

# Personal Transport Budget - SEN Transport

## Information for parents, guardians and carers

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### Introduction

A Personal Transport Budget (PTB) is a payment designed to help you to get your child to school.

It is available to SEN children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) who have been assessed as eligible to receive Home to School transport by Leicestershire County Council.

To view the SEN Home to School Transport Policy, please visit:

[www.leicestershire.gov.uk/send-school-transport](http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/send-school-transport)

The PTB is granted at the discretion of the council, therefore even if your child is assessed as being eligible to transport assistance, you may not be granted a PTB if it is not cost effective for the council to do so. For example if your child could be placed onto existing transport at no additional cost to the authority.

### Benefits of a personal budget

- Freedom and flexibility to make travel arrangements that best meet your family's needs and circumstances.
- Choice and control on how funding to support your child's needs is spent.
- Your child may be more relaxed at school if they are dropped off or collected by someone close or familiar to them.
- Opportunities to coordinate with other parents to arrange shared transport.
- Provides you with opportunities to discuss your child's progress with their teachers at school more frequently and directly.
- Opportunity to use the budget to support your child's personal development, for example to encourage independent travel such as public transport to enable them to access social and employment opportunities in the future.

## **Applying for a PTB**

An application can be made by:

- the parent, guardian or carer
- the service user themselves if they are over 18 years old.
- a nominated person acting on behalf of the applicant if agreed by the applicant and that nominated person has capacity.

If your child is already in receipt of SEN transport assistance and you would like to be considered for a PTB for the first time or if you are already in receipt of a PTB and wish to reapply then please email [TO@leics.gov.uk](mailto:TO@leics.gov.uk) or telephone 0116 305 0002.

When your application has been assessed, you will be informed of the decision in writing no later than Friday 4<sup>th</sup> August 2017.

## **Calculation of the PTB amount**

The amount of PTB payment that you will receive will be determined by your child's age, timetable, and by the distance from your child's home address to their school, using the Council's own measuring software.

For fairness and consistency, all PTB distance calculations will be measured using the same measuring software that is used for assessing your child's eligibility for transport assistance.

## **Change of circumstances**

You must notify the council immediately in writing or by email about any change in your circumstances that may affect your eligibility to transport assistance and/or your PTB payment, for example:

- If you move address or change school or school site
- Change of timetable that affects your child's school hours
- Long term absences (5 consecutive school days or more)

If you fail to notify the council of any change to your circumstances, which the council later decides would have had the effect of reducing or ending your child's entitlement to payments then the council may terminate your PTB payments and will seek to recover any monies that you should not have received for the period in which you failed to notify.

If you are unsure about whether a change of circumstances will affect the PTB payments, you are advised to discuss this with the council.

If any change to your circumstances requires your child's eligibility to transport assistance to be reassessed, then the PTB payments will cease, and you will be responsible for any transport arrangements until your child has been reassessed.

## **Change of payment**

The PTB amount may also be reviewed, adjusted, suspended or terminated if:

- Your child's attendance falls below 90%<sup>(1)</sup>
- Your child regularly arrives late at school in the mornings
- Your child arrives at school in an unfit state to learn
- The travel arrangements that have been put in place for your child using the PTB are deemed to be unsuitable or unsafe
- Your child accesses short – break stays away from the family home
- There is a change to national legislation and / or the council's policies
- You have more than one child, e.g. sibling, half-sibling or step-sibling or other member of the same household each receiving a PTB and attending the same school or another school nearby
- Your child is not of statutory school age such as those attending nursery (Under 5) or those in post 16 education as you may be required to make a financial contribution as per the SEN Home to School Transport Policy, this can be viewed at: [www.leicestershire.gov.uk/send-school-transport](http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/send-school-transport)

(1) –Department for Education - National Statistics - Pupil absence in schools in England: Autumn term 2014 (Published May 2015)

## **Review of PTB arrangements**

Each PTB will be in place up to the end of the current academic year, therefore you will need to re-apply each year. It will be reviewed on a regular basis and prior to the start of a new academic year.

As part of the PTB review, the council will contact your child's school to request their attendance records to confirm their level of attendance, and that they are able to fully access their learning opportunities.

Once this information has been received and the transport review has been completed, the decision to continue, adjust or withdraw the PTB will be advised to you in writing.

## **Payment of the PTB**

The PTB will be paid into a nominated bank account every calendar month in advance, unless otherwise agreed. In exceptional circumstances alternative payment arrangements may be made by agreement between you and the council.

## Using the PTB

You must **always** spend the payment, or allow the payment to be spent, in a way that ensures your child's attendance at school.

You can use the PTB in any way you wish to do this, for example:

- You or someone in your family can drive your child to and from school
- You can arrange with a friend or relative to cycle with or walk your child to school.
- You can car share with other parents where their children are going to the same school as your child.
- You could provide a relative or friend with a bus pass in order to take your child to and from school.
- You could pay for a bus pass on a vehicle that the school organises to take children to and from their school.
- You could pay for childcare for a younger child in order for you to take your child to school.

If you use the PTB to employ someone yourself, then you will be responsible for complying with relevant rules regarding Tax and National Insurance, Employment Law, Insurance, Health and Safety or any other relevant rules or legislation in force at that time.

The council always recommends that you have a check carried out by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) on anyone that you are thinking of employing.

If you use the PTB to enter into contracts with organisations (e.g. after school clubs) or individuals: you are responsible for complying with the terms and conditions of those contracts, e.g. payment arrangements, notice of cancellation, etc.

The council advises you to seek your own independent legal advice as to the terms of the agreement that you may be entering into and any obligations that are placed on you.

You will:

- have control over the payment paid to you
- accept responsibility for the decisions made regarding the use of the payments and understand what the consequences are for misuse

You **cannot** use your payment:

- To buy or utilise a space on transport services from Leicestershire County Council
- For any purpose that does not enable you to get your child to or from school
- For any activity that is illegal, unlawful or unsafe
- For other purposes that may bring the council into disrepute

Although you have control of the payments, the money can be reclaimed by the council if it is not used in accordance with this guidance.

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 into working collectively to ensure the best use of the PTB for all of the children and families.

### **Terminating the PTB agreement**

You may terminate the agreement by providing at least one calendar month's written notice to the council. You must also tell anyone you have engaged to provide services under the PTB.

The council will provide you with at least one calendar month's written notice if it decides to terminate the PTB agreement with you.

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### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **Q. Will the payments be taxed or have an impact on other benefits?**

**A.** No. The payments are not taxed and will not impact on other benefits that you may receive. This is because the PTB is a payment made in relation to the child not the parent.

#### **Q. If I have two or more children with statements or Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP), all of whom are eligible for transport, can I claim a PTB for each child?**

**A.** You can claim for each child. The first child in the household will receive 100% of the PTB, the PTB offer to any additional children will be at the discretion of the council.

#### **Q. Both myself and my child are happy with the current contractor and driver that transport my child to and from school. If I applied for the PTB, could my child continue to travel on the same vehicle?**

**A.** No. By applying for the PTB, you will be responsible for making your own arrangements for transporting your child to and from school. Whilst you could use your PTB to make your own personal arrangements with the taxi contractor to take your child to and from school, your child would not be able to travel on the vehicle that the council has arranged.

**Q. Do I need to collect any receipts for petrol or show how the PTB is being spent?**

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

**Q. I am a foster carer for a child that receives transport, can I apply for a PTB?**

**A.** If your foster child is in the care of Leicestershire County Council and meets the criteria to receive free home to school transport, then you can apply for a PTB. If your foster child is in the care of another Local Authority i.e. outside of Leicestershire, you will not be eligible to receive a PTB but may be eligible for a PTB from the other authority.

**Q. Would I receive a PTB if my child attends two schools?**

**A.** No. Transport assistance is only provided to one school. If you apply for a PTB, this will only be assessed to the school that your child is on roll at.

**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 change back to the previous transport arrangement?**

**A.** Yes. You must give us at least one calendar months' notice (maybe longer at peak periods) to stop the PTB payments and to allow the council the opportunity to rearrange transport for your child. Please be aware, that this may not necessarily be the same taxi company or fleet driver that your child previously had as no guarantee can be given that the arrangements will stay the same.

**Q. Will the council arrange short term transport cover for the occasions that I am unable to transport my child to school, for example if I am unwell?**

**A.** No. The council will not provide any cover transport arrangements and it will be your parental responsibility to ensure your child's attendance at school. You are advised to have a contingency plan in place using your PTB if for any reason you are unable to get your child to school yourself or by your chosen method.

### **General information**

This guidance is amended from time to time as and when national legislation or council policy changes. If you want to confirm whether this guidance is the most up to date version, or if you require any further information on the guidance, please telephone: **0116 305 0002**.

Also contact the number above if you have any comments on this guidance or if you require information contained in this guidance in an alternative version, e.g. large print, Braille, tape or an alternative language.

**You can write to us at:** Customer Service Centre (E&T), Leicestershire County Council, County Hall, Glenfield, Leicestershire LE3 8SR

**Email:** [TO@leics.gov.uk](mailto:TO@leics.gov.uk)

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