Local Authority (LA) Transport Policy Statement 2011/12
Transport Policy Statement for learners aged 16-18 in further education and continuing learners aged 19 and over

Name of Local Authority: Somerset County Council
Department Responsible: Transporting Somerset

1. Summary of Policy Statement and Main Objectives
Somerset County Council, through a range of partnership activities, seek to maximise opportunities to increase concessionary travel to 14 –19 yrs students and continuing learners aged 19+ yrs across the County.

Through the Somerset Post 14 Strategic Transport Partnership and other partnerships the main partner providers of transport to post 14 learners work together to ensure that the individual needs of learners are paramount whilst balancing equality of access with value for money by :-

- Identifying the transport implications of the national 14 – 19 reforms and seeking solutions
- Developing a collective strategy relating to post 14 school/college transport within the context of Government, YPLA (Young Peoples Learning Agency) and Somerset County Council transport strategies
- Building on the review of post 16 education and training in Somerset and mapping of existing and predicted travel to learn patterns, assessing the extent to which participation, retention and achievement rates are affected by travel issues.
- Identifying gaps in transport provision and filling those gaps to improve accessibility to education and to maximise choice of learning venue.
- Ensuring that transport issues impacting on learners of all ages are reflected in the Somerset Future Transport Plan and the Somerset Accessibility Planning Strategy, including developing protocols for sharing information and contributing to the development and delivery of related Action Plans
- Improving transport information for all young people and adult learners
- Agreeing spending priorities with local Education Providers
- Focusing on improving transport for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities by providing specialised individual transport where needed or through the Somerset Independent Travel Training Scheme in order to increase the independence for this group of learners
- Improving transport links in deeply rural areas by extending the provision of demand responsive transport schemes and by supporting other transport initiatives for young people to increase affordable access to learning for young people, improve their employment opportunities and reduce social exclusion
- Ensuring transport provision removes barriers to learning and training for those from vulnerable groups and/or those most likely not to be in education, employment or training.

2. Details of all concessionary fares, discounts, subsidies, passes or travel cards available for learners aged 16–18 and who provides them.

Somerset County Council - the Local Authority (LA) offer a student ‘County Ticket’ or 'County Ticket Plus' to enable students to attend the learning centre of their choice provided applicants meet the Somerset County Council eligibility criteria of:-

- Being over the statutory school leaving age of 16 on 1 September 2010.
- Attending a course of further education.
A County Ticket will cost £535.00 per year, and County Ticket Plus will cost £645.00 per year. There is a direct debit option to enable students to spread the payment over the year.

Petrol allowances are available at 18 pence per mile up to a limit of £135.00 per annum to allow students living more than three miles from their nearest bus stop to gain access to and from the local bus network.

Where space is available on the contracted School Transport fleet, students may also apply for a Student Contract Ticket which costs £431.55. As the average cost of a contract place is £815 per year, the amount by which the Somerset County Council subsidises this is over £383 per ticket.

Post 16 students attending Diploma courses, Foundation Learning and Apprenticeships can access both college/school-based provision and work placements by using the County Ticket.

Diploma students in Years 10 and 11 travelling to other establishments for Principal Learning will be provided with transport broadly in line with the transport provisions contained within the Education & Inspections Act 2006 for pre 16 students.

Transport to academies will be on the same basis as for local authority schools with sixth forms (i.e. free pre 16 for those that qualify and County Ticket/Student Contract Ticket for post 16 students).

Currently no form of means testing is applied to the County Ticket, County Ticket Plus, Student Contract Ticket or petrol allowance given to students living more than 3 miles from a bus stop.

Somerset County Council, in Partnership with Somerset College in Taunton, also provide subsidised fares (approx half of the normal adult price) on the Taunton Park & Ride bus service from sites at Silk Mills and Taunton Gateway which serve Somerset College.

2(a) Additional arrangements made by Colleges and Schools to support Transport provision and costs.

Bridgwater College make additional arrangements for transport by providing an annual contribution of £140,706 to assist in the funding of bus services serving the College. Bridgwater College also provide their own minibus service from Wiveliscombe and from September 2010 from Castle Cary and Shepton Mallet.

Bridgwater College also operate inter site travel for students on entry level courses from Bridgwater College to Cannington College on a daily basis, as well as twice weekly inter site travel for students who have their main programmes at either site but have added A levels or Animal Management as enrichment. This inter site travel is at no cost to the students however and is paid for solely by the College.

Strode College make additional arrangements for transport by providing an annual contribution of £70,000 to assist in the funding of bus services serving the College.

Yeovil College provide direct funding for two bus services from Ilminster and Curry Rivel into the College site.

In addition to this Yeovil College also offer assistance in certain circumstances if a student lives over three miles from a bus stop by offering a petrol allowance at 10p per mile to the nearest stop for students resident in Dorset (Somerset County Council provide a petrol allowance for students living over three miles from the nearest bus stop in Somerset).
Somerset College, in partnership with Somerset County Council provide a subsidy on fares charged to students on the Taunton Park & Ride service (see section 2 above)

3. What times during the day can learners use their travel pass or obtain concessionary fares?

The County Ticket entitles the holder to travel throughout Somerset and on cross border routes to and from Wiltshire, Dorset and Devon. The County Ticket Plus entitles the holder to the same as above plus cross border routes to and from North Somerset and Bath & North East Somerset. Unless stated otherwise, students may use these flexible tickets to travel at any time of the day, evenings, on weekends and during vacations. Full details of operators providing unrestricted and restricted County Ticket services can be found on the application form.

4. Will support continue to be made available to learners who reach 19 whilst continuing on a course?

Yes

5. How will learners be assessed to see if they are eligible for support? e.g. means-testing or must they be on State Benefits?

Please refer to section 2 above for the general eligibility criteria.

There is currently no means testing for assistance with travel costs and the student contribution to the cost of their subsidised ticket is the same for all. However, those suffering financial hardship or personal problems can access additional assistance through 16-19 Bursary (which is means tested) provided by colleges and sixth formers.

Students who have recently left ‘care’ or who are estranged from their parents may be eligible to have their contribution to travel waived.

6. What help with transport is provided for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities including those over 19, or learners facing other difficulties in following their courses?

The students who may benefit from extra help with transport include those whom the LA (Local Authority) deems have no way of receiving the education that they need without access to special transport facilities. In Somerset it has been decided that this should apply to young people who have special educational needs (learning difficulties) and/or a physical and/or mental disability and who cannot make their own way to the relevant education establishment. By this it is meant that they cannot use a public service bus, cannot live independently in lodgings (to be near to the institution) or who cannot be conveyed by their parents or carers.

LAs also have a duty to have regard to any student’s or parental wish for the student to be provided with education or training at a particular establishment where that wish is based upon the student’s/parents religion or belief.

6(a) Students of 6th Form Age with learning difficulties and/or a disability.

When requested to do so the LA will decide upon the transport needs of individual young people of 6th form age (16 –19 years) and will decide what financial assistance to make in respect of the reasonable cost of any transport that is deemed to be necessary. In some cases the LA will procure special transport where it assesses that the proposed course is appropriate and special transport arrangements are necessary in order for the student to access the course.
In such cases the LA will meet the full costs of that special transport. Please also see section 6(c) below.

6 (b) Adult learners with learning difficulties and/or a disability.

The LA will also consider applications for assistance with reasonable transport costs from adult students aged 19 – 25 years. Each case will be considered on its merits and the LA will decide what financial assistance to make in respect of the reasonable cost of any transport that is provided. If the LA decides that it is prepared to procure special individual transport for an adult learner because it considers that the student’s course, course venue, and special transport is absolutely appropriate and necessary then the special transport will be offered free of charge. Please also see section 6(c) below.

Adult students aged over 19 years who secure a place at an education/training institution outside the further and higher education sectors (for example at a specialist private institution) and whose place is funded by the Young Peoples Learning Agency (YPLA) may apply for transport assistance and if the LA agree that the transport is necessary it will be provided free of charge.

In all other cases the LA has discretion to decline or offer the student the whole, or part, of the cost of travel as it thinks fit.

6 (c) How are applications for transport assessed for students with learning disabilities and/or other disabilities?

When the LA receives an application for transport to the relevant establishment, it considers the following information:-

- Whether the student is a Somerset resident;
- The age and needs of the student;
- The nature of the available route to the relevant establishment and any reasonable alternative route;
- The length of the journey;
- Whether the student can use public service vehicles. Lack of public service vehicles in an area is not in itself a reason to provide individual transport;
- The benefit that the student will get from the course. Here the LA will take into account any previous post 16 education and must decide if the course will really make a difference to the life and future prospects of the student. Reports are requested from Connexions officers and other relevant agencies in order to help the LA to make this decision;
- Whether the student is applying for transport to the relevant establishment. This means to their nearest college, 6th form college or school offering their chosen or a comparable course. In the case of a pupil of sixth form age with a Statement of Special Educational Needs it means the school, if any, identified in Part 4 of the Statement.
- The cost of the transport to be provided against any alternative means of facilitating attendance - e.g. could the student go into lodgings close to the college or be conveyed by parents if they have a mobility vehicle for the student etc;
- Students will have the opportunity to choose between establishments provided it is reasonable to do so. However, the cost of providing specialised transport to a college, Sixth Form College or school and the suitability of the course will be factors that the LA must consider when making decisions about support with transport. Where the LA agrees to meet the full cost of transport, students should attend the nearest relevant college, 6th form college or school offering the same or a comparable course.
- In some cases the LA may decide that a young person would benefit from a different type of setting to aid their development such as attendance at a Day Centre or employment within the Adult & Social Care Service rather than further education at a college or school.
6 (d) How do students with learning disabilities and/or other disabilities apply for transport?

Students will need to complete a TP16 application form for students under 19 years of age, or a TP19 application form for students over 19 years of age. These are available from Post 16 establishments and should be completed with, and signed by the education establishment concerned.

**Applications are granted for one academic year and therefore an application for transport must be completed for each subsequent academic year of a course.**

Each subsequent application will be assessed taking into account the student's progression on the course and their individual needs. The LA will take advice from the education establishment attended, social worker (if appropriate), Connexions officer and where appropriate other agencies.

**It should not be assumed that assistance with transport will automatically be provided each year.** In some cases the LA may decide that a young person would benefit from a different type of setting to aid their development such as attendance at a Day Centre or employment within the Adult & Social Care Service rather than further education at a college or school.

For applications received by **31 March** staff in the LA’s Transporting Somerset team aim to notify the student of the result of their application in writing within 30 days of receipt of the application. This may take longer where further information in support of the application is sought from other agencies such as Connexions, or if the application is received after **30 June. Therefore it is really important that students make an early application for assistance with transport.**

6 (e) Independent Travel Training Scheme

Transporting Somerset employ Independent Travel Trainers who work with appropriate students to train them to travel independently. Students are trained in road safety awareness, using money for travel and safe independent travel. Once the independent travel training has been completed the student will be issued with a County Ticket **free of charge for one year initially (subject to annual review)** which will allow them to travel to and from School/College on all local bus services within Somerset without charge.

6 (f) Appeals Process

If a student is not happy with the service they receive they should contact Transporting Somerset (see the contact details below) and ask for details of the Somerset County Council Complaints procedure.

If a student wishes to appeal against a decision made by the Council concerning their transport assistance entitlement then Transporting Somerset will be able to offer advice and guidance about the review process.

6 (g) Useful Contact Numbers for students with learning disabilities and/or other disabilities

**Contact the Environment Directorate on 0845 345 9155**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avalon School</td>
<td>01458 443081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penrose School</td>
<td>01278 423660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selworthy School</td>
<td>01823 284970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerset College (Taunton)</td>
<td>01823 366366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Huish College</td>
<td>01823 270171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strode College</td>
<td>01458 844400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeovil College</td>
<td>01935 423921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridgwater College</td>
<td>01278 455464</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Is there mobility/independence training for learners who face difficulty with transport?

Yes, please refer to para. 6 (e) above.

8. When should learners start to apply for transport support?

As early as possible, preferably during the Spring or Summer terms prior to their start at college/sixth form/school in the following September. All students should apply by the 12th August to ensure that a County Ticket can be produced in time for the start of term. Applicants with Learning disabilities and/or other disabilities should refer to the information provided in section 6 above.

9. What help is available to learners who need to travel to a course that is beyond the Somerset Local Authority area?

If the chosen course is unavailable in Somerset or the ‘out of county’ college is the nearest college to the student’s home that offers the course, or a similar suitable course, then, provided they meet the eligibility criteria, they will be offered a County Ticket or County Ticket Plus. If there is no public transport available then a travel allowance will be offered up to a maximum of £135.00 per year.

10. What help is available for learners who attend a further education institution which is beyond daily travelling distance and they need to lodge away from home?

Termly travel is offered i.e. one journey at the start of term and one journey at the end of term. Some students who need to live away from home in order to attend the course may apply for a ‘Residential Bursary’ and should enquire about this at the Further Education institution they will attend.

11. Information about all points of contact for learners seeking transport support (including website addresses).

Somerset County Council, Transporting Somerset, County Hall, Taunton, TA1 4DY. 
WWW.Somerset.gov.uk

Transport to 16+ schools and FE Colleges – telephone 01823 355668
Post 16 Transport Policy Website
http://moneytolearn.direct.gov.uk

Somerset County Council Moving Forward Website
WWW.movingsomersetforward.co.uk

Somerset 14-19 Area Prospectus Website
WWW.movingonmovingup.co.uk

Discretionary Learner Support Funds for students in school sixth forms – telephone 01823 355794

Discretionary Learner Support Funds for students attending FE colleges – telephone the individual college (see contact details given below)

For Local Bus Services contact Traveline: 0871 200 22 33
Community Transport /Dial-Ride services  0845 345 9155

Moped Loan Scheme information

**Somerset Colleges and Schools with Sixth Forms** (which also offer assistance with transport and 16-19 Bursary funds):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bridgwater College</td>
<td>01278 455464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerset College</td>
<td>01823 366366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strode College</td>
<td>01458 844400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Huish College</td>
<td>01823 308000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yeovil College</td>
<td>01935 423921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Castle School</td>
<td>01823 274073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Space, Heathfield Community School</td>
<td>01823 414173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The West Somerset Community College</td>
<td>01643 706061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holyrood Academy</td>
<td>01460 260100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wadham Community School</td>
<td>01460 270123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huish Episcopi Academy</td>
<td>01458 250501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frome College</td>
<td>01373 465353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Blue School</td>
<td>01749 678799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The King Alfred School</td>
<td>01278 784881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Kings of Wessex Academy Trust</td>
<td>01934 742608</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Neighbouring Colleges:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bath College</td>
<td>01225 312191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicton College</td>
<td>01395 562400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Devon College</td>
<td>01884 235200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exeter College</td>
<td>0845 111 6000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exe College</td>
<td>01761 433161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiltshire College Lackham</td>
<td>01249 466873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiltshire College Trowbridge</td>
<td>01225 756264</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Weston College 01934 411411

http://www.weston.ac.uk/

Major Bus Operators in Somerset:

Bakers Coaches 01934 635635
48 Locking Rd, Weston-super-Mare

Berkeley Coach & Travel 01761 413196
Berkeley Garage, Ham Lane, Paulton, Bristol BS18 5PL

Damory Coaches 01258 452545
Unit 1, Clump Farm, Higher Shaftesbury Rd, Blandford Forum DT11 7TD

First Somerset & Avon 08456 064446
Enterprise House, Easton Rd, Bristol BS5 0DZ

First Hants & Dorset 0870 010 6022
Edward Street, Weymouth DT4 7DP

Frome Minibuses 01373 471474
George’s Ground, Marston Trading Estate, Frome BA11 4RP

Hatch Green Coaches 01823 480338
Hatch Green Garage, Hatch Beauchamp, TA3 6TN

Libra Travel 01373 812255
Buckland Down Cottage, Buckland Down, Buckland Dinham
Frome BA11 2RG

Nippybus 01935 823888
Great Western Rd, Martock TA12 6HB

Quantock Motor Services 01823 251140
The Coal Yard, Broadgauge Business Park, Station Rd, Bishops Lydeard TA4 3BU

Rendalls Coaches 01278 426966
Boards Rd, Bridgwater TA6 4BB

Ridlers Coaches 01398 323398
Jury Rd Garage, Dulverton TA22 9EJ

South West Coaches 01963 33124
Southgate Rd, Wincanton BA9 9EB

Stagecoach South West 01823 672247
Victor House, Greenham Business Park, Wellington TA21 0LR

Taylors Coaches 01935 423177
Brompton Way, Lynx trading Estate, Yeovil BA20 2HP

Webberbus 0800 096 3039
Unit 8C, Beech Business Park, Bridgwater TA6 4FF