash should not be given as a gift unless as a contribution towards an identified expenditure. As many families will do, it is appropriate to use the allowance to contribute towards the cost of more expensive items e.g., mobile phone, musical instrument, or an activity such as horse riding or learning to drive.

2.4.2 Whilst the festival payment will usually be made prior to Christmas, it is acknowledged that children may wish to celebrate other festivals (for example Eid) throughout the calendar year, or a combination of different festivals. If that is the case, the carer will need to discuss and agree this with the child, and a request made for the payment to be made at a different time of year (at least a month in advance). The payment is expected to follow the child, therefore if the child moves fostering home after the payment has been made for a birthday or a religious festival, the previous foster carer must pass on the payment or presents in full to the next foster carer.

Age band	Birthday & Festival
0–4 Years	£189.00
5-10 Years	£208.00
11-15 Years	£238.00
16-18 Years	£278.00

2.4.3 Any purchases using this allowance should be noted by the foster carer and receipts kept.

## 2.5 Activities & Holiday

### 2.5.1 Activity Allowance

2.5.1.1 Two weeks fostering allowance is payable to foster carers to meet the additional costs of activities (also whilst on holiday) for children during school holiday periods.

<b>Age band</b>	<b>Activity Allowance</b>
0-4	£378.00
5-10	£416.00
11-15	£476.00
16-17	£556.00

Payment split into two parts (Easter Holiday 25%, Summer Holiday 75%)

2.5.1.2 This payment is per child and therefore if the child moves foster home, any unused allowance will follow the child. As the allowance covers all periods of school holiday, if a child should move between foster carers for all or some of the holiday, the corresponding allowance should be passed on by the foster carer.

2.5.1.3 Any purchases using this allowance should be noted by the foster carer and receipts kept.

## 2.5.2 Holiday Allowance

2.5.2.1 A holiday allowance up to £500 per financial year per child is payable for a contribution to holidays of a minimum of seven nights in the UK or abroad, taken during school holidays only.

2.5.2.2 Foster carers must not arrange to take children out of school during term unless an exception (for example family events such as a wedding) has been agreed by the Deputy Director. If agreed by the Deputy Director, the Holiday Allowance will be paid.

## 2.6 **Savings & Pocket Money**

2.6.1 Foster carers should promote and encourage good money management for the children they are caring for. As part of the fostering allowance, there is an element for the child's pocket money and savings.

### 2.6.2 Savings

2.6.2.1 Foster carers must set aside long-term savings per child, regardless of the child's age. If the child does not have a savings account, the foster carer will need to open one and deposit savings into the account. This should be an account separate to the foster carers own personal account. The savings amount will need to move with the child if/when they move on. Respite carers are not required to set aside a proportion of the fostering allowance for long-term savings.

### 2.6.3 Pocket Money

2.6.3.1 All children will receive weekly pocket money and will be taken out of the fostering allowance.

## 2.7 **School Related Clothing**

2.7.1 Payment will be made to support a school uniform if the child starts a new school within six months of living with the foster carers, changes schools unexpectedly, or if the child moves to an alternative foster carer and does not have adequate school uniform. It should be noted that if a child has been living with the foster carer for over 6 months the service would expect the

cost of any new uniforms to be met from their fostering weekly allowance.

- 2.7.2 The fostering allowance will cover ongoing clothing costs (including school uniform). When a child joins a new school, changes school, or moves fostering home in the circumstances outlined above the social worker should discuss with the foster carer what uniform items, including sports clothing and school equipment, is necessary, particularly if the child is unlikely to remain in the school permanently. Some items of uniform can be transferred from one school to another.
- 2.7.3 If the child is in year 11, a payment can be claimed to contribute towards the child's prom outfit.
- 2.7.4 Where payment is required to support a new school uniform/prom outfit, the expenditure will be a maximum of the following:

<b>Primary School</b>	Up to £75.00
<b>Secondary School</b>	Up to £100.00
<b>Prom Outfit</b>	Up to £100.00

- 2.7.5 Any purchases using this allowance should be noted by the foster carer and receipts kept.

### 3. Skills Fees

- 3.1 Skills fees are linked to the skills and training that foster carers have completed. Fees are given to carers once approved at panel. Kinship carers who are yet to be approved at panel will only receive the fostering allowance. The skills fee is payable weekly to the carer in relation to each child in their care.

<b>Age Range</b>	<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 3</b>
<b>0 - 4</b>	£40.00	£197.00	£353.00
<b>5 - 10</b>	£40.00	£197.00	£353.00
<b>11 - 15</b>	£40.00	£197.00	£353.00
<b>16 - 17</b>	£40.00	£197.00	£353.00

- 3.2 Skills Level 1: Carers who have childcare experience through their own parenting or caring for family and friends' children.

- 3.3 Skills Level 2: Foster carers who evidence skills, knowledge, and experience to care for children with some high-level support needs can be assessed for skills level 2.
- 3.4 Skills Level 3: Those carers who evidence skills, knowledge, and experience, including professional qualifications working with children to meet their complex needs and a high level of support can be assessed at skills level 3.
- 3.5 For approved foster carers there is a progression pathway linked to carer training. Progression to skills levels should be discussed and a plan agreed in carers supervision and Household Review. The progression report completed by the foster carer and their supervising social worker should evidence training and learning and include evidence of placement stability and improved outcomes for the children they care for. Skills levels progression will be presented to the Supporting Children and Carers panel for agreement.
- 3.6 The skills levels are linked to knowledge, experience, and training, and should be reviewed annually. Should carers not continue to meet the requirements or competencies of the level on which they are placed, they may move to another level that best meets their circumstances following review/decision by the Fostering Service Leader and approved by the Head of Service for Children We Care For.

## 4. Specialist and Other Fees

- 4.1 There are several specialisms that are likely to require additional caring intensity and/or additional funding to support the care of children:

### 4.2 Parent and Child

- 4.2.1 When both the parent and child are in care, the foster carer will provide for them financially via the fostering allowance as with any other child in their care. It may be appropriate for the foster carer to pass part of the fostering allowance to the looked after parent for them develop budgeting and independence skills. This would be agreed in the Placement Planning Meeting at the beginning of the placement or subsequently at Review meetings.
- 4.2.2 The foster carer must have suitable equipment for the baby, including, cot, sterilising equipment, baby rocking chair, changing mat, pram, appropriate toys, and car seat. These items may be loaned from the Fostering Service. There is an expectation the foster carer supports the parent(s) to cook and prepare meals. Details of daily arrangements will be covered in the Placement Planning Meeting.
- 4.2.3 Assessment Placement
- 4.2.3.1 This is for foster carers who have been trained to assess and supervise parents who have a new baby. Foster carers will be asked to support a mother/father or both parents and their baby. The placement is usually expected to last 12 weeks (but may go on longer depending on circumstances).

4.2.3.2 During the assessment period, the foster carer will be paid the following:

<b>Assessment fee (12 weeks)</b>	<b>Weekly fee</b>
One parent fee	£600.00
Additional parent fee	£300.00

4.2.3.3 In addition, during the assessment period the foster carer will be paid the relevant fostering allowance for each child they care for. They will also be paid skills level 1 (whatever their skills level), on the basis that the parent will be providing the majority of the day-to-day care for the child.

4.2.3.4 Where the parent(s) are not being cared for, the maintenance element of the lodgings allowance (£200.00) will be paid per parent. The parent(s) are expected to provide for themselves including food, clothing and other expenses.

#### 4.2.4 Non-Assessment Placement

4.2.4.1 There will be times when the parent and child placement does not include an assessment element and at such times, the assessment fee will not be paid:

1. The placement does not require assessment or intensive supervision by the foster carer.
2. The assessment period ends.

4.2.4.2 For non-assessment placements, the foster carer will be paid the relevant fostering allowance for each child being cared for and their usual skills level fee.

4.2.4.3 Where the parent(s) are not being cared for, the maintenance element of the lodgings allowance (£200.00) will be paid per parent. The parent(s) are expected to provide for themselves including food, clothing and other expenses.

### 4.3 **Mockingbird Model of Care**

4.3.1 Mockingbird uses an extended family model in the form of 'constellations' which consist of a 'hub' home and several 'satellite' homes nearby. The specially recruited and trained hub home foster carers are level 3 foster carers and receive a Mockingbird fee in recognition of the additional tasks they provide for their constellation which includes sleep overs for children they care for, peer support, regular shared learning, and social activities for which they will receive £50 per week activities allowance. The hub home foster carer must keep a record of spend for audit purposes, to be evidenced on request by the Mockingbird Team Leader.

4.3.2 Where home hub carers share the role, the home hub carers fees will be split between them, proportional to the level of service they are providing within the home hub carer agreement.

Mockingbird hub home carer	£600.00
Activity fee	£50.00

4.3.3 Hub home carers will receive the usual fostering allowance and skills level fee for children they care for as part of their usual foster carer role. Where they provide sleepovers to a child within

the constellation, they will receive a proportion of the fostering allowance and skill level 1 fee (there is no additional payment for providing day care). No associated allowances (including travel) will be paid to the hub home carer as it is expected that these will be received by the child's main foster carer.

## 4.4 Out of Hours Carers

- 4.4.1 Portsmouth City Council alongside Hampshire County Council have foster carers on call to provide foster carers for children needing care outside of office hours. Foster carers who volunteer to be on call for out of hours receive a daily on call fee (though this will not be paid if they decline a placement). Foster carers need to be willing and able to offer a home to a child who may need care any time day or night and care for them at least until the office reopens. If a child is placed out of hours, the foster carer will also receive a one-off emergency payment, in addition to the respective allowances and fees paid for the child.

<b>On-call Fee</b>	£35.00 per night
<b>Emergency one off payment outside of working hours i.e., after 6:00pm and before 8:00am Monday to Friday, weekends/bank Holidays</b> (the one-off fee will not be paid again for the same child in a consecutive night)	Aged 10 and under - £100.00 Aged 11 plus - £200.00

## 4.5 Family Link Care

- 4.5.1 Family Link carers provide pre-agreed care for children with disabilities and are paid an inclusive fee for each period of care they provide.

<b>Period of Care</b>	<b>Payment Rate</b>
Up to 4 hours	£28.00
5 – 8 hours	£58.73
9 – 12 hours	£84.04
13 – 24 hours (overnight care)	£136.09

## 4.6 Day Time only Foster Care

- 4.6.1 Where a foster carer is asked by the fostering service to care for a child or children during the day with no overnight stay. This could include assisting with day care support for other carers:

Period of Care	Skill Level 1	Skill Level 2	Skill Level 3
0 – 4 hours	£20.00	£30.00	£40.00
4 hours and above	£40.00	£60.00	£80.00

## 4.7 Overnight Fostering Respite Care

- 4.7.1 Respite care is agreed when the needs of the child are assessed as being at such a level that the primary foster carers need a break to boost placement stability. Respite should be offered to ensure stability and should be reviewed as part of the child's care plan. The needs of the child are central to any decisions that are made.
- 4.7.2 Where a foster carer cares for a child to provide respite for the child's family, the respite foster carer receives the fostering allowance (less the clothing, savings and pocket money element) and skills fee for each overnight stay on a pro rata basis (overnight is up to 24 hours 8pm – 8pm. The main foster carer continues to be paid their weekly skills fee and allowance.
- 4.7.3 Where a stay exceeds a 24-hour period, but does not include a further overnight stay, payment for the provision of daytime respite care will apply.

## 4.8 Family/Friends Relief Carers

- 4.8.1 As part of the fostering assessment, foster carers identify family and friends as their support network to provide continuity of care and minimal disruption to a child and creating a more 'normalised' care arrangement for the child. Foster carers are encouraged to identify family or friends to provide care for the children when foster carers need to spend some time away from the child they care for.
- 4.8.2 These arrangements are informal and delegated authority can be used for a maximum time of one week. The family/friend identified is required to have a risk assessment that includes a DBS check, local authority check, home safety check and family/friend summary information completed by the foster carers supervising social worker and agreed by the Fostering Service Leader.
- 4.8.3 The relief carer is not subject to the statutory requirements of a foster carer but will be supported by the Fostering Service for the period they are caring for the child. The foster carer remains the child's primary carer and is expected to give the family/friend the child's fostering allowance (minus the child's savings, pocket money and clothing element) to cover the period they care for the child. The child's foster carer does not receive a payment during the period of time that they are on leave, as this is paid within their weekly allowance, spread across the year (See 7.2).

## 5. Supporting Young People over 18

### 5.1 Supported Lodgings

- 5.1.1 Supported lodgings carers in Portsmouth is for young people aged 18 - 21 (up to 25 years if in full time education).
- 5.1.2 Supported lodgings carers provide a young person with a room of their own in a private home, where they are a member of the household. The carer provides a safe and supportive environment, working alongside professional services to help and support the young person in gaining skills for independent adult life. This is not a fostering role or assessed under the Fostering Regulations, and therefore they do not receive a fostering allowance or skills fee.
- 5.1.3 Supported lodgings hosts receive the following weekly fees, typically made up from Universal Credit, Housing Allowance, rent contribution from the young person, and a top up from Social Care:
- **Lodgings allowance of £200** to cover household expenses, breakfast and lunch
  - **Support allowance of £60** (minimum 10 hours per week)
  - An *optional evening meal allowance of £20 per week (minimum)*, paid directly from the young person if this option is agreed by all
- 5.1.4 The young person is expected to pay the carer the housing allowance via Universal Credit to cover the rental contribution. Where the young person is in employment, they are expected to pay housing allowance equivalent. Where the young person is in employment and still receiving financial support from Universal Credit, they will be expected to pay the housing allowance equivalent. If the young person is not receiving any financial support from Universal Credit, the rental contribution will be reduced by approximately a third.
- 5.1.5 For those young people moving on from a Supported Lodgings arrangement, a short term limited Away from Home Exceptional Payment may be made to stabilise or maintain the new living arrangement for the young person. This additional payment would be time limited and must be agreed at the Supporting Children and Carers Panel.
- 5.1.6 Children aged 16 and 17 cannot be placed in unregulated rented accommodation or lodgings without the authorisation of the Deputy Director. In these circumstances, the young person's contributions will be different.

### 5.2 Staying Put

- 5.2.1 Staying put is to enable young people aged 18 - 21 (up to 25 years if in full time education) to remain with their former foster carer. Many children who are being cared for are not ready to live independently when they reach 18 years old and need the continuing support of their foster family. As part of planning for post 18, discussions regarding staying put with foster carers should be discussed at Children we care for Reviews when the child reaches 16 years old. Prior to this the supervising social worker should begin conversations with carers in their supervisions.
- 5.2.2 Staying put carers receive the following weekly fees (the same as Supported Lodgings), typically made up from Universal Credit, Housing Allowance, rent contribution from the young person, and



a top up from Social Care:

- **Lodgings allowance of £200** to cover household expenses, breakfast and lunch
- **Support allowance of £60**
- *An optional evening meal allowance of £20 (minimum)*, paid directly from the young person if this option is agreed by all

5.2.3 Housing allowance via Universal Credit will be claimed by the young person and paid to the carer by the young person. Where the young person is in employment, they are expected to either top up the housing allowance element they receive via Universal Credit or pay a rental contribution.

5.2.4 It is anticipated that when young people move into a Staying Put arrangement, they will require less support from their former foster carers. It is expected that they should be able to be left in the home unsupervised for periods of time, able to make meals for themselves, and travel to where they need to be with little support. However, it is recognised that some young people may need as much support and supervision at 18 that might be expected in relation to a younger child. Therefore, an enhanced support allowance can be paid in such circumstances (instead of the regular support allowance). The enhanced support allowance must be requested at the Supporting Children and Carers Panel and if paid, reviewed six monthly.

5.2.5 Living away from the former foster carer's home for temporary periods such as attending higher education courses does not preclude a Staying Put arrangement, though carers will not receive any payments during the time that they are away. This might include a residential further education institution; undertaking induction training for the armed services or other training or employment programmes that require a young person to live away from home.

5.2.6 Where the young person is receiving a service from Adult Social Care (ASC), any additional payments would need to be agreed with ASC and the Head of the Children We Care For including any sharing of the costs. In some circumstances it may be appropriate for a former foster carer to be assessed and supported as a Shared Lives Carer. This should be considered with the foster carer before discussions as part of the young person's Pathway Plan. This plan should be agreed prior to the child's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday when planning with ASC led by the Service Leader for transitions.

5.2.7 For those young people moving on from a Staying Put arrangement, a short term limited Away from Home Exceptional Payment may be made to stabilise or maintain the new living arrangement for the young person. This additional payment would be time limited and must be agreed at the Supporting Children and Carers Panel.

### **5.3 Independence Training Flat**

5.3.1 Young people aged 18, who are just about to move into independent accommodation, can be booked into the Portsmouth training flat for a four to six week period. During this time the foster carers will continue to receive their weekly fostering allowance in full plus skills fee as they will still be required to provide 24 hour support during this period.

## **6. Other Considerations for the Child**

### **6.1 Travel**

- 6.1.2 The fostering allowance covers an element towards the cost of travel expenses which arise from the need to make trips in relation to the child living with them which includes school, nursery, health, medical appointments, family time and meetings. This does not include family activities which may include the foster child, and so do not relate specifically to the foster child. Claims should be made monthly.

#### By Car

- 6.1.3 Mileage is paid to foster carers at 45p per mile. Foster carers are expected to absorb the first 63 miles driven each week, and mileage over this can be claimed for, though no claims for journeys under one mile will be accepted as carers will be expected to walk with children for short distances.
- 6.1.4 If there are two or more children being cared for and the foster carer is transporting to the same school (or nearby school) or contact, then it is expected that the foster carer takes this into consideration when making a claim. Where possible, the foster carer may want to explore whether there are car-sharing opportunities with other local families in the community (including foster carers) for school runs.

#### Other transport

- 6.1.5 Where felt appropriate, the child/young person may travel to school on public transport. The equivalent travel element of the weekly fostering allowance will be paid by the foster carer, and public transport costs over this can be claimed for.
- 6.1.6 The overriding principle is that children should not be spending significant periods of time in taxis, therefore the payment of taxi fares to school or contact will only be made in exceptional circumstances. There must be no other reasonable option, given the age and circumstances of the child (for example emergency or short-term placement, or temporary illness or disability of the foster carer) and this should be time limited. As transport costs to and from school and contact are an integral part of the fostering allowance, the equivalent travel element of the weekly fostering allowance will be absorbed towards taxi costs.
- 6.1.7 Any taxi costs not covered by the fostering allowance must be approved by the Supporting Children and Carers Panel in advance or as soon as possible in an emergency and no commitment should be entered into with a taxi firm beyond one week without approval of the Supporting Children and Carers Panel. These should be booked and paid for by Portsmouth City Council.

### **6.2 Special Interests/Hobbies**

- 6.2.1 All Portsmouth approved foster carers are entitled to the free Portsmouth City Council Leisure card, available to children they care for and the children of foster carers. Foster carers' can obtain an application form and authorising letter from their supervising social worker. Foster carers should use local Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) Programme for the children they care for when considering alternative holiday clubs and activities.

### **6.3 Glasses/ Corrective Lenses**

- 6.3.1 Expenditure for the full cost of frames for National Health Service lenses, or repairs to glasses will be reimbursed when required.
- 6.3.2 If any additional costs are incurred (associated with the provision of corrective lenses) identified following an eye examination as part of the child's health care plan, these must be agreed in writing with the Fostering Service Leader in advance of the expenditure being made.

### **6.4 Ethnic and Cultural Needs**

- 6.4.1 There may be specific expenses that arise because of a child or young person's cultural or ethnic background. The fostering allowance should be used to cover needs relating to hair care, skin care and other specific issues. For some children with specific needs relating their personal care for cultural and/or religious needs identified within their care plan. Payments for costs to meet those needs must be specified within the Placement Planning Meeting and the child's care plan and the difference between what is seen as standard and the actual cost, can be authorised by the Fostering Service Leader.

### **6.5 Education Costs**

- 6.5.1 Children we care for are supported and encouraged with their education and wider holistic development through Pupil Premium. In the first instance requests for financial support with one-to-one tuition, education trips, extra-curricular opportunities including music/drama/sports activities should be discussed at the child's Personal Education Plan Meetings, Looked After Children Review Meetings and requests made to the child's Virtual School education advocate. Please refer to the pupil premium guidance which is shared annually with all foster carers which details the robust and transparent processes and note that requests must be agreed before any activities can begin, and funding cannot be paid directly to foster carers, and will be passed directly to the provider. If funding is not agreed or the request is not suitable to take to panel, then a request can be considered at the Supporting Children and Carers Panel for an exceptional payment to be made.

### **6.6 Medical Issues**

- 6.6.1 Most medical examinations and treatments are free for young people. Portsmouth City Council will look at the individual needs of young people who require specific support that is either reflected in their care plan or advised at the children we care for medical. Any private health care arrangements for a specific purpose must be agreed by the Fostering Service Leader.

### **6.7 Passports**

- 6.7.1 Children we care for will have a passport as identified in their care plan. The application for the passport will be made by the child's social worker and/or parent on the legal status of the child and will complete the passport application form. The foster carer will be reimbursed for any costs associated with the passport application through expenses claim.

### **6.8 Bicycles**

- 6.8.1 When it is agreed that it is in the child's interest to own a bicycle, first consideration should be

given to funding the bicycle from either the birthday, festivity allowance or consideration in relation to the child's savings.

- 6.8.2 Bicycles should be tested as road worthy (by a recognised bicycle retailer / specialist) and each child should, where available attend a Cycling Proficiency Course and wear a cycle safety helmet. Before allowing a child to cycle on roads carers should assess the child's safety and competence as any responsible parent would. The bicycle must have an adequate lock and be post coded using the Police identification system. The bicycle must also be insured against theft by listing it on the carer's household insurance policy.

## **6.9 16/17 Year Old Young People**

- 6.9.1 Where the young person is in education and training and not in receipt of an income, it is expected that the foster carer gives the young person the clothing and pocket money (and where relevant travel) element of the fostering allowance.

### **6.9.2 Unemployed or in Full-Time Education**

- 6.9.2.1 The young person will be expected to pay for their own travel to and from education if they are receiving a bursary. If their travel costs are significant due to the distance from placement to education, then an additional payment may be made by the department even if the young person has a bursary. Where the young person is not eligible for a bursary and the college is not meeting the travel costs as part of the course then the department will pay for public transport to and from education.

### **6.9.3 In Employment or Training/Apprenticeship**

- 6.9.3.1 Young people need to make a financial contribution towards their rent and care costs if they are earning over the equivalent Universal Credit amount per week net pay (Net pay is the gross pay after compulsory deductions Income tax, National Insurance etc) from the wages or benefits they may receive. Young People will not be expected to make a weekly contribution if they are earning less than the equivalent of Universal Credit per week. The young person will still be entitled to the clothing and pocket money element of the fostering allowance, if they are earning less than the equivalent of Universal Credit a week. However, if they are earning more, this element might be affected and possibly cease dependent on the amount they are earning. This will be agreed between the young person, foster carer and social worker.

- 6.9.3.2 Expenditure on necessary clothing, equipment and tools may be provided and paid for by the department. Requests for funding must be presented to the Supporting Children and Carers Panel.

### **6.9.4 How the Financial Contribution is Calculated**

- 6.9.4.1 Young people will be expected to pay a contribution amounting to a third of anything they earn above the equivalent of Universal Credit per week.

- 6.9.4.2 If the young person and their carer agree, the young person purchases their own food the rental contribution amount will be reduced to a mutually agreed amount to take into consideration the cost of food.

- 6.9.4.4 The weekly amount of supplement required from Children's Services is the amount by which the young person's weekly contributions falls short of the 16 - 17 year old age banded weekly fostering allowance plus any skill fee payable minus the clothing and pocket money element.
- 6.9.4.5 Young people will need to contribute if they are earning as part of moving towards independence. Foster Carers will receive the same amount per week made up of payments from the fostering allowance and young person. The foster carer will continue to receive birthday/festival allowance for the young person. The foster carer and the young person must clarify arrangements in writing, sharing this with the child's social worker.

## **7. Other Considerations for the Foster Carer**

### **7.1 Refer a Friend**

- 7.1.1 We want to increase our fostering community so that we can provide excellent quality local care for more children. If a current Portsmouth foster carer refers someone and they are successfully assessed and approved, the referring foster carer and newly approved foster carer will receive £500 each as a thank you once the first child has been placed. There is no limit to the number of prospective foster carers that can be introduced.

### **7.2 Foster Carers' Leave**

- 7.2.1 The holiday year runs from 1st April to the 31st of March (the financial year).
- 7.2.2 A foster carer who has had a child/ren placed with them during the financial year will be entitled to paid leave of up to 14 nights leave per year, per child. The amount of leave due will be pro-rata based on the length of time the child/ren has been placed with the carer.
- 7.2.3 All foster carers can request a break from fostering. Some foster carers may choose to take a break (foster carer's leave) during a period they have no children in their care. Where possible this is the preferred approach, minimising disruption for the child. Foster carers are always encouraged to identify support carers within their family network for such occasions where foster carers should require a short break or holiday. It is essential that the number of changes in accommodation for the child/young person is kept to a minimum therefore careful consideration of foster carer's holiday is important.
- 7.2.4 Any leave must be requested well in advance and dates must be agreed by the Team Leader or Service Leader within the fostering service before the foster carer makes any holiday arrangements. Leave cannot be guaranteed as the service must be assured that there is an alternative carer who can meet the child's needs before they are able to agree the foster carer's holiday.
- 7.2.5 Any foster carer choosing to take additional foster care leave for any reason would be able to do so, but this would be unpaid. Respite carers including family link carers, supported lodgings, and staying put carers do not get leave allowances.

### **7.3 Child/Young Person Temporarily not in a Foster Placement**

- 7.3.1 Where a child is not in a fostering placement, for example to return home, extended family time, adoption introductions, or if the child is in a specialist care home for a specific period, with the approval of the Service Leader for Fostering, the foster carer may be paid the fostering allowance and any fee normally payable for a maximum of 3 nights, for keeping the carer home free in case of emergencies. The Head of Service for Children We Care For will need to agree

payments to continue for up to a further 11 nights in exceptional circumstances.

## 7.4 Home Furnishing and Equipment for Fostering

7.4.1 It is expected that foster families will have the basic furniture and equipment needed to fulfil the fostering role. This includes a bed, bedding, wardrobe, chest of drawers for a child's bedroom. School age children will also need a place to comfortably do their homework. Foster carers are expected to meet the costs of those items, including replacement in terms of natural wear and tear.

7.4.2 Babies and pre-school children will need cots, baby monitors, highchairs, prams, buggies car seats and other related equipment. Such items may be purchased by the Fostering Service and loaned to foster carers for the period the child is in their care. An equipment loan will be set up by the supervising social worker. When the equipment is no longer needed it will be returned to the Fostering Service in good condition and suitable for further loan.

## 7.5 Childcare and Travel Expenses for Attending Fostering Training

7.5.1 It is the foster carer's responsibility to make appropriate childcare arrangements to attend training or attend meetings. Relevant checks on those who provide regular childcare will be made by the fostering service if required, and the babysitting rates apply only on production of a receipt as proof of the payment made:

Babysitting	Amount (total)
Under 4 hours maximum	£15.00
Over 4 hours less than 12 hours	£30.00

7.5.2 Carers attending fostering training, events or meetings can claim for travel and should consider the most cost-effective way of travelling, including sharing journeys with other foster carers. Claims should be submitted on a monthly basis on the 'Claim for Foster Carer Training Courses' (AF24) form.

## 7.6 Complaints and Allegations

7.6.1 Where carers are subject to an allegation and a child/ren living with them are moved as a result, the carer will continue to receive the fostering allowance and any fees normally paid for the child/ren for a period of up to 28 days. If the decision is made not to return the child within that timeframe, payments will cease immediately. This is intended to ensure that carers do not suffer undue financial hardship because of an allegation having been made against them and supports the possibility of the child/ren returning to their care. Should an investigation still be ongoing after the 28-night period, the Head of Service Children We Care For must agree any continuing payments to the foster carers.

## 8. Benefits, Tax and Insurance

### 8.1 Child Benefit

8.1.1 Foster carers are not eligible to claim or receive Child Benefit for a child they care for, and that child cannot be included in the foster family's claim for benefits or Tax Credits. Anyone who

does so is committing an act of Fraud. Carers in receipt of benefits should contact the benefits agency to inform them of the allowance and any fees they receive through their fostering role and identify if there is an impact on their benefits.

- 8.1.2 The fostering allowance covers all food costs incurred by the child whilst living with them including school meals or packed lunches and meal costs during family time. All children in Reception, Year 1 and 2 are automatically entitled to receive school meals.
- 8.1.3 When a child with a disability is placed, foster carers must inform their supervising social worker to enable Children's Services to claim all state benefits which are applicable in respect of caring for that child. No additional expenses are available from Children's Services, and it is the expectation that additional expenses incurred by the carer will be offset by use of the child's Disability Living Allowance.

## **8.2 Disability Living Allowance**

- 8.2.1 Where a child is placed who is, or may be, entitled to Disability Living Allowance (DLA) it will be the responsibility of the child's social worker to make a claim on behalf of the child. If a child is in receipt of DLA, prior to being cared for, the child's social worker should be involved in discussions with the parent relating to the transfer of the DLA to the foster carer and arrangements agreed at the Placement Planning Meeting. The DLA benefit contains both a care and mobility component and is paid at different rates according to the child's needs. It is the responsibility of the foster carer to inform the child's social worker and their supervising social worker if a child in their care is awarded DLA. The foster carer will be responsible for spending the child's DLA in line with the following guidelines - carers will not be expected to make additional claims to Children's Services to meet costs that can be covered by the DLA.
- 8.2.2 The DLA is to be used to enhance the child's life and the child's social worker must be involved in decisions on how the DLA can be used to improve the child's life and the supervising social worker is responsible for monitoring the money is spent in foster carer supervision.
- 8.2.3 Examples of how the money could be spent:
- Activities that are costly i.e., horse riding, after school clubs
  - Provision of an escort to enable social events to be attended
  - Extra helper for an outing or holiday
  - Taxi fares for trips out
  - Special holiday for the child, which could include covering the family's expenses
  - Caravan expenses so that the child can have regular breaks in a familiar place
  - Extra support such as child sitting service
  - Individual equipment such as computer, communication aids
  - Laundry service and appliances
  - Replacement clothing where there is excessive wear and tear on clothing
  - Additional heating costs
  - Additional help with personal care
  - Contribution to replacement/repair to furnishings/property outside of daily wear and tear



- Special toys to meet child's needs – which may be of therapeutic value
- Domestic help to allow the carer to spend more time with child

8.2.4 Please note that all escorts or paid help must have a current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check to ensure their suitability.

### **8.3. Housing Allowance/Universal Credit**

8.3.1 All young people are expected to claim housing allowance to contribute towards their Staying Put /Supported Lodgings arrangements unless their earnings are such that they do not qualify for Housing allowance. Where carers are claiming housing allowance for their home the young person will not be eligible to apply.

### **8.4 Council Tax and Council Tax Benefit**

8.4.1 The foster carer is always responsible for paying their Council Tax or claiming Council Tax Benefit.

### **8.5 His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC)**

8.5.1 All foster carers in receipt of fostering allowances are self-employed and must register with His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) as such. It is the carers' responsibility to hold their remittance slips for minimum period of six years plus current. If copies are lost, or carers require a hard copy of electronic remittance slips they can request a new one, however there will be a charge of £5.00 to cover the associated costs. No annual statements will be provided after 2023/24.

8.5.2 Further information can be accessed from the Fostering Network website:

<https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/advice-information/finances/tax-and-national-insurance>

8.5.3 A useful online course for foster carers regarding tax matters is available from the HMRC web site:

[http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/courses/syob2/fc/HTML/fc\\_menu.html](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/courses/syob2/fc/HTML/fc_menu.html).

### **8.6 Insurance**

8.6.1 Foster carers are expected to have suitable fully comprehensive insurances for their property, including contents insurance for their own personal possessions and for the property of the child they care for. It is recommended that the foster carer informs their insurance company that they are fostering. The insurance policy excess is the choice of the foster carer and is at their own risk.

8.6.2 Portsmouth City Council Insurance does not cover any claim related to cars and does not pay foster carers insurance excess. Any request for reimbursement for damage or loss to property outside of the foster carers should be discussed with the Fostering Service Lead in the first instance.



## **9. Payments and Expenses Issues**

### **9.1 Payments**

- 9.1.2 Payments are made weekly for the current week (Sunday - Saturday) and paid directly into the carer's bank account by BACS. Payment should be received into a nominated bank account on a Friday. New foster carers will automatically be paid via BACS. Cheque payments will only be made to those carers who have a particular type of Building Society / Benefits account.
- 9.1.6 Fostering allowances are paid from the night the foster placement commences up to and including the night prior to the child leaving the foster home or becoming 18 years of age. Payments are made on a pro rata basis i.e., a one-night placement is paid at one seventh of the age-related fostering allowance and any fee payable.

### **9.2 Overpayments**

- 9.2.1 Overpayments will be recovered as soon as possible from future payments where they are ongoing or where this is not possible an invoice will be raised.

### **9.3 Expenses**

- 9.3.1 Claims for expenses must be made monthly. Any claims over three months old will not be made under any circumstances.
- 9.3.2 Foster Carers are expected to complete a log of all income and expenditure related to holiday, birthday and festival allowances together with clothing and personal expenditure. This information should be recorded on the *Record of Expenditure Form*.
- 9.3.3 This will help the carer to:
- Demonstrate what the money has been used for and thereby reduce any risk of complaint.
  - Evidence expenditure to the Supervising Social Worker and the child's Social Worker who will monitor and "sign off" forms in supervision and statutory visits.
- 9.3.4 If age appropriate, a young person should be encouraged to sign the expenditure sheet with the carer. This ensures that the young person is aware of financial management and the important of financial and budgetary planning.
- 9.3.5 The completion of the form is required for audit purposes and to ensure that children and young people have received their full entitlement for each financial year and particularly when they move between placements.
- 9.3.6 A record of respite arrangements should be recorded by the carers to ensure that entitlements are received, and correct payments made.
- ### **9.4 Receipts**
- 9.4.1 Foster Carers should retain receipts for their records as they may otherwise find themselves challenged by the Fostering Team or HMRC.

## APPENDIX A - TABLE OF ALLOWANCES AND FEES

### Allowances

#### Fostering Allowance - weekly rates

2024/25	Age 0 to 4	Age 5 to 10	Age 11 to 15	Age 16 to 17
Total	£189.00	£208.00	£238.00	£278.00
Savings	£6.26	6.26	£9.87	£9.87
Pocket money	£3.97	£10.11	£16.28	£21.81
Clothing	£30.79	£37.59	£56.40	£59.45
Travel	£28.35	£28.35	£28.35	£28.35

Guidance is given in the table above for the proportion of clothing, long term savings, pocket money, and travel.

#### Emergency Clothing

Age band	Emergency clothing (up to)
0–10 Years	£100.00
11-17 Years	£200.00

#### Birthday & Religious Festival

Age band	Birthday & Festival
0–4 Years	£189.00
5-10 Years	£208.00
11-15 Years	£238.00
16-18 Years	£278.00

## Activities

Age band	Activity Allowance
0-4	£378.00
5-10	£416.00
11-15	£476.00
16-17	£556.00

Payment split into two parts (Easter Holiday 25%, Summer Holiday 75%)

## Holiday

Holiday Allowance is up to £500.00 per child per financial year.

## School Related Clothing

Primary School	Up to £75.00
Secondary School	Up to £100.00
Prom Expenses	Up to £100.00

## Skills Fees

Age Range	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
0 - 4	£40.00	£197.00	£353.00
5 - 10	£40.00	£197.00	£353.00
11 - 15	£40.00	£197.00	£353.00
16 - 17	£40.00	£197.00	£353.00

## Specialist and Other Fees

### Parent and Child

#### Assessment Placement

During the assessment period, the foster carer will be paid the following:

<b>Assessment fee (12 weeks)</b>	<b>Weekly fee</b>
One parent fee	£600.00
Additional parent fee	£300.00

In addition, during the assessment period the foster carer will be paid the relevant fostering allowance for each child they care for. They will also be paid skills level 1 (whatever their skills level), on the basis that the parent will be providing the majority of the day-to-day care for the child.

Where the parent(s) are not being cared for, the maintenance element of the **lodgings allowance (£200.00)** will be paid per parent. The parent(s) are expected to provide for themselves including food, clothing, and other expenses.

#### Non-Assessment Placement

For non-assessment placements, the foster carer will be paid the relevant fostering allowance for each child being cared for and their usual skills level fee.

Where the parent(s) are not being cared for, the maintenance element of the **lodgings allowance (£200.00)** will be paid per parent. The parent(s) are expected to provide for themselves including food, clothing, and other expenses.

### Mockingbird

Mockingbird hub home carer	£600.00
Activity fee	£50.00

Hub home carers will receive the usual fostering allowance and skills level fee for children they care for as part of their usual foster carer role.

## Out of Hours Carers

<b>On-call Fee</b>	£35.00 per night
<b>Emergency one off payment outside of working hours i.e., after 6:00pm and before 8:00am Monday to Friday, weekends/bank holidays</b>	Aged 10 and under - £100.00 Aged 11 plus - £200.00

## Family Link Care

<b>Period of Care</b>	<b>Payment Rate</b>
Up to 4 hours	£28.00
5 – 8 hours	£58.78
9 – 12 hours	£84.04
13 – 24 hours (overnight care)	£136.09

## Day Time only Foster Care

<b>Period of Care</b>	<b>Skill Level 1</b>	<b>Skill Level 2</b>	<b>Skill Level 3</b>
0 – 4 hours	£20.00	£30.00	£40.00
4 hours and above	£40.00	£60.00	£80.00

## Supporting Young People over 18

### Supported Lodgings

Supported lodgings hosts receive the following weekly fees:

- **Lodgings allowance of £200** to cover household expenses and breakfast and lunch
- **Support allowance of £60** (minimum 10 hours per week)
- *An optional evening meal allowance of £20 (minimum)*, paid directly from the young person if this option is agreed by all

### Staying Put

Staying put carers receive the following weekly fees:

- **Lodgings allowance of £200** to cover household expenses and breakfast and lunch
- **Support allowance of £60** (minimum 10 hours per week)

- An *optional evening meal allowance of £20 (minimum)*, paid directly from the young person if this option is agreed by all

## **Other Rates and Allowances**

<b>Rate/Allowance</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Mileage rate	£0.45 per mile
Refer a friend	£500.00 (for referring foster carer and new foster carer) if approved
Babysitting - under 4 hours maximum	£15.00
Over 4 hours but less than 12 hours	£30.00
13 – 24 hours (overnight care)	£160.00
Fee for printing and postage of replacement remittance (per copy)	£5.00

<b>Form name</b>	Integrated Impact Assessment
<b>Reference</b>	IA570429234
<b>Date</b>	17/01/2024



## Policy details

<b>Request date</b>	17/01/2024 14:50
<b>Directorate</b>	PCC Children Families and Education
<b>Service</b>	Fostering Service
<b>Title of policy, service, function</b>	Carers' Fees and Allowance Policy for Portsmouth 2023/24
<b>Type of policy, service, function</b>	Changed
<b>What is the aim of your policy, service, function, project or strategy?</b>	The document sets out the Foster Carers' (and related Carers) Allowances and Skills Fees and other payments that may be provided with guidance relating to how they are applied.
<b>Has any consultation been undertaken for this proposal?</b>	yes
<b>What were the outcomes of the consultations?</b>	Increased of the Skills Fee, Holiday Allowance paid for all (rather than discretionary), contribution to a Prom outfit for year 11 students, and increase of travel threshold.
<b>Has anything changed because of the consultation?</b>	yes
<b>Please provide details</b>	See above.
<b>Did this inform your proposal?</b>	yes
<b>Please provide details</b>	Considerations taken into account and implemented in the new policy.

**Equality & diversity - will it have any positive/negative impacts on the protected characteristics?**

<p><b>With the above in mind and following data analysis, who is the policy, service, function, project or strategy going to benefit or have a detrimental effect on and how?</b></p>	<p>The policy will support the fostering service to recruit and retain a diverse population of Portsmouth foster carers in Portsmouth, who provide care for some of our most vulnerable children. The changes in the policy aims to support the increase and retention of local foster carers, reducing the use of more expensive distant placements, and the use of Independent Fostering Agencies.</p> <p>By maintaining and increasing our local foster care community, we would increase the opportunities for children to live locally and to be able to attend the same school and stay in touch with their friends and family.</p> <p>An increased number of foster carers would enable our children to be matched with carers who are best able to meet their needs which may be needs arising from their disability, sexuality, race, religion and culture.</p> <p>An enhanced offer (including financial) for Portsmouth foster carers would mean that more people would be able to become carers for the Council. It should help us improve equality of opportunity and diversity for our foster carers.</p>
<p><b>Will any of those groups be affected in a different way to others because of your policy, project, service, function, or strategy?</b></p>	<p>No groups will be affected in different ways because of the policy.</p>
<p><b>If you are directly or indirectly discriminating, how are you going to mitigate the negative impact?</b></p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>
<p><b>Who have you consulted with or are planning to consult with and what was/will be your consultation methodology?</b></p>	<p>Foster carers were consulted with as part of monthly Foster Carer Liaison Meetings and a special consultation meeting was held on 01/12/23. In addition, all foster carers were sent an online survey to complete. The Children in Care Council were also consulted with on specific elements of the policy that related to them.</p>



<p><b>How are you going to review the policy, service, project or strategy, how often and who will be responsible?</b></p>	<p>The policy will be reviewed annual. The Head of Children We Care For will be responsible.</p>
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**Crime - Will it make our city safer?**

<p><b>This section is not applicable to my policy</b></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
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**Housing - will it provide good quality homes?**

<p><b>This section is not applicable to my policy</b></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
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**Health - will this help promote healthy, safe and independent living?**

<p><b>Please expand on the impact your policy/proposal will have, and how you propose to mitigate any negative impacts?</b></p>	<p>The aim of the policy is to ensure that the fees and allowances offer for Portsmouth foster carers promotes the recruitment of new local foster carers, as well as retaining existing foster carers. Having local foster carers will ensure that our cared for children have their health needs met locally. The policy offers our cared for children to remain with their carers post eighteen years old, with carers supporting them towards independent living in stay put arrangements.</p>
<p><b>How are you going to measure/check the impact of your proposal?</b></p>	<p>This will be measured by examining the numbers of new foster carer approvals and foster carer resignations. Data for staying put arrangements will also be considered.</p>

**Income deprivation and poverty - will it consider income deprivation and reduce poverty?**

<p><b>Please expand on the impact your policy/proposal will have, and how you propose to mitigate any negative impacts?</b></p>	<p>The revised policy details increases in the allowances and fees that the foster carer currently receive. In its final report, published in May 2022, the Independent Review of Children’s Social Care noted that national retention problems were getting worse due to the cost-of-living crisis. Fostering Network research published in November 2022 raised similar concerns about the impact of rising prices on carers’ ability to continue in their role. These concerns were confirmed to be a factor in Portsmouth (Feedback February 2022/23).</p>
<p><b>How are you going to measure/check the impact of your proposal?</b></p>	<p>The 'Feedback February' report (2024/25 will show foster carers' overall satisfaction.</p>

**Carbon emissions - will it reduce carbon emissions?**

<p><b>This section is not applicable to my policy</b></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
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**Energy use - will it reduce energy use?**

<p><b>This section is not applicable to my policy</b></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
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**Climate change mitigation and flooding - will it proactively mitigate against a changing climate and flooding?**

<p><b>This section is not applicable to my policy</b></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
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**Natural environment - will it ensure public spaces are greener, more sustainable and well-maintained?**

<b>This section is not applicable to my policy</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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### **Air quality - will it improve air quality?**

<b>Please expand on the impact your policy/proposal will have, and how you propose to mitigate any negative impacts?</b>	The policy encourages foster carers to share travel arrangements for the children they care for whenever possible.
<b>How are you going to measure/check the impact of your proposal?</b>	It will not be possible to measure/check the impact.

### **Transport - will it make transport more sustainable and safer for the whole community?**

<b>Please expand on the impact your policy/proposal will have, and how you propose to mitigate any negative impacts?</b>	The policy encourages foster carers to share travel arrangements for the children they care for whenever possible.
<b>How are you going to measure/check the impact of your proposal?</b>	It will not be possible to measure/check the impact.

### **Waste management - will it increase recycling and reduce the production of waste?**

<b>This section is not applicable to my policy</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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**Culture and heritage - will it promote, protect and enhance our culture and heritage?**

<p><b>This section is not applicable to my policy</b></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
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**Employment and opportunities - will it promote the development of a skilled workforce?**

<p><b>Please expand on the impact your policy/proposal will have, and how you propose to mitigate any negative impacts?</b></p>	<p>As previously mentioned, the policy will support the fostering service to recruit more Portsmouth foster carers, as well as providing an improved financial offer to existing Portsmouth foster carers.</p>
<p><b>How are you going to measure/check the impact of your proposal?</b></p>	<p>Data showing the number of Portsmouth fosters, newly approved foster carers, and foster carer resignations.</p>

**Economy - will it encourage businesses to invest in the city, support sustainable growth and regeneration?**

<p><b>This section is not applicable to my policy</b></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
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**Social value**

<p><b>Please explain how your policy, service, function, project or strategy delivers Social Value</b></p>	<p>The policy will support the fostering service to recruit more Portsmouth foster carers which in turn will mean that PCC are able to provide local foster placements for Portsmouth children, reducing the demand on placements that are out of area.</p>
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<b>Who was involved in the Integrated impact assessment?</b>	Mark Jowett, Head of Children We Care For
<b>Name of the person completing this form</b>	Mark Jowett
<b>Date of completion</b>	2024-01-17

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# Agenda Item 5



Portsmouth  
CITY COUNCIL

**Title of meeting:** Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education

**Date of meeting:** 22 February 2024

**Subject:** Decision on Revised Travel Assistance Policies

**Report by:** Alison Critchley, Head of Sufficiency and Resources

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Suzy Horton, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education

**Wards affected:** All

**Key decision:** Yes/No

**Full Council decision:** Yes/No

## 1. Purpose of report

1.1 To approve the updated Travel Assistance Policy for children of statutory school age (5-16) and the Travel Assistance Statement for post-16 learners for 2024/25.

## 2. Recommendations

**2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education agrees the attached Travel Assistance Policy for children of statutory school age (5-16) and the Travel Assistance Statement for post-16 learners for 2024/25.**

## 3. Background

3.1 The Council is required to keep their travel assistance policy for children of statutory school age under regular review and are required to publish a travel assistance statement for post-16 learners on an annual basis.

3.2 New DFE statutory guidance on *Travel to school for children of compulsory school age* was published in June 2023, and our guidance for children of statutory school age has been thoroughly reviewed in the light of this updated guidance. A slightly updated version of the DFE guidance was published on 25 January 2024. The guidance includes the requirement that consultation on policy changes should last for at least 28 working days during term time.

### ***Proposed changes to policies issued for consultation***

3.3 The revised draft policies respond to consistent feedback from children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their parents and carers. This is that being able to travel independently is a key skill that teenagers would like to develop,

and that access to free bus passes for the young people themselves and a companion pass for parents would be the single most important thing to supporting independence.

3.4 No changes were proposed to the eligibility criteria, so children and young people who are currently eligible for home to school and college transport assistance would still be eligible under the revised policy.

3.5 The consultation drafts proposed four main changes from the previous versions:

- i. **Information about disabled person's bus passes:** The policies included information about how children and young people with particular disabilities can apply for a disabled person's bus pass under the national scheme for concessionary bus travel, irrespective of whether they qualify for school travel assistance. The relevant pages of the council's website are also being amended to make it clearer that children aged 5-16 are eligible.
- ii. **Emphasis on preparing for adulthood:** the drafts emphasised that for children and young people in Year 9 and above the travel arrangements will take into account the need to prepare for adult life and support independence. In practice this means that where appropriate young people will be supported and encouraged to take part in independent travel training and then travel to school on public buses rather than council provided minibuses or taxis.
- iii. **Simplification and greater transparency around personal budgets:** at present parents are only notified of how much their personal budget would be if they enquire, and the sums provided are calculated based on the exact mileage between home and school.

We had proposed to introduce a banding system, anticipating that by introducing greater transparency it would encourage more families to choose a personal budget. We had also proposed to make payments monthly in advance rather than in arrears, with payments continuing to be reduced for non-attendance.

- iv. **An increase in the charge made for Privilege Places:** Parents of children with an EHCP who do not meet the Statutory Criteria or the Exceptional Circumstances Criteria may apply for a Privilege Place. Privilege Places are available only where there is spare capacity in a vehicle used by children who meet the Statutory Criteria or Exceptional Circumstances Criteria. Decisions on the allocation of any Privilege Places will be taken based on the pupil's special needs and any impact on the other pupils travelling. To reflect the increased costs of transport it was recommended that the annual charge for Privilege Places be increased from £900 to £1050 per year from September 2024, payable in three termly instalments of £350 per term. The charge remained well below the actual costs of providing a place on a minibus. No change is proposed to the price charged to post-16 learners, which will remain at £600 per year (£495 for low income families).



3.6 We also amended the wording on appeals, to bring our written policy into line with recent practice.

3.7 The draft documents were published on the council's website on 24 November and circulated to education stakeholders via the PEP bulletin in the week beginning 27 November 2023 and in January 2024, requesting any feedback be submitted by 19 January 2024. Links to the documents were also sent to families currently in receipt of a personal budget for travel assistance.

### ***Proposed changes following consultation***

3.8 Six responses were received from parents, two of whom were asking for information about how to apply next year, two were checking the eligibility criteria, one parent asked how much they would be paid if the new arrangements were introduced, and one parent advised the council that they would not require transport from March as they would be moving nearer to the school. All of the queries have been responded to individually and no further responses were received.

3.9 However, on 25 January 2024 the DFE issued Q and A guidance to support the new statutory guidance that was published in June 2023. This guidance gave a strong steer that local authorities should not pay a mileage rate above 45p per mile as this could have an impact on a parent's Universal Credit or tax if the parent could be considered to be making a profit. A banding system would create "winners" and "losers" increasing the risk of challenge.

3.10 The final draft policies therefore remove the banding proposal and all of the detail about how personal budgets would be calculated, reverting to the wording in previous policies. This states that the amount will be paid at a rate determined by the local authority at the time. The revised policies also reintroduce the option for parents to claim mileage and make clear that this is paid at a rate of 45p per mile.

3.11 These changes may affect the number of families who choose to take a personal budget or mileage allowance and the costs to the council of providing travel assistance. The exact financial implications will become clearer as travel arrangements for 2024/25 are agreed with families in the Summer Term. The financial implications will be closely monitored. Should these affect the overall transport budget position they will be reported as part of the budget monitoring reports or in a separate paper.

3.12 No other changes are proposed to the drafts that were issued for consultation. The final draft *Travel Assistance Policy for children of statutory school age (5-16)* and the *Travel Assistance Statement for post-16 learners for 2024/25* are attached at Appendices A and B for approval.

### ***Links with bus strategy***

3.13 As part of the national bus strategy colleagues in the Economy, Planning and Transport directorate are currently working on a Department for Transport funded project looking at discounts for hard to reach groups facing health and economic

barriers and improve health, community engagement, health and social welfare outcomes.

3.14 Children and young people with SEND clearly fall within this category and initial discussions have been held about whether they could be supported. This could be done, for example by providing a free bus pass to all secondary aged children with SEND who are currently receive travel assistance from Portsmouth in a council commissioned minibus or taxi so that they can gain confidence to travel by bus and move to independent travel as they get older.

#### **4. Reasons for recommendations**

4.1 The Council is required to keep travel assistance policies under review. The proposed changes in terms of providing information about disabled persons' bus passes, preparing for adulthood, as well as some other minor changes to the text, are intended to give greater clarity, promote independence, and support families of children with disabilities.

4.2 The change to the price charged for Privilege Places reflects the continuing increase to the costs of providing travel assistance. This will come into effect from 1 September 2024.

#### **5. Integrated impact assessment**

5.1 No changes are proposed to the eligibility criteria, and so there will be no adverse impact on children and young people who meet either the Statutory Criteria or the Exceptional Circumstances Criteria for receiving travel assistance.

#### **6. Legal implications**

6.1 The Education Act 1996 contains statutory duties and powers in relation to school transport. The Council has a duty to make such travel arrangements as they consider necessary to secure suitable home to school transport arrangements are made for eligible children in accordance with s.508B. This relates to children of compulsory school age (5 - 16) and ensures transport is free. When determining what is necessary, the Council must take account of local circumstances. Section 508C of the Act gives the Council discretionary powers to make school travel arrangements for other children not covered by section 508B. Such transport does not have to be provided free of charge. Local authorities also have a duty under section 508A(1)(c) to promote the use of sustainable travel on journeys to and from places of education in their area.

6.2 In making those transport arrangements, regard must be had to the statutory guidance issued by the DfE. The current guidance is in the 2023 "Travel to school for children of compulsory school age - statutory guidance for local authorities". The guidance recognises that it is for the individual LA to decide how they apply their discretion and that LAs will need to balance the demands for a range of discretionary travel against their budget priorities. All arrangements made must be published by the LA.

- 6.3 There are further provisions for young persons (aged 16 - 18) and those continuing learners who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday. These persons are defined as "persons of sixth form age". Under s.509AA LAs must prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement specifying the arrangements for the provision of transport or otherwise that the authority considers necessary for facilitating the attendance of persons of sixth form age receiving education or training at schools, FE institutions and higher education institutions maintained or assisted by the LA. This statement must include the arrangements the LA consider necessary for the provision of financial assistance in respect of the reasonable travelling expenses of persons of sixth form age receiving education or training. The LA must publish the statement on or before 31st May in the year in which the academic year begins.
- 6.4 In preparing the post-16 policy statement, the LA must have regard to the statutory guidance from the DfE of 2019 "Post-16 transport and travel support to education and training."
- 6.5 The Education Act requires the Council to have regard to any parental choice of school based upon the parent's religion or belief (s.509AD) or in relation to a person of sixth form age, that person's choice based on their religion or belief (s.84 Education and Inspections Act 2006). Section 29 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity between different protected groups in the provision of services. However, paragraph 11 of part 2 of Schedule 3 of the Equality Act states that the discrimination provisions on the grounds of age, religion or belief do not extend to transport arrangements.
- 6.6 The guidance states that where an authority propose changes to their school travel policy which may affect children's eligibility for transport, consultation should be carried out locally and should last for at least 28 working days during term time. Minor amendments or corrections may not require consultation.
- 6.7 In formulating its proposals, and subject to the proviso given above, the Council must have "due regard" to its equalities duties including the Public Sector Equality Duty. Under Section 149 Equality Act 2010, the Council in exercise of its education functions, must have "due regard" to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not, and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The relevant protected characteristics are age, gender reassignment, disability, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 6.8 It is within the powers of the Cabinet Member to make the recommendations in this report, in accordance with the Council's constitution.

**7. Director of Finance's comments**

7.1 The financial impact of the recent guidance issued by the Department for Education will need to be worked through, and any pressure resulting from this will need to be met within the existing budget.

Signed by:  
Sarah Daly Director Children, Families and Education

**Appendices:**

**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by ..... on .....

.....  
Signed by Councillor Suzy Horton, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education:

# **PORTSMOUTH TRAVEL ASSISTANCE POLICY FOR CHILDREN OF STATUTORY SCHOOL AGE (5-16)**

February 2024

### ***Section one: Introduction***

1. This document sets out Portsmouth's Policy for providing travel assistance to children of statutory aged school age i.e. children aged 5-16. It has been updated to reflect the DFE's *Travel to school for children of compulsory school age* statutory guidance which was published in June 2023.
2. The legal responsibility for ensuring a child's attendance at school rests with the child's parent/carer. Generally parents/carers are expected to make their own arrangements for ensuring that their child gets to and from school.
3. Travel assistance may be provided for children aged 5-16 where the Statutory Criteria are met, or, for children who do not meet the Statutory Criteria, where the Exceptional Circumstances Criteria are met. Where there is spare capacity, places may be offered via the Privilege Places scheme.
4. For information about Portsmouth's travel assistance policy for post 16 learners see the separate "Portsmouth Travel Assistance Policy for Post 16 Learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities".
5. No applications for assistance with travel to school or nursery will be accepted for children who have not reached Reception Year (Year 0).
6. Portsmouth will not consider assistance with travel to fee paying schools, unless the school has been named in a pupil's Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or is the nearest school considered by Portsmouth City Council's SEN team as able to meet the needs of the pupil.
7. The statement applies to children and young people residing in the Portsmouth City area (Post codes PO1 - PO6). Learners not resident within the post code area should refer to the transport policy issued by their own Local Authority. Where a child lives at more than one address they will be assessed using the address of their main home. Where time is split equally between two addresses, the address of the parent in receipt of child benefit will be used.
8. This policy will be used to determine applications for transport from 1 September 2024 onwards. It will be subject to regular review.

### ***Section Two: Eligibility for Travel Assistance***

#### ***Travel Assistance Provided under Statutory Criteria***

9. The Local Authority is under a statutory duty to provide travel assistance as set out in the Education Act 1996 to eligible children and young people of statutory school age. Statutory (or compulsory) school age starts at the beginning of the term after a child's fifth birthday, and ends at the end of June in the school year in

which a young person has their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.

10. Portsmouth City Council's travel assistance policy follows the DFE statutory guidance in determining which children meet the Statutory Criteria for travel assistance. There are four different circumstances in which children may meet the Statutory Criteria:

- a. **Statutory walking distances eligibility:** where the nearest suitable school is:
  - beyond 2 miles (if below the age of 8); or
  - beyond 3 miles (if aged between 8 and 16)
- b. **Special educational needs, a disability or mobility problems eligibility:** where the child cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school because of their mobility problems or because of associated health and safety issues related to their special educational needs or disability (SEND).
- c. **Unsafe route eligibility:** where children cannot reasonably be expected to walk to nearest suitable school because the nature of the route is deemed unsafe to walk.
- d. **Extended rights eligibility** where pupils are entitled to free school meals or their parents are in receipt of maximum Working Tax Credit if:
  - the nearest suitable school is beyond 2 miles (for children over the age of 8 and under 11); or
  - the school is between 2 and 6 miles (if aged 11-16 and there are not three or more suitable nearer schools); or
  - the school is between 2 and 15 miles and is the nearest school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief (aged 11-16).

11. In Portsmouth the nearest "suitable" school will be the child's designated catchment school or nearer school, or qualifying special school.

12. Portsmouth also deems children to be eligible for travel assistance under the statutory criteria where the parent/carer(s) have a disability which means that it is not possible for either parent to accompany their primary aged child(ren) or secondary aged child(ren) with special educational needs and disabilities to school.

13. The full criteria for travel assistance under the Statutory Criteria for children of statutory school age are set out at Appendix A.

14. To apply for travel assistance please complete an application form on the Portsmouth SEN local offer website

<https://portsmouthlocaloffer.org/services/701/>.

15. Some children and young people with SEND will be eligible for a free bus pass under the national scheme for concessionary bus travel (which also includes the free bus passes for older people). The [Portsmouth eligibility criteria mean that these passes are available to people who:](#)
- a. are blind or partially sighted, profoundly or severely deaf, without speech
  - b. have a disability, or have suffered an injury, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to walk
  - c. have long term loss of the use of both arms or do not have arms
  - d. have a learning disability – a state of arrested or incomplete development of mind which includes significant impairment of intelligence and social functioning
16. For more information and to apply for a disabled person's bus pass and a companion pass for those who are unable to travel alone on public transport go to the [Council's website](#).

*Travel Assistance Provided under Exceptional Circumstances Criteria*

17. Children and young people who do not meet the criteria for statutory transport assistance may be eligible for help under the Exceptional Circumstances Criteria (ECC). Portsmouth City Council recognises the difference that travel assistance can make to the lives of some vulnerable children and young people. However, the funding available for such support is limited and under continued pressure, so the ECC aims to ensure that transport assistance is allocated to those most in need.
18. All applications for non-statutory transport assistance will be assessed using the Student Eligibility Grid, a copy of which is attached at Appendix B.
19. Every application for home to school transport will be considered on an individual basis and points will be awarded in accordance with the Student Eligibility Grid. Where a need is considered to be high (70+ points) transport will be provided. Where points are less than 70, transport will be declined. Where an applicant wishes to appeal against the decision, a letter outlining the reasons can be sent to the Access and Entitlement Officer as outlined in the appeals process at Appendix C.
20. To apply for travel assistance please complete an application form on the Portsmouth SEN local offer website <https://portsmouthlocaloffer.org/services/701/>.

*Privilege Places*

21. Parents of children with an EHCP who do not meet the Statutory Criteria or the Exceptional Circumstances Criteria may apply for a Privilege Place. If a pupil is successful in being awarded a Privilege Place then they are transported on a



Home to School vehicle suitable for their needs and picked up/set down at a central point up to one mile from the home address. Privilege Places are available only where there is spare capacity in a vehicle used by children who meet the Statutory Criteria or Exceptional Circumstances Criteria. Decisions on the allocation of any Privilege Places will be taken based on the pupil's special needs and any impact on the other pupils travelling.

22. Applications for Privilege Places are made on an annual basis. The decision about the allocation of Privilege Places is made after the travel assistance for all pupils meeting the Statutory Criteria and Exceptional Circumstances Criteria has been agreed, and therefore may be notified close to the start of the relevant term. The place may be withdrawn with 10 days' notice at any time, if it is needed by a child meeting the Statutory or Exceptional Circumstances Criteria, or where routes are changed or re-tendered, or where the number of children on a route needs to be reduced, for example due to coronavirus.
23. The price of a privilege seat is currently<sup>1</sup> £1050.00 payable in 3 termly instalments of £350, paid in advance.
24. To request travel assistance via the Privilege Place Scheme email [htstransport@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:htstransport@portsmouthcc.gov.uk).

### ***Section Three: The Travel Assistance Offer***

25. Travel assistance will automatically be considered when the Local Authority applies for a placement in a special school or resourced provision for a child. Transport entitlement will be reviewed for all pupils annually. For pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan transport will be reviewed at a child's or young person's Annual Review.
26. Travel assistance will only be given for travel to school at the start and end of the school day. Travel assistance is not provided to enable children to attend extra-curricular activities or other commitments outside school hours. Where a school and parent have, exceptionally, agreed a reduced timetable for a limited period e.g. to support transition the school will be responsible for providing any transport at times other than the beginning and end of the school day.
27. Travel assistance will be provided in a safe and cost effective manner, taking account of the child's specific needs, with regard to the best use of the Council's resources, and having regard to the duty on local authorities to promote the use of sustainable travel on journeys to and from places of education in the area. For pupils in Year 9 and above the travel arrangements will take into account the need to prepare young people for adult life and promote independence, including through supporting independent travel where appropriate. The main travel arrangements are:

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<sup>1</sup> Price correct for 2024/25 school year.

28. **Bus or Rail Pass** - This is a free pass for use on public transport and is generally provided for children and young people who meet the Statutory Criteria under the "walking distances" and "extended rights" eligibility criteria. Secondary age pupils are expected to travel independently. Parents/carers may need to accompany primary aged children to school, but travel assistance for parents accompanying entitled children will only be considered on a discretionary basis where the family meets the Exceptional Circumstances Criteria.
29. **Transport Vehicles** - Vehicles and drivers are provided by a suitable qualified registered commercial provider working to contractual standards set out by Portsmouth City Council. Where necessary passenger assistants are employed and trained by Portsmouth City Council to look after the welfare of pupils travelling on school transport. A passenger assistant will be provided for a primary age pupil travelling by taxi if it would be unreasonable to expect the parent/carer to accompany the child. Secondary age children would not normally be provided with a passenger assistant if travelling in a taxi.
30. Children are often picked up and set down at a central point (up to one mile from the home address) rather than at their home address. Parents/carers are responsible for the safety of their child until they board and after they exit the vehicle. If the parent/carer is not at the drop off point to meet their child and cannot be contacted then the Duty Social Worker will be contacted. The parent/carer may be responsible for any additional expenditure incurred. Where there is evidence that a parent/carer is failing to meet their child on a regular basis a review of entitlement to transport will be made.
31. Where the distance between a pick-up or drop-off point and home or school is less than one mile the City Council will not normally provide transport for that part of the journey. Requests for transport to be provided for a home to pick-up point of less than one mile will be considered on an individual basis and will be dependent upon the medical needs of the pupil and or parent/carer and should be supported by appropriate medical evidence.
32. Transport will be arranged so as to be non-stressful. Best practice indicates that the maximum journey time should be no longer than 45 minutes for primary aged pupils and 75 minutes for secondary aged pupils. However consideration should be given to traffic conditions within the city. Exceptions may apply for operational reasons, although individual needs will be assessed. Longer journey may be necessary for pupils attending special education needs schools outside of Portsmouth.
33. **Car Mileage Allowance** - A mileage allowance of 45p per mile will be payable, payable for two round trip journeys per day. Parents/carers should check their car insurance policy, as it may be invalidated if they do not inform their insurance company. The mileage allowance is paid monthly onto a prepaid card, similar to a debit card.

34. **Personal Budget Transport** - Pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan who are eligible for travel assistance can request a personal transport budget. For more information email [htstransport@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:htstransport@portsmouthcc.gov.uk).
35. The Personal Budget is paid monthly onto a prepaid card, similar to a debit card, and can be used however a parent chooses, as long as the child gets 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. Examples of how Personal Transport Budgets include:
- a. Buying a travel pass for a parent or a trusted adult to accompany the child to and from school.
  - b. Covering the costs of driving or cycling with the child to school.
  - c. Sharing the costs of the school run with another parent such as shared driving responsibilities, walking buses or joint taxi bookings.
36. The amount of the Personal Budget, including elements of mileage, will be paid at a rate determined by the local authority at the time. More details can be found in Portsmouth City Council's Local Offer. (<https://portsmouthlocaloffer.org/documents/personal-transport-budgets/>).
37. **Access to Independent Travel Training** - Travel training supports children, young people and adults to get more out of life through learning the skills and building confidence to use public transport safely. For information about accessing support for independent travel for a child of statutory school age please email [htstransport@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:htstransport@portsmouthcc.gov.uk).

#### **Section Four: Additional Important Information**

38. **Parental Preference:** Assessment for travel assistance will normally be determined once a school place has been allocated by the Local Authority. For on-time applications for starting school, transfer to junior and transfer to secondary school, if as a result of parental preference, a child is not attending their designated catchment or nearer school, or they are not attending one of the three nearest secondary schools (for families meeting the low income criteria) or nearest qualifying special school, they will not normally be entitled to assistance with transport to school.

For late applications to the main round transfer groups and in-year admissions, families would only normally be entitled to travel assistance if they had applied to their four nearest schools, including their catchment school(s), and had confirmed that they were happy to be allocated a school place at a local school by the local authority if their preferences could not be met.

39. **Age:** A child becomes eligible for travel assistance under the Statutory Criteria only once they have reached statutory school age i.e. in the term after their fifth birthday. Most children start full time school in the September after they turn four, and will therefore start school before they are able to apply for travel assistance under the Statutory Criteria. Parents of four year olds in Reception can apply for

transport under the "Exceptional Circumstances" criteria. Alternatively they may apply for a Privilege Place.

40. Children living between 2 and 3 miles from their nearest suitable school will normally lose their eligibility for travel assistance under the Statutory Criteria on their 8<sup>th</sup> birthday. Children will continue to receive travel assistance until the end of the term after their 8<sup>th</sup> birthday. Parents are then able to apply for transport under the "Exceptional Circumstances" criteria. Alternatively they may apply for a Privilege Place.
41. **Change of Address** Parents should notify Portsmouth City Council of any change of address giving as much prior notice as possible but a minimum of 10 working days. Pupils who change their home address will have their eligibility re-assessed based on the new address. Where a pupil has been entitled to a bus pass the old bus pass must be returned to the Access & Entitlement Officer before a new bus pass can be issued.
42. **Unacceptable Behaviour** Where a child is unable to travel safely to school, including where the pupil's behaviour is such that it may threaten the safety of the pupils, driver and passenger assistants, the council reserves the right to suspend transport support for up to two weeks. Parents would normally have been contacted by the transport team, including through a formal warning letter from the Integrated Transport Unit, before such a suspension is made. Should a suspension be considered necessary the parents/carers will be responsible for transporting their child to school during this period. Transport will then be re-instated.
43. Where there are ongoing issues an officer of the Local Authority will discuss with parents/carers the possible withdrawal of transport and the alternative arrangements which may need to be made, which might include the offer of a public bus pass or personal budget.
44. **Attendance:** Where attendance at school is irregular the Local Authority has the right to review transport assistance and withdraw it if attendance remains unacceptable.
45. **Permanent exclusions or managed moves:** Where a child changes school as a result of a permanent exclusion or managed move, then transport assistance will be provided if the school is beyond the statutory walking distance and the local authority agrees with the preference.
46. **School Re-organisation (by the City Council):** Other than by exceptional decision, the normal entitlement policy will apply to the children of families where closure or re-organisation takes place.
47. **Armed Forces Covenant** Portsmouth City Council has signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant. Portsmouth City Council will therefore ensure that the needs of members of the armed services are considered in line with the terms of the covenant when application for transport using the exceptional circumstances

criteria are assessed.

48. **Health and Safety and Medical Needs:** Health and safety information provided by parents/carers and head teachers is gathered as part of the application process. This is then assessed and relevant information will be provided to passenger assistants. All of the Portsmouth passenger assistants have basic first aid training and will have received the information provided by parents about any health needs. Routine medication will not be administered on the journey to and from school. In a medical emergency the passenger assistant or driver will ring 999.
49. **Emergency Travel Assistance:** Travel assistance may exceptionally be provided on a short term basis where a pupil may be at risk of educational disruption due to circumstances beyond the control of the parents. Evidence to support such applications will be required from relevant professionals. Each application will be considered on its own merits. A parental/carer contribution towards the costs of providing emergency travel assistance may be payable.
50. **Appeals:** Parents/carers have the right to appeal the decisions made by Portsmouth City Council officers when assessing Home to School Transport applications. The appeals process is outlined in the Home to School Travel Appeal process detailed in Appendix C.
51. **Timescales:** Where a delay occurs in providing transport which is over and above the normal operational timescale for doing so, and the application for transport has been submitted with the permitted timescales (including all supporting evidence) reimbursement may be made to cover expenses incurred (upon production of evidence of expenditure) from the date from which transport would otherwise have been provided. Such reimbursement will be calculated using the most cost effective means of transport.
52. **Assessment Errors:** Where assistance is found to have been granted in error, notice of four weeks will normally be given that travel will be withdrawn to allow families to make other arrangements.
53. Where entitlement has been denied in error transport will be arranged as soon as possible and consideration will be given to reimbursing parents/carers retrospectively, with a time limit of the start of the academic year in which the error was discovered.
54. **Lost and Stolen Bus Passes** Where a bus pass is lost there will be an administration charge made by the bus company to the parents/carers for a replacement. Stolen bus passes will not incur an administration charge if evidence in the form of a police crime number is provided.
55. **Complaints** Portsmouth City Council takes complaints seriously and if needed the complaints procedure can be found at Portsmouth City Council [www.portsmouth.gov.uk](http://www.portsmouth.gov.uk). In the first instance complaints should be put in writing to:

Complaints Manager  
Portsmouth City Council  
Civic Offices  
Guildhall Square  
Portsmouth  
Hants, PO1 2EA

56. **Contacts** The most up to date information on who to contact can be found on the Home to School Transport page at [www.portsmouth.gov.uk/learning](http://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/learning).

### ***Section five: Additional information for schools***

57. **Change of Time of the School Day:** Provided that governing bodies have followed the procedures in statute and national guidance the City Council will seek to re-arrange transport accordingly. However, if additional costs are involved the City Council reserves the right to make arrangements for all or part of those costs to be charged to the school concerned.

58. When a school wishes to temporarily change the time of the school day i.e. at the end of the term, transport will only be provided at the changed end of the day with the prior consent of the manager of the Integrated Transport Unit who must be given at least one month's notice of the change of school day.

59. Where particular classes, year groups or pupils have a start or finish time that is different to most pupils at the school it will not normally be possible for the local authority to make separate travel arrangements. Schools may need to make arrangements to accommodate these pupils.

60. Where a school has, exceptionally, agreed to a reduced timetable for a pupil, for example to support a phased transition, the school will be responsible for organising and paying for any transport other than at the beginning or end of the school day.

61. **Commissioned Placements** When a school commissions a place for a student in an alternative provision, e.g. The Harbour School or Flying Bull Academy, and the student remains on the roll of the school, the commissioner of the place will be responsible for contribution to the cost of any statutory transport that is required.

62. If the walking distance between the student's home and the commissioned placement is less than the statutory walking distance transport will not normally be provided, except where the student meets the criteria for exceptional circumstances, or where the school or the commissioner of the placement agrees to fund the transport.

<b>APPENDIX A - ELIGIBILITY FOR TRAVEL ASSISTANCE UNDER THE STATUTORY CRITERIA FOR CHILDREN AGED 5-16</b>		
<b>Section</b>	<b>Who can we help?</b>	<b>What are the criteria?</b>
1	Children living further than the statutory walking distance from their designated catchment school or a nearer school	<p>Children in Reception Year to aged 8 years old, who live over 2 miles (but less than 6 miles) from their designated catchment school, measured by the shortest walking route between the home and the school, qualifying special school, or a nearer school.</p> <p>Children aged 8 years old to the end of Year 11 who live over 3 miles (but less than 6 miles) from their designated catchment school. This is measured by the shortest walking route between the home and the school, qualifying special school or a nearer school.</p> <p>Generally journey times must not exceed 45 minutes.</p> <p>Where parents express a preference for the designated catchment school, special school or a nearer school, and the school is unable to offer a place, travel assistance will be offered to the next nearest school or special school with a place available, providing the distance criteria outlined above is met.</p>
2	Children with an Education Health or Care Plan	Children attending their designated catchment school, or nearer school, or qualifying special school who are unable to walk to school (accompanied or unaccompanied) by reason of their special education needs, disability or mobility needs.
3	Children of disabled parents	Single parents/carers with a disability (or where both parents/carers have a disability, each parent/carer) must provide evidence from a medical professional stating the impact of their condition on their ability to accompany their primary aged child(ren) or secondary aged child(ren) with special educational needs and disabilities to school. The children must attend their designated catchment school, qualifying special school or a nearer school.
4	Children attending their designated catchment school or a nearer school or a qualifying special school.	Children who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school because the route is deemed unsafe.



<b>FAMILIES ON LOW INCOME WITH PRIMARY AGED CHILDREN - AGE 8 TO AGE 10 YEARS.</b>		
<b>Section</b>	<b>Who can we help?</b>	<b>What are the criteria?</b>
5	Parents/carers with financial responsibility for a child or children and who meet the criteria for low income.	Children aged 8 years to age 10 years, attending their designated catchment school or nearer school, who live over 2 miles from the school measured by the shortest walking route <b>AND</b> who are entitled to free school meals or whose parents/carers are entitled to the <b>MAXIMUM</b> level of working tax credit or universal credit insert limits.

<b>FAMILIES ON LOW INCOME WITH SECONDARY AGED CHILDREN - YEAR 7 - YEAR 11</b>		
<b>Section</b>	<b>Who can we help?</b>	<b>What are the criteria?</b>
6	Parents/carers with financial responsibility for a child or children and who meet the criteria for low income.	Children in Year 7 to Year 11 who live over 2 miles (but less than 6) from their home address to one of the three nearest schools, measured by the shortest walking route <b>AND</b> who are entitled to free school meals or whose parents/carers are entitled to the <b>MAXIMUM</b> level or working tax creditor universal credit *.
7	Parents/carers with financial responsibility for a child or children and who meet the criteria for low income and attend the nearest suitable school preferred on grounds of religion or belief.	Children in Year 7 to Year 11 who live over 2 miles (but not more than 15 miles) from their home address to the nearest suitable school preferred on grounds of religion or belief <b>AND</b> who are entitled to free school meals or whose parents are entitled to the <b>MAXIMUM</b> level of working tax credit or universal credit. **

\* for some students living within the PO6 post code area, one of the three nearest schools may be situated within another Local Authority area. If a parent/carer chooses to send their child to a school outside of the Portsmouth City Council boundary, we will consider transport to the neighbouring Local Authority school, if it is one of the three nearest to the student's home address. However, if a parent/carer wishes to send their child to a school within the Portsmouth City Council boundary, only the three nearest schools within Portsmouth will be considered as the nearest three schools.

\*\* for some students living within the PO6 post code area, the nearest faith school may be situated within another Local Authority area. If a parent/carer chooses to send their child to a faith school outside of Portsmouth, we will consider transport to that neighbouring school, if the



student meets the extended rights criteria. For students living nearer to St Edmunds Catholic School, the designated faith school for Portsmouth residents, we will only consider providing assistance with transport to that school if students meet the extended rights criteria.

## Student Eligibility Grid

	Criteria	Points	How points are awarded
<b>Parent and Family Factors</b>			
1	The applicant is primary school age and the parent or carer of the applicant has other PRIMARY school aged children to escort to their CATCHMENT school, nearer school or another school allocated by Portsmouth City Council Admissions Team. Or the parent/carer has older children with special educational needs or disabilities to escort to their designated place of education and the distance between the education establishment and the home would prevent all of the students from arriving at their educational establishment before the start of the school day.	20	<p>The Access and Entitlement Officer will be responsible for checking walking distances.</p> <p>Evidence of parent/carer working hours may be required. The School Admissions Service will be contacted to ensure parent/carers have requested their DESIGNATED CATCHMENT SCHOOL as a first preference.</p> <p>Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but the decision may be challenged at any subsequent appeal.</p>
2	Difficult Family Circumstances	20	<p>Evidence may be taken from an Early Help Assessment (EHA) or Single Assessment Framework (SAF) or Child in Need Plan (CIN) where one is in place. The EHA/SAF/CIN must support the need for transport assistance to school for the child named in the application.</p> <p>Where there is no EHA/SAF/CIN in place or a parent has refused permission to use the EHA/SAF/CIN,</p>

			<p>evidence from a medical practitioner may be considered.</p> <p>Evidence from Portsmouth City Council Housing may be used where the applicant is living in temporary accommodation or a refuge.</p> <p>Points may also be awarded where there is evidence of domestic abuse; or where a young person in Year 10/11 moves house and the distance between the new house and the school is over the statutory walking distance; or where a parent/carer of a primary aged child or older child with special educational needs or disabilities has a sudden debilitating illness, which makes it difficult for them to escort that child to school.</p> <p>Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but may be challenged at any subsequent appeal.</p>
3	You are the only adult living in the household.	10	<p>Evidence may be requested. Portsmouth City Council database will be used to evidence this information.</p> <p>Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but may be challenged at any subsequent appeal.</p>
4	<p>A family or young person (if the young person is applying for transport in their own right) who receives any of the following benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Income Support</li> <li>• Income-based Jobseekers Allowance</li> </ul>	10	<p>Parent/carers/young people will need to provide a current benefit award letter detailing benefits received, or a copy of a current TC602 Tax Credit Award Letter (all pages).</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Income-related Employment and Support Allowance</li> <li>Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999</li> <li>The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit</li> <li><b>Child Tax Credit only</b>, provided your annual household income (as assessed by HM Revenue &amp; Customs) does not exceed £16,190. <b>Anyone entitled to Working Tax Credit is not entitled to free meals regardless of income</b></li> <li>Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit</li> <li>Universal Credit</li> </ul>		Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer but may be challenged at any subsequent appeal.
5	A parent/carer who has access to a motor vehicle which they are licenced to drive. If NO	5	Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but may be challenged at any subsequent appeal.
6	A parent/carer with a medical or mental health condition who is the only adult responsible for taking a <b>PRIMARY</b> aged child to school, or an older child where there is evidence of special educational needs and disabilities who is unable to walk unaccompanied. Adults with parental responsibility who do not live in the same household may still be expected to escort their children to school, i.e. non-resident parent, other family member.	5	Current and relevant medical evidence will be required from a health professional which specifically states that the parent/carer would not be able to escort their <b>PRIMARY</b> aged child or older child with special educational needs and disabilities from home to school and back home.  Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer but may be challenged at any subsequent appeal.
7	A parent/carer who is a full time primary carer for another family member living in the household.	5	You will need to provide evidence that you are in receipt of 'Carers Allowance' which has been awarded to support a family member living in the household and responsibility for their care would

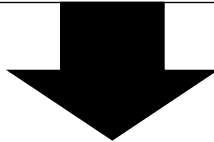
			<p>prevent you from walking a <b>PRIMARY</b> aged child, or older child with special educational needs and disabilities to school.</p> <p>Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer but may be challenged at any subsequent appeal.</p>
8	<p>You and your partner work and your working hours mean it is not possible for you to escort your <b>PRIMARY</b> aged child/children or older child with special educational needs and disabilities who is unable to walk unaccompanied to school.</p>	5	<p>Parents/carers will need to provide a letter from their employer stating the start and finish times of their working day.</p> <p>Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer but may be challenged at any subsequent appeal.</p>
<b>Child and Young Person Factors</b>			
9	<p>You are a young person who is attending college or 6<sup>th</sup> form or other learning provider and were entitled to school transport because of your special educational needs or disability in the year before you reached 16 years of age.</p> <p>Or attended a mainstream school with and Education, Health and Care Plan that specifies full time support</p>	20	<p>Evidence will only be required if you were living outside of the PO1-PO6 post code area at the time you were receiving transport assistance.</p> <p>Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer but may be challenged at any subsequent appeal.</p>
10	<p>Your child is attending a specialist resource provision allocated by the special educational needs and disabilities team.</p>	10	<p>You will not normally be required to provide evidence.</p>
11	<p>Your child or young person has a physical disability or a learning disability and has an Education Health and Care Plan</p>	10	<p>Parents/carers can give permission for evidence to be used from the Education Health and Care Plan.</p>

			Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but may be challenged at subsequent appeal.
12	The child or young person does not have an Education Health and Care Plan but has a medical condition which prevents them from walking to school.	10	Supporting medical evidence from a health professional will be required which specifically states that the child or young person is unable to walk to school.  Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but may be challenged at subsequent appeal.
13	You are a secondary aged pupil or young person over 16 years of age and you are unable to travel independently.	5	Evidence must be provided confirming that the young person is unable to travel independently from a GP or other health professional.  Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but may be challenged at subsequent appeal.
14	You are a student or parent/carer of a Post 16 student with special educational needs or disabilities and you have to walk significantly further (more than one mile) than the usual statutory walking distances outlined on Pages 4 and 5 of this document.	10	You will not normally be required to provide evidence.  Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but may be challenged at subsequent appeal.
<b>Environmental Factors</b>			
15	There is no public transport available on the usual walking route from the child/young person's home to school.	5	You will not normally be required to provide evidence.  Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but may be challenged at subsequent appeal.

## APPENDIX C

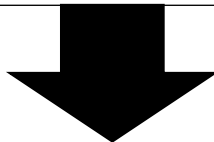
### HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT APPEAL PROCESS

**Stage 1** - The Access and Entitlement Officer assessed the application for Home to School/College Transport using the Exceptional Circumstances Criteria Student Eligibility Grid and if transport is declined the parent/carer/young person may:

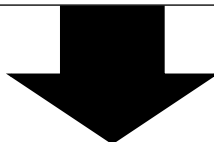


Challenge the decision (within 20 working days) on the basis of:

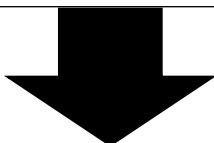
Entitlement  
Distance measurement  
Route Safety  
Points awarded.



**Stage 2** - The Access and Entitlement Officer passes the application to the Special Educational Needs Case Management Decision meeting who review the application and supporting evidence. If the appeal is unsuccessful parents/carers or their representatives can challenge the decision (within 20 working days.).



**Stage 3** - The Access and Entitlement Officer prepares and presents the case on behalf of Portsmouth City Council to the Inclusion Transport Appeal Panel. The parent/carer/young person or their representatives are invited to attend and present their case. If the appeal is unsuccessful the parent/carer/young person can challenge the decision, in writing to the Deputy Director of Education (within 20 working days)



**Stage 4** - The Deputy Director of Education reviews the case and parents/carers/young people are informed of the decision in writing, within 40 working days. The Deputy Director of Education decision letter gives details of how to escalate a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

# **PORTSMOUTH TRAVEL ASSISTANCE STATEMENT FOR POST 16 LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES**

February 2024

### **Section one: Introduction**

1. Portsmouth City Council and its partners have written this Transport Statement to ensure that young people aged 16-19 in Portsmouth are informed and supported with regard to the transport that is available to them to help them access their learning.
2. This statement has been written in accordance with Section 509 of the Education Act 1996 (amended by 2002 Act) and amendments made to the 1996 Act by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (Sections 54 and 57). This policy statement gives consideration to the Department for Education, Post 16 Transport to Education and Training October 2017 statutory guidance for local authorities.
3. There is no statutory entitlement to transport for young people attending Post 16 education (even for young people who had an entitlement when at school) but young people or their parent/carer can apply to be considered for a discretionary award of transport if they have an Education Health and Care Plan.
4. This document provides information about the range of concessionary fares, discounts, subsidies, passes or travel cards available for young people aged 16-19 studying in or close to Portsmouth, and who provides them. It also sets out how Portsmouth City Council will assist with travel expenses for some Post-16 students with an Education Health and Care Plan where there is evidence of Exceptional Circumstances.
5. For information about Portsmouth's travel assistance policy for children of statutory school aged i.e. aged 5-16 see the separate "Portsmouth Travel Assistance Policy for Children of Statutory School Age (5-16)".
6. Support is not normally available for students aged 19 or over to start a new<sup>1</sup> course. To request an additional assessment to be made to establish why it is necessary for the Local Authority, and not the student or the student's family, to make the travel arrangements contact the adult social care helpline on 023 9268 0810 or by email on [ASCoppdAdmin@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:ASCoppdAdmin@portsmouthcc.gov.uk).

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<sup>1</sup> Our definition of a new course is one where the named qualification, learning aims, outcomes, unit/course code or title of the course differ to the previous year. For example an 'A' level in maths delivered over 2 years with the qualification being awarded only at the end of the completion of the second year, is considered a continuing course.

Where a student follows a programme of study such as a Level 1 course the first year, and progresses on to the Level 2, the next, or completes a series of courses where the outcomes differ each year and there is no requirement to progress to the second or further years to successfully complete each year, this is NOT considered a continuing course.



7. Portsmouth will not consider assistance with travel to fee paying schools or colleges, unless the school has been named in a pupil's Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or is the nearest school considered by Portsmouth City Council's SEN team as able to meet the needs of the pupil.
8. The statement applies to young people residing in the Portsmouth City area (Post codes PO1 - PO6). Learners not resident within the post code area should refer to the transport policy issued by their own Local Authority. Where a young person lives at more than one address they will be assessed using the address of their main home. Where time is split equally between two addresses, the address of the parent in receipt of child benefit will be used.
9. The statement covers the period 31 May 2024 to 30 May 2025.

### ***Section Two: Eligibility for Travel Assistance***

10. There is no statutory entitlement to travel assistance for post 16 learners. Travel assistance is provided only for post 16 learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and who have an Education and Health Care Plan who also meet the Exceptional Circumstances Criteria (see paras 13-20 below). Travel assistance is not the provision of arranged transport free of charge, there is a contribution to the cost of any arranged transport.
11. Discounts and concessionary fares may be available to learners through individual education and training providers. Links to their schemes are given at Appendix A, along with contact details to receive the most up to date information.
12. When a course of study is agreed with a learning provider it may be possible to apply for support with travel as set out in Pages 10-13. Please check the travel assistance available with your individual education provider before an application for transport assistance is made to Portsmouth City Council.
13. Some young people with SEND will be eligible for a free bus pass under the national scheme for concessionary bus travel (which also includes the free bus passes for older people). The [Portsmouth eligibility criteria mean that these passes are available to people who:](#)
  - a. are blind or partially sighted, profoundly or severely deaf, without speech
  - b. have a disability, or have suffered an injury, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to walk
  - c. have long term loss of the use of both arms or do not have arms
  - d. have a learning disability – a state of arrested or incomplete development of mind which includes significant impairment of intelligence and social functioning
14. For more information and to apply for a disabled person's bus pass and a companion pass for those who are unable to travel alone on public transport go to the [Council's website](#).

### *Travel Assistance Provided under Exceptional Circumstances Criteria*

15. Post 16 students with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) may be eligible for help under the Exceptional Circumstances Criteria (ECC). Portsmouth City Council recognises the difference that travel assistance can make to the lives of some vulnerable children and young people. However, the funding available for such support is limited and under continued pressure, so the ECC aims to ensure that transport assistance is allocated to those most in need.
16. All applications for non-statutory transport assistance will be assessed using the Student Eligibility Grid, a copy of which is attached at Appendix B.
17. Every application for home to school/college transport will be considered on an individual basis and points will be awarded in accordance with the Student Eligibility Grid. Where a need is considered to be high (70+ points) transport will be offered subject to the relevant contribution. Where points are less than 70, transport will be declined. Where an applicant wishes to appeal against the decision, a letter outlining the reasons can be sent to the Access and Entitlement Officer as outlined in the appeals process at Appendix C.
18. A contribution towards the cost of providing transport for Post-16 students will be payable for each young person travelling. Parent/carers who do not meet the criteria for low income will have to make a contribution of £600.00 per annum, payable in 3 termly instalments of £200.00, in advance.
19. Parents/carers, who meet the criteria for low income, will have to make a financial contribution of £495.00 per annum payable in 3 termly instalments of £165.00, in advance. Families receiving travel assistance through a Personal Budget (see paragraphs 32-34) are not required to make a financial contribution.
20. Parent/carers who receive any of the following benefits are considered to meet the criteria for low income:
  - Income Support
  - Income based Job Seekers Allowance
  - Income based Employment and Support Allowance
  - Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
  - Maximum level of Working Tax Credit
  - Universal Credit - your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)
21. Young people who receive any of these benefits in their own right will also be considered to be from a low income family.
22. To apply for travel assistance please complete an application form on the Portsmouth SEN Local Offer website  
<https://portsmouthlocaloffer.org/services/701/>.

### *Privilege Places*

23. Parents of children with an EHCP who do not meet the Exceptional Circumstances Criteria may apply for a Privilege Place. If a pupil is successful in being awarded a Privilege Place then they are transported on a Home to School vehicle suitable for their needs and picked up/set down at a central point up to one mile from the home address. Privilege Places are available only where there is spare capacity in a vehicle used by children who meet the Statutory Criteria or Exceptional Circumstances Criteria. Decisions on the allocation of any Privilege Places will be taken based on the pupil's special needs and any impact on the other pupils travelling.
24. Applications for Privilege Places are made on an annual basis. The decision about the allocation of Privilege Places is made after the travel assistance for all pupils meeting the Statutory Criteria and Exceptional Circumstances Criteria has been agreed, and therefore may be notified close to the start of the relevant term. The place may be withdrawn with 10 days' notice at any time, if it is needed by a child meeting the Statutory or Exceptional Circumstances Criteria, or where routes are changed or re-tendered, or where the number of children on a route needs to be reduced.
25. The price of a privilege seat is currently<sup>2</sup> £1050.00 payable in 3 termly instalments of £350, paid in advance.
26. To request travel assistance via a Privilege Place email [htstransport@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:htstransport@portsmouthcc.gov.uk).

### ***Section Three: The Travel Assistance Offer***

27. Travel assistance will only be provided at the beginning and end of the school/ college day, and only on the days that the young person is required to be in school/ college. Travel assistance is not provided to enable young people to attend extra-curricular activities or other commitments outside school hours.
28. Travel assistance will be provided in a safe and cost effective manner, taking account of the young person's specific needs, with regard to the best use of the Council's resources, and having regard to the duty on local authorities to promote the use of sustainable travel on journeys to and from places of education in the area. The travel arrangements will also take into account the need to prepare young people for adult life and promote independence, including through supporting independent travel where appropriate. The main travel arrangements are:
29. **Bus or Rail Pass** - This is a free pass for use on public transport and is generally provided for children and young people who meet the Statutory Criteria under the "walking distances" and "extended rights" eligibility criteria.
30. **Transport Vehicles** - Vehicles and drivers are provided by a suitable qualified registered commercial provider working to contractual standards set out by

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<sup>2</sup> Price correct for 2024/25 school year.

Portsmouth City Council. A Passenger Assistant (escort) will not usually be provided for a young person in Post 16 provision unless there are exceptional circumstances supported by the school/college or appropriate professional and agreed by the local authority.

31. Young people are often picked up and set down at a central point (up to one mile from the home address) rather than at their home address. Parents/carers are responsible for the safety of their child until they board and after they exit the vehicle. Where there is evidence that a parent/carer is failing to meet their child on a regular basis a review of entitlement to transport will be made.
32. Where the distance between a pick-up or drop-off point and home or school/college is less than one mile the City Council will not normally provide transport for that part of the journey. Requests for transport to be provided for a home to pick-up point of less than one mile will be considered on an individual basis and will be dependent upon the medical needs of the pupil and or parent/carer and should be supported by appropriate medical evidence.
33. Transport will be arranged so as to be non-stressful. Best practice indicates that the maximum journey time should be no longer than 75 minutes for secondary aged pupils and above. However consideration should be given to traffic conditions within the city. Exceptions may apply for operational reasons, although individual needs will be assessed. Longer journey may be necessary for pupils attending special education needs schools and colleges outside of Portsmouth.
34. **Car Mileage Allowance** - A mileage allowance of 45p per mile will be payable, payable for two round trip journeys per day. Parents/carers should check their car insurance policy, as it may be invalidated if they do not inform their insurance company. The mileage allowance is paid monthly onto a prepaid card, similar to a debit card.
35. **Personal Budget Transport** - Pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan who are eligible for travel assistance can request a personal transport budget. For more information email [htstransport@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:htstransport@portsmouthcc.gov.uk).
36. The Personal Budget is paid onto a prepaid card, similar to a debit card. It can be used however the parent chooses, as long as the young person gets 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/college. Examples of how Personal Transport Budgets include:
  - a. Buying a travel pass for a parent or a trusted adult to accompany the young person to and from school.
  - b. Covering the costs of driving or cycling with the young person to school/college.
  - c. Sharing the costs of the school/college run with another parent such as shared driving responsibilities, walking buses or joint taxi bookings.
37. The amount of the Personal Budget, including elements of mileage, will be paid at a rate determined by the local authority at the time. More details can be found

in Portsmouth City Council's Local Offer.

(<https://portsmouthlocaloffer.org/documents/personal-transport-budgets/>).

38. **Access to Independent Travel Training** - Travel training supports children, young people and adults to get more out of life through learning the skills and building confidence to use public transport safely. Independent Travel Training is currently provided through some courses offered at Havant and South Downs College and City of Portsmouth College. For more information about accessing support for independent travel please email [htstransport@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:htstransport@portsmouthcc.gov.uk).

#### ***Section Four: Additional Important Information***

39. **Change of Address** Parents should notify Portsmouth City Council of any change of address giving as much prior notice as possible but a minimum of 10 working days. Students who change their home address will have their eligibility re-assessed based on the new address. Where a student has been entitled to a bus pass the old bus pass must be returned to the Access & Entitlement Officer before a new bus pass can be issued.
40. **Unacceptable Behaviour** Where a young person is unable to travel safely to school/college, including where the young person's behaviour is such that it may threaten the safety of others, the council reserves the right to suspend transport support for up to two weeks. Parents would normally have been contacted by the transport team, including through a formal warning letter from the Integrated Transport Unit, before such a suspension is made. Should a suspension be considered necessary the parents/carers will be responsible for transporting their young person to school during this period. Transport will then be re-instated.
41. Where there are ongoing issues an officer of the Local Authority will discuss with parents/carers the possible withdrawal of transport and the alternative arrangements which may need to be made, which might include the offer of a public bus pass or personal budget.
42. **Attendance:** Where attendance at school/college is irregular the Local Authority has the right to review transport assistance and withdraw it if attendance remains unacceptable.
43. **Armed Forces Covenant** Portsmouth City Council has signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant. Portsmouth City Council will therefore ensure that the needs of members of the armed services are considered in line with the terms of the covenant when application for transport using the exceptional circumstances criteria are assessed.
44. **Health and Safety and Medical needs:** Health and safety information provided by parents/carers and head teachers/ college principal is gathered as part of the application process. This is then assessed and relevant information will be provided to passenger assistants. All of the Portsmouth passenger assistants have basic first aid training and will have received the information provided by parents about any health needs. Routine medication will not be administered on the journey to and from school. In a medical emergency the passenger assistant or driver will ring 999.

45. **Appeals:** Parents/carers have the right to appeal the decisions made by Portsmouth City Council officers when assessing Travel Assistance for Post 16 Learners. The appeals process is outlined in the Home to School Travel Appeal process detailed in Appendix C.
46. **Assessment Errors:** Where assistance is found to have been granted in error, notice of four weeks will normally be given that travel will be withdrawn to allow families to make other arrangements.
47. Where entitlement has been denied in error transport will be arranged as soon as possible and consideration will be given to reimbursing parents/carers retrospectively, with a time limit of the start of the academic year in which the error was discovered.
48. **Lost and Stolen Bus Passes** Where a bus pass is lost there will be an administration charge made by the bus company to the parents/carers for a replacement. Stolen bus passes will not incur an administration charge if evidence in the form of a police crime number is provided.
49. **Complaints** Portsmouth City Council takes complaints seriously and if needed the complaints procedure can be found at Portsmouth City Council [www.portsmouth.gov.uk](http://www.portsmouth.gov.uk). In the first instance complaints should be put in writing to:
- Complaints Manager
  - Portsmouth City Council
  - Civic Offices
  - Guildhall Square
  - Portsmouth
  - Hants, PO1 2EA
50. **Contacts** The most up to date information on who to contact can be found on the Home to School Transport page at [www.portsmouth.gov.uk/learning](http://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/learning).

Appendix A: **Useful Contacts:**

Access and Entitlement Officer  
Portsmouth City Council  
Civic Offices  
Guildhall Square  
Portsmouth  
Hants  
PO1 2EA

Tel: 023 9282 2251

[www.portsmouth.gov.uk](http://www.portsmouth.gov.uk)

First Bus Travel Shop  
The Hard Interchange  
Portsmouth  
Hants  
PO1 3PA

Tel: 0333 014 3480

[www.firstgroup.com](http://www.firstgroup.com)

Stagecoach  
Walton Road  
Portsmouth  
Hants  
PO6 1TU

Tel: 0345 121 0190

[www.stagecoachbus.com](http://www.stagecoachbus.com)

Government Website

[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

## **Colleges within the City of Portsmouth (PO1-PO6)**

City of Portsmouth College  
Tangier Road  
Portsmouth  
Hants  
PO3 6PZ

Telephone: 023 9266 7521

[www.city-of-portsmouth-college.ac.uk](http://www.city-of-portsmouth-college.ac.uk)

## **Local Colleges outside of the City of Portsmouth (PO1-PO6)**

Havant & South Downs College (Havant Campus)  
New Road  
Havant  
Hants  
PO9 1QL

Telephone: 023 9387 9999

[www.hsdac.ac.uk](http://www.hsdac.ac.uk)

Havant and South Downs College (South Downs College)  
College Road  
Waterlooville  
Hants  
PO7 8AA

Telephone: 023 9387 9999

[www.hsdac.ac.uk](http://www.hsdac.ac.uk)

Oaklands Catholic School and 6<sup>th</sup> Form College  
Stakes Hill Road  
Waterlooville  
Hants  
PO7 7BW

Telephone: 023 9225 9214

[www.oaklandscatholicschool.org](http://www.oaklandscatholicschool.org)

**City of Portsmouth College and Havant and South Downs College provide a range of discounted travel options. For the latest information see their websites:**

<https://www.city-of-portsmouth-college.ac.uk/school-leavers/student-support/travel-support/>

<https://www.hsdac.ac.uk/life-at-hsdac/finance-and-travel-support/student-travel/>



## Appendix B: Student Eligibility Grid

	Criteria	Points	How points are awarded
<b>Parent and Family Factors</b>			
1	The applicant is primary school age and the parent or carer of the applicant has other PRIMARY school aged children to escort to their CATCHMENT school, nearer school or another school allocated by Portsmouth City Council Admissions Team. Or the parent/carer has older children with special educational needs or disabilities to escort to their designated place of education and the distance between the education establishment and the home would prevent all of the students from arriving at their educational establishment before the start of the school day.	20	<p>The Access and Entitlement Officer will be responsible for checking walking distances.</p> <p>Evidence of parent/carer working hours may be required. The School Admissions Service will be contacted to ensure parent/carers have requested their DESIGNATED CATCHMENT SCHOOL as a first preference.</p> <p>Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but the decision may be challenged at any subsequent appeal.</p>
2	Difficult Family Circumstances	20	<p>Evidence may be taken from an Early Help Assessment (EHA) or Single Assessment Framework (SAF) or Child in Need Plan (CIN) where one is in place. The EHA/SAF/CIN must support the need for transport assistance to school for the child named in the application.</p> <p>Where there is no EHA/SAF/CIN in place or a parent has refused permission to use the EHA/SAF/CIN, evidence from a medical practitioner may be considered.</p>

			<p>Evidence from Portsmouth City Council Housing may be used where the applicant is living in temporary accommodation or a refuge.</p> <p>Points may also be awarded where there is evidence of domestic abuse; or where a young person in Year 10/11 moves house and the distance between the new house and the school is over the statutory walking distance; or where a parent/carer of a primary aged child or older child with special educational needs or disabilities has a sudden debilitating illness, which makes it difficult for them to escort that child to school.</p> <p>Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but may be challenged at any subsequent appeal.</p>
3	You are the only adult living in the household.	10	<p>Evidence may be requested. Portsmouth City Council database will be used to evidence this information.</p> <p>Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but may be challenged at any subsequent appeal.</p>
4	<p>A family or young person (if the young person is applying for transport in their own right) who receives any of the following benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Income Support</li> <li>• Income-based Jobseekers Allowance</li> <li>• Income-related Employment and Support Allowance</li> </ul>	10	<p>Parent/carers/young people will need to provide a current benefit award letter detailing benefits received, or a copy of a current TC602 Tax Credit Award Letter (all pages).</p> <p>Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer but may be challenged at any subsequent appeal.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999</li> <li>• The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit</li> <li>• <b>Child Tax Credit only</b>, provided your annual household income (as assessed by HM Revenue &amp; Customs) does not exceed £16,190. <b>Anyone entitled to Working Tax Credit is not entitled to free meals regardless of income</b></li> <li>• Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit</li> <li>• Universal Credit</li> </ul>		
5	A parent/carer who has access to a motor vehicle which they are licenced to drive. If NO	5	Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but may be challenged at any subsequent appeal.
6	A parent/carer with a medical or mental health condition who is the only adult responsible for taking a <b>PRIMARY</b> aged child to school, or an older child where there is evidence of special educational needs and disabilities who is unable to walk unaccompanied. Adults with parental responsibility who do not live in the same household may still be expected to escort their children to school, i.e. non-resident parent, other family member.	5	Current and relevant medical evidence will be required from a health professional which specifically states that the parent/carer would not be able to escort their <b>PRIMARY</b> aged child or older child with special educational needs and disabilities from home to school and back home.  Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer but may be challenged at any subsequent appeal.
7	A parent/carer who is a full time primary carer for another family member living in the household.	5	You will need to provide evidence that you are in receipt of 'Carers Allowance' which has been awarded to support a family member living in the household and responsibility for their care would prevent you from walking a <b>PRIMARY</b> aged child, or

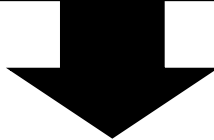
			<p>older child with special educational needs and disabilities to school.</p> <p>Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer but may be challenged at any subsequent appeal.</p>
8	<p>You and your partner work and your working hours mean it is not possible for you to escort your <b>PRIMARY</b> aged child/children or older child with special educational needs and disabilities who is unable to walk unaccompanied to school.</p>	5	<p>Parents/carers will need to provide a letter from their employer stating the start and finish times of their working day.</p> <p>Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer but may be challenged at any subsequent appeal.</p>
<b>Child and Young Person Factors</b>			
9	<p>You are a young person who is attending college or 6<sup>th</sup> form or other learning provider and were entitled to school transport because of your special educational needs or disability in the year before you reached 16 years of age.</p> <p>Or attended a mainstream school with and Education, Health and Care Plan that specifies full time support</p>	20	<p>Evidence will only be required if you were living outside of the PO1-PO6 post code area at the time you were receiving transport assistance.</p> <p>Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer but may be challenged at any subsequent appeal.</p>
10	<p>Your child is attending a specialist resource provision allocated by the special educational needs and disabilities team.</p>	10	<p>You will not normally be required to provide evidence.</p>
11	<p>Your child or young person has a physical disability or a learning disability and has an Education Health and Care Plan</p>	10	<p>Parents/carers can give permission for evidence to be used from the Education Health and Care Plan.</p>

			Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but may be challenged at subsequent appeal.
12	The child or young person does not have an Education Health and Care Plan but has a medical condition which prevents them from walking to school.	10	Supporting medical evidence from a health professional will be required which specifically states that the child or young person is unable to walk to school.  Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but may be challenged at subsequent appeal.
13	You are a secondary aged pupil or young person over 16 years of age and you are unable to travel independently.	5	Evidence must be provided confirming that the young person is unable to travel independently from a GP or other health professional.  Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but may be challenged at subsequent appeal.
14	You are a student or parent/carer of a Post 16 student with special educational needs or disabilities and you have to walk significantly further (more than one mile) than the usual statutory walking distances outlined on Pages 4 and 5 of this document.	10	You will not normally be required to provide evidence.  Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but may be challenged at subsequent appeal.
<b>Environmental Factors</b>			
15	There is no public transport available on the usual walking route from the child/young person's home to school.	5	You will not normally be required to provide evidence.  Points will be awarded at the discretion of the Access and Entitlement Officer, but may be challenged at subsequent appeal.

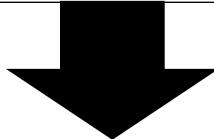
APPENDIX C

**HOME TO SCHOOL/COLLEGE TRANSPORT APPEAL PROCESS**

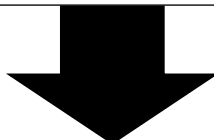
**Stage 1** - The Access and Entitlement Officer assessed the application for Home to School/College Transport using the Exceptional Circumstances Criteria Student Eligibility Grid and if transport is declined the parent/carer/young person may:



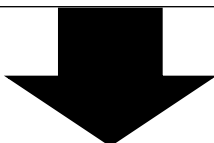
Challenge the decision (within 20 working days) on the basis of:  
Entitlement  
Distance measurement  
Route Safety  
Points awarded.



**Stage 2** - The Access and Entitlement Officer passes the application to the Special Educational Needs Case Management Decision meeting who review the application and supporting evidence. If the appeal is unsuccessful parents/carers or their representatives can challenge the decision (within 20 working days.)



**Stage 3** - The Access and Entitlement Officer prepares and presents the case on behalf of Portsmouth City Council to the Inclusion Transport Appeal Panel. The parent/carer/young person or their representatives are invited to attend and present their case. If the appeal is unsuccessful the parent/carer/young person can challenge the decision, in writing to the Deputy Director of Education (within 20 working days)



**Stage 4** - The Deputy Director of Education reviews the case and parents/carers/young people are informed of the decision in writing, within 40 working days. The Deputy Director of Education decision letter gives details of how to escalate a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

# Agenda Item 6



**Portsmouth**  
CITY COUNCIL

**Title of meeting:** Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education

**Date of meeting:** 22 February 2024

**Subject:** Appointment at UTC Portsmouth

**Report by:** Alison Critchley, Head of Sufficiency and Resources

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Suzy Horton, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education

**Wards affected:** All

**Key decision:** Yes/No

**Full Council decision:** Yes/No

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## 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To seek agreement to the appointment of Portsmouth City Council's Chief Executive, Natalie Brahma-Pearl, to the UTC Portsmouth as a member of the company.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Natalie Brahma-Pearl, Portsmouth City Council's Chief Executive, be appointed by the Council to the UTC Portsmouth as a member of the company.**

## 3. Background

- 3.1 The UTC Portsmouth is a specialist college for young people aged 14-19 which opened in September 2017. The curriculum is focused on the STEM subjects of science, technology, engineering and maths, offering both academic and technical qualifications. The UTC also has exceptionally strong links with local employers. The College was judged to be "outstanding" when last inspected by Ofsted in June 2021.
- 3.2 The Department for Education agreed last year to the UTC Portsmouth opening a second UTC in Southampton as part of the same Trust.
- 3.3 The UTC Portsmouth is a company limited by guarantee, and an exempt charity whose principal regulator is the Secretary of State for Education. Portsmouth City Council is one of the original sponsors of the UTC. The UTC's Articles state that Portsmouth City Council appoints one of the members of the company. Members have no legal liability for the operations and undertaking of UTC Portsmouth, but they have the power to appoint and dismiss governors (who are also trustees of the charity and directors of the company).

3.4 David Williams, the former Chief Executive of Portsmouth City Council, was previously the Council's appointed member of the UTC company.

**4. Reasons for recommendations**

4.1 Following Natalie Brahma-Pearl's appointment as the Council's Chief Executive it is recommended that she succeed David Williams as the Council's appointed member of the UTC company to maintain the same level of strategic relationship with the UTC.

**5. Integrated impact assessment**

5.1 No relevant impacts.

**6. Finance comments**

6.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from the Recommendation within this report. In the event that financial implications are identified at a later stage a further report will be brought to the Portfolio.

**7. Legal implications**

7.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Signed by: Sarah Daly, Director of Children, Families and Education

**Appendices:**

**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by ..... on .....

.....

Signed by Councillor Suzy Horton, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education: