

Personal Transport Budgets – Post 16

2017/18



An Information Guide for parents www.sensupportstockport.uk



STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Personal Travel Budget (PTB) for children and Young People with additional needs

What is a Personal Transport Budget?

A Personal Travel Budget (PTB) is provided to parents or carers of children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) who are eligible for travel assistance. It allows families to make flexible arrangements, monitor the quality of their child's transport directly or they could work with other families to achieve the best possible travel arrangements for their children.



Personal Travel Budgets will help you to arrange your child's home to school travel arrangements in a way that suits your personal circumstances. It is a payment designed to help you make any arrangements needed, which will enable you to facilitate your child accessing school.

You would use the budget to ensure your child attends school every day and is able to arrive on time and in a fit state to learn. For example, it can help towards covering the cost of running a family car or arranging with another member of the family or friends to assist with childcare enabling you to make the journey.

What are the benefits of personal travel budgets?

- It provides freedom and flexibility for your family to choose the most appropriate travel arrangements for your child that best fit your personal circumstances
- It provides choice and control over how funding is used to get your child to and from school on time in a way that suits you, your child and your family.
- It ensures resources are distributed in a fair way according to need
- It allows you to explore opportunities to share with other parents and potentially increase your buying power
- It offers families an alternative to the traditional services that the council can provide.
- It provides parents with a direct link to the school and more frequent opportunities to discuss a child/young person's progress with teachers that they may not have previously had.

Who can be considered for a PTB?

A Personal Transport Budget (PTB) is available to children and young people with an EHC plan and who have been assessed as eligible to receive home to school transport. The PTB is granted at the discretion of the Local Authority and is not automatically granted on request. There is no automatic right to receive a PTB in place of alternative transport assistance, which you may have been offered,

Parents/carers seeking to access the PTB must be found to be eligible for transport assistance being considered for a PTB.

From September 2016 Stockport council is to introduce a fee for all students aged 16-19, who receive additional travel support. This fee will be capped in line with the current cost of an annual student travel pass (currently **£510.00).

Post 16 courses are for 35 weeks and the example below will be pro rata to reflect this.

For low income families*, the charge is **£255 per year.

** These charges will be reflected out of the annual lump sum.

*Low income families are defined as those in receipt of income support or an equivalent benefit, or being in receipt of an annual household income less than £16,190. This is subject to parliamentary change.

How much would I expect to receive?

The amount of money that is awarded is based on the distance between your home and the school your child attends. The distance measured is based on the safest walking route.

Example:

A 4 mile journey to school each day would provide a monthly PTB of:

Lump sum payment	Mileage	Trips
£648.17 for 35 weeks	0.41 per mile For 35 weeks per annum	4 (this includes the journey to school and return trips)

Total £163.29

per month – based on 35 weeks

Should your child be absent from school, even if this is through no fault of theirs, you will be notified of the reduction that will be made in the following month's payment to reflect absenteeism, before that month's payment is due to be paid.

Would I receive the PTB until my child finishes at the school he/she attends?

The PTB is not guaranteed until a child leaves the school they were attending when you first applied and received your PTB. It will be reviewed on a regular basis and the Local Authority will review your child's attendance records and will also take into account the current transport arrangements that may be provided by the local authority at that time.

At least annually, the review will evaluate whether it remains cost effective to be provided and new transport options may mean this is no longer the case.



What if I change my address?

You must write or email the Travel Coordination Team of any change of address or school as soon as possible giving at least 3 weeks' notice. Your child's eligibility to receive a PTB would then be reassessed to/from your new address or to/from your child's new school. Whilst you may have received a PTB previously, it does not mean you will be automatically continue to receive the budget from another address to the same school or from the same address to another school. Any transport arrangements, until your child has been reassessed will be the parent's responsibility to arrange.

What can I spend the PTB on?

The PTB can be spend in a variety of ways, as long as your child gets to and from school on time and in a way that ensures their safety, encourages attendance and does not negatively affect their ability to learn once they are at school. Some ideas of how you can spend the PTB include:

- Purchasing a travel pass for yourself or a trusted adult to accompany your child on public transport
- To cover fuel costs or wear and tear on your car
- Paying other people to take your child to school or college when you can't
- Arrange shared travel arrangements with other parents, such as shared driving responsibilities, walking buses or joint taxi arrangements
- Overcoming barriers that may prevent you accompanying your child to school, e.g. travel / childcare arrangements for siblings

Will it have an impact of other benefits?

No. PTBs have no impact on any other benefits you might receive.

Will I need to regularly show the council how I am spending the PTB?



No. We want to keep the flexibility and control with parents and we will keep monitoring to a minimum. We will pick up any potential issues through the schools recording of the child/young person's attendance and fitness to learn once at school.

How and when will my PTB be paid?

The payments would be made over an 11 month period with no payments being made in August due to school closure. Payments would be paid directly into your bank account.

How do I apply?

All applications for a PTB should be made to the travel co-ordination team

Contact details: Travel Co-ordination Service:

Email TravelCo-ordination@stockport.gov.uk

Tel: [0161 474 2504](tel:01614742504) / [2505 /2508](tel:016125052508)

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Will the payments be taxed?

A. No. The payments are not taxed as the budget is a payment made in relation to the child / young person not the parents. It is used to enable your child to get to and from school each day and should not be used for any other purpose.

Q. My child travels in a taxi with other children. What would happen to that vehicle if one of the parents is granted a PTB?

A. The Local Authority would continue to provide you with the appropriate transport assistance but would review arrangements to see if you or the parents would prefer a PTB. The vehicle would only be withdrawn if all the children occupying the vehicle were granted a PTB and where the total cost of a PTB's collectively was less than the cost of procuring the existing transport arrangements.



Q. If I have two or more children with statements/ EHC plans all of whom are eligible for transport assistance can I claim a PTB for each child?

A. You can claim for each child but whilst the first child would receive 100% of the PTB, the second child would only receive the mileage and not a lump sum payment. If both children are at the same school only one PTB can be claimed.

Q. Do I need to collect any receipts for petrol etc?

A. No. Once the payments are made to you, you can use them any way you wish in order to get your child to and from school every day in a safe and legal way.

Q. What happens if my child is ill?

A. Your child's attendance record will be reviewed and the payments for any days that they are absent will be deducted from the following PTB payment. If your child's attendance drops below an acceptable level without reason, you will be at risk of having your PTB withdrawn.



Q. My child has previously travelled on a taxi funded by the local authority. If I am granted a PTB, can I place my child on the same taxi now and again and pay the taxi company separately?

A. No. Once you have been granted a PTB, your child's seat on the vehicle will either be cancelled or given to another child. You can ask the same taxi company to provide you with a vehicle and pay them to take your child to and from school, however, this would be through a private arrangement between yourself and the taxi company.

Q. If I apply and am granted a PTB but find that at a later date it doesn't work with my child or my circumstances change, can I go back to the previous transport arrangement?

A. Yes. You must give us 28 days' notice to stop payments into your bank account and to rearrange transport for your child. Please be aware that this may not necessarily be the same taxi company or driver that your child may previously had as no guarantee can be given that the arrangements will stay the same.

General Information

When your application has been assessed you will be informed of the decision in writing by email/letter. Your PTB will be reviewed on a regular basis and if you have not previously advised the team of a change of address or change of school for your child, the PTB may be withdrawn.

When your child's PTB is reviewed, the team review their attendance records to ensure that the level of attendance is satisfactory in order to continue your PTB. Once this information has been received and the review completed, the decision to continue or to withdraw the PTB will be advised to you.

If you are granted a PTB, you may wish to discuss this with your child's school as they may be in a position to put you in touch with other parents who also receive a PTB. You could look at working collectively to ensure the best use of the PTB for the children and families.