



Personal Travel Budget (PTB) Information Sheet 2023

What is a Personal Travel Budget (PTB)?

A Personal Travel Budget (PTB) is a sum of money paid to the parent/carer of a child who has an entitlement to free home to school travel assistance. A PTB allows parents/carers to make their own home to school travel arrangements for their child in a way that suits both the child's needs and the parent/carer's personal circumstances.

An offer of a PTB is at the discretion of the Council and will only be made if the PTB is more cost effective than any other alternative travel arrangement the Council is able to make. A PTB will be reviewed at least annually to ensure it remains the most cost effective solution.

*determining the most cost effective solution is a decision made by the Council

Prior to confirming the offer of a PTB, the Council will need to be satisfied that parents/carers have a suitable plan in place to get the child to/from school. A suitable plan provides appropriate travel that is reliable and ensures the child gets to school on time and in a safe way.

Why does the Council offer a PTB?

The Council has a legal duty to provide suitable arrangements for children who have an entitlement to home to school travel assistance. A PTB is one of the offers the Council is able to make in order to meet its duty.

The Council's Home to School Travel Policy sets out the criteria for entitlement to home to school travel assistance, and includes one or more of the following criteria being met:

1. Live more than the statutory walking distance from school
 - statutory walking distance is 2 miles for primary aged children
 - statutory walking distance is 3 miles for secondary aged children

2. Live within walking distance but, because of the nature of the route, cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school because the route has been declared as unsuitable following assessment by the Council
3. Unable to walk any distance to school, even when accompanied, because of an additional learning need or disability that affects the ability to walk a suitable route

**The school attended must be either the catchment or nearest suitable school to the home address, or for pupils with additional learning needs the school placement must be the school recommended by the Additional Learning Needs Panel.*

How can the PTB be used?

The PTB will be used by the parent/carer to organise home to school travel which meets the needs of their child, and is in place of alternative travel assistance options organised by the Council.

The PTB can be used for:

- Purchasing a travel pass for public transport (so the child may be accompanied)
- Paying a responsible person deemed to be appropriate by the parent/carer to help the child use public transport
- Paying a responsible person deemed as appropriate by the parent/carer to walk or cycle to school with the child
- Paying a responsible person deemed as appropriate by the parent/carer to drive the child to school
- Paying for fuel
- Paying for travel by taxi
- Paying a childminder (e.g. to look after siblings)
- To organise travel to separate home addresses where there is split custody

**Parents/Carers must ensure that any transport secured with the PTB is appropriate in respect of the provision of the service(s) agreed, including a valid MOT (if applicable), road tax, a valid policy of motor insurance, and the driver having a valid driving licence for the type of vehicle.*

**Parents/Carers must ensure that any professional childminder employed under the PTB has been appropriately vetted with an enhanced check under the Disclosure and Barring Service, as well as having the necessary insurance cover in respect of the provision of the service(s) agreed.*

How will a PTB be awarded?

If the child has an entitlement to free home to school travel assistance, the Council will look at the various travel assistance options it has available. If it is found that a PTB is the most cost effective and efficient use of public resources, the Council is able to offer a PTB.

The PTB is calculated based on the shortest direct driven route between the child's home address and school, and is payable for the 190 school days in an academic year. However, should the child be absent from school, a reduction will be made to reflect the absenteeism.

**Every parent/carer has a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at school.*

The amount paid under the PTB is worked out based on two return journeys from the pupil's home address to school at the beginning and end of the school day, plus the time taken to undertake the journeys.

**In cases where siblings attend the same school, only one payment will be made as the journey is shared.*

Once the Council has set the payment amount this will be paid into the parent/carer's designated bank account. Payment will be made monthly, in advance, however, for any days that the journeys are not completed e.g. because of illness, an adjustment will be made and any deduction will be applied to the next payment. Additionally, where it is found that there has been no notification of changes that have led to the child no longer having an entitlement to a PTB e.g. a move of address, the Council will seek to recover all non-appropriate payments, either in full or in-part following a re-calculation of the PTB payment.

**Being awarded a PTB should not affect any other benefits the parent/carer receives, although parents/carers should seek advice to clarify this is the case depending on their individual circumstances.*

**Payments will not be taxed as the PTB is a payment made in relation to a child and so should not affect the parent/carer's tax situation provided the PTB is used for no other purpose other than enabling a child to get to and from school each day.*

**If a parent/carer has concerns relating to their tax situation, they are advised to seek independent advice from a tax expert.*

Arrangements for awarding a PTB:

- **Mileage and time taken is calculated via the shortest direct driven route between the pupil's home address and the school using Google maps**
- **Payment is for 4 x journeys (representing two return journeys to and from the pupil's home address) @ £0.65p per mile**
- **Payment is for the time taken to complete the journey @ £10.00 per hour or £0.16 per minute**
- **Payment is made monthly in advance and paid into the parent/carer designated bank account**

Prior to receiving a PTB the parent/carer is required to sign a Personal Travel Budget contract, which sets out the terms of the agreement between the Council and the parent/carer for the PTB. This contract will be renewed on a yearly basis provided the child has a continued entitlement to home to school travel assistance, and the PTB remains the most cost effective solution.

The PTB agreement will be immediately withdrawn if:

- a move of address means there is no longer an entitlement to free home to school travel assistance
- the child leaves school or registers at a new school meaning there is no longer an entitlement to free home to school travel assistance
- the PTB is no longer the most cost effective solution e.g. because of new home address or new school
- the travel arrangements made by the parent/carer are deemed as unsafe
- the child's attendance is below that which the Council thinks it should be

What if the Personal Travel Budget is no longer suitable?

Parents/Carers can cancel a PTB if it is no longer suitable. The Council requires a month's notice of any cancellation, however, in the first instance, parents/carers should contact the Council's Home to School Travel Assistance Service to discuss any difficulties with travel arrangements before deciding to cancel the PTB.

Parent/Carer responsibility

The Council is responsible for ensuring that public funds are spent on the intended services, therefore parents/carers will need to keep records, e.g. receipts/invoices, and provide them for monitoring purposes when requested to do so by the Council.

Additionally, parents/carers must:

- ensure the journey to and from school is safe
- ensure their child gets to school on time
- ensure the journey is without such stress and strain that the child's ability to learn is affected
- ensure the average level of attendance for the school is met

*the PTB may be withdrawn if the Council is satisfied that the arrangements made do not meet the above requirements