

Appendix C: Home to School Transport Route Planning & Tendering Processes

1. Route planning processes

- 1.1 Any child or young person leaving a setting or moving out of the area are removed from existing routes and Home to School Transport Contracts.
- 1.2 All Solo¹ and Travel Alone² journeys are reviewed to ascertain if any children travelling singly could safely and logistically travel in a shared vehicle.
- 1.3 Existing routes are assessed on a case-by-case basis to ensure they continue to meet the needs of each child. Preserving continuity for the child and young person is a priority, where possible.
- 1.4 The Home to School Transport Team undertake Risk Assessments for all new children and young people joining the service.
- 1.5 The Team review Risk Assessments, Education, Health and Care Plans, Pupil Travel Information Forms, Application Forms, and any other supplementary documentation to review the most suitable travel arrangement for each child.
- 1.6 The Team use mapping to add pupils to routes, ensuring, in accordance with Department for Education guidelines, that all children attending schools within Brighton & Hove are able to reach their school within 45 minutes for primary age children or 75 minutes for secondary age children. We acknowledge that for children with SEND, a shorter time may be desirable.
- 1.7 There is liaison with key settings, predominately Hill Park Lower, Hill Park Upper, Downs View Woodingdean, Downs View Link College, Downs View Life Skills and the PRU on the safety and suitability of 'mix' of pupils in shared vehicles to their settings. Vehicle Risk Assessments are undertaken for some cohorts of children, they are prioritised by:
 - New routes of new CYP added
 - Solo passengers, to assess any change in needs
 - CYP using any equipment such as wheelchairs
 - CYP with high medical needs
 - CYP with complex needs
- 1.8 The Team work to the following route planning principles, co-produced with the Parent and Carers Council:

¹ Solo passenger journeys are given when there is no concern about the complexity of current need, but there are no other existing travel arrangements that a child or young person can fit into, e.g the passenger is the only child or young person travelling to the school or college at that time.

² Travel Alone Status means that we think children's current needs are so complex and/or challenging that their safety and wellbeing, or that of other children or transport staff, would be significantly compromised by travelling on a shared vehicle.

- Our top priority will always be the comfort, safety and wellbeing of children and young people - all children should be comfortable on transport and arrive at school stress-free and ready to learn – journey times must not be excessive
- We aim to ensure the safety and wellbeing of transport staff
- While transport must always meet needs, it must also provide best value for public funds and be fair and equitable across all children and young people
- Journeys will use shared transport where at all possible and will be based on our calculation of the most efficient routes
- Unless there are exceptional circumstances, primary and secondary children travel on separate routes
- Routes will only travel to one school or setting on any one journey – although exceptions were made this year for siblings after guidance from schools and in consultation with Operators.
- No child’s journey should exceed government guidance (45 mins for a primary child and 75 minutes for a secondary child in normal traffic conditions) unless placements are out of City and cannot be made in these timescales
- Solo passenger journeys are appropriate where:
 - No other pupils are making that journey to a school or setting
- Travel Alone passenger journeys are appropriate where:
 - The young person’s needs are so complex and challenging that their safety and wellbeing, or that of other children or transport staff, would be significantly compromised by travelling on a shared vehicle and no solutions can be found to this;
 - Alternatives to solo passenger journeys have been considered, notably whether:
 - an alternative vehicle or different seating arrangements could meet needs;
 - whether further training and expert support could enable transport staff to meet needs;
 - if an additional VPA on route could enable needs to be met;
 - if a personal allowance to family to arrange transport is appropriate.

2. Tendering processes

- 2.2 The process for Home to School Transport routes being awarded to Operators is twofold.
- 2.3 Firstly, any Operator that wishes to tender for routes must first be accepted onto our Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) framework. A DPS is a fully electronic system used by public sector bodies to award works or services. It is a fair and transparent process for all Service Providers and ensures compliance with the

Public Contract Relations 2015 (as amended.) The framework is open year-round which allows additional Operators to be added at any point during the duration of the Contract.

- 2.4 A Selection Questionnaire sets out the Council's minimum criteria and expectations for Operators. There are a series of YES/NO questions which address Organisation Details, Business Conduct & History, Financial Information, Insurance, and Equalities & Diversity. These responses are evaluated by the Council's Procurement team.
- 2.5 In addition, each Operator applying to join the framework must complete a stringent set of responses relating to Technical Capability. In our current contract, these relate to Service Delivery, Data Management, Sustainability and Health & Safety. The responses are weighted and are scored independently by a panel made up of the HTST Team.
- 2.6 If the minimum score is achieved across the whole Selection Questionnaire, then the Operator will join the DPS and will then be able to bid on routes that are distributed out for tender.
- 2.7 When routes are put out to tender they include the child's name, their age, their address and any relevant information about their special educational needs and/or disabilities. This includes whether a wheelchair accessible vehicle is required, or a Vehicle Passenger Assistant or any other support a child or young person may require supporting safe and reasonably stress-free travel. We seek this information from parents and carers through completion of a Pupil Travel Information Form which details the specific needs of children and young people. This supports conscious and conscientious bidding by Operators.
- 2.8 Given that the Operator must have already complied with our strict criteria and satisfied our expectations across several aspects of delivering a quality service, when routes go out for tender, the award criteria is focussed on value for money. This approach complies with best procurement practice of not asking bidders the same question twice; the quality element is either satisfied or not at the time of applying to join the DPS.
- 2.9 This will continue to be the case for the 2023 procurement. However, we have recognised that the current Selection Questionnaire does not fully support our hopes and aspirations for the new Contract. We will have a greater focus on Safeguarding and Sustainability; and will ensure that Social Value is also considered as part of the Technical Capability scoring. We will also amend the format of tender responses to include a breakdown of total price to include a separate staffing cost (mainly applicable when a Vehicle Passenger Assistant is being employed directly by the Operator) to seek assurance that the Voluntary Living Wage is being paid to these invaluable members of our crews.

