



**All Age Travel Assistance Policy
Consultation Evaluation Report**

December 2019

results
communications

engagement and consultation services

Prepared by **Results Communications Ltd** for and on behalf of
City of Wolverhampton Council

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1.0 Introduction

Results Communications Ltd was commissioned to provide independent consultation and engagement services to City of Wolverhampton Council as it consulted on proposals to reshape the All Age Travel Assistance Policy. This report sets out the engagement and consultation activity, and the responses received.

Background

The Children and Families Act 2014

In the Children and Families Act 2014 the government said it wants to make sure that all children and young disabled people and children and young people who have been told they have special educational needs, have good lives:

- They want to make sure children, young people and families get support early to keep them healthy
- They want young children and people be involved in making decisions in their lives
- They want children, young people and families to be able to find information easily that can support them
- They want children, young people and families to be supported to prepare for the future, having a job, choosing where to live and being part of their community.

The Care Act 2014

The Care Act 2014 promotes wellbeing, and the recognition that everyone's needs are different and personal to them. It sets out that local authorities must consider how to meet each person's specific needs rather than simply considering what service they will fit into.

Wolverhampton Challenge Board White Paper

In 2017, City of Wolverhampton Council set how it would deliver the expectations of these two pieces of legislation in Wolverhampton Challenge Board's *Ordinary Life White Paper* (Appendix 1a).

It stated its vision of investing in a *future that changes lives*. The council affirmed its commitment to empowering young people with special education needs and disabilities and their families to take control over their lives and challenge the status quo.

In the Paper, findings from research with 102 young people aged 11 to 22 revealed that they want to be more

"Local authorities must consider how to meet each person's specific needs rather than simply considering what service they will fit into"

- Care and Support Statutory Guidance Note, issued under the Care Act 2014

"Young people are part of the solution and we need to listen to their aspirations and understand their needs so we can plan and commission for a new generation"

- Val Gibson, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People (2017)

1.0 Introduction

independent, want to work, want opportunities to meet new friends, and want ordinary life outcomes the same as their non-disabled peers.

Changing Our Lives Real Talk

In 2018, Changing Our Lives, which supports the Wolverhampton Challenge Board, organised a Real Talk ([Appendix 1b](#)) event to further explore the section of the White Paper which dealt with the attitudes and expectations of what they can achieve from ordinary community life young people experience. At the event young people discussed transport, preparing for the future and designing an inclusive city.

Shaping the Conversation

Feedback received from the 2017 and 2018 studies suggested some people feel they would benefit from more choice in the way they travel; this feedback shaped the conversation the City of Wolverhampton Council invited people to be part of early in 2019.

Led by the SEND Support Team, the council embarked on a series of workshops to find out what people thought about the current transport offer and how they thought the offer could be improved to better meet their needs. Through a series of workshops held around in the city, the council heard from under-16 pupils, older teenagers, adults using transport services, parents and carers, as well as professionals involved in supporting children, young people and adults who access this support.

Feedback from those workshops ([Appendix 1c](#)), along with that of the work by Wolverhampton Challenge Board and Changing Our Lives has helped City of Wolverhampton Council shape the proposals to develop the existing approach for providing Home to School Travel, Post 16 Travel and Adult Social Care Travel.

2.0 Consultation and Engagement

This section of the report sets out the details about the consultation, engagement activities, the proposals, any complaints or challenges to the consultation, any learnings from the consultation while still in progress, alternative proposals presented, and spoiled papers.

The Consultation

The consultation launched on 2 September 2019 and closed on 29 November 2019. The consultation was digitally hosted on the council’s website, with hard copy versions of all documents made available on request, and during engagement workshops and meetings facilitated by third-party organisations.

The consultation information was still available at the time of writing on the [council’s website](#).

A suite of supporting information was also made available, both online and during engagement activity, including:

- Proposed All Age Travel Assistance Policy ([Appendix 2a](#))
- Consultation Proposals Summary ([Appendix 2b](#))
- Consultation Questionnaire (including Equality Analysis) ([Appendix 2c](#))
- Easy Read Questionnaire (including Equality Analysis) ([Appendix 2d](#)).

Further supporting information was available online, including the Department for Education Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance, the Care Act 2014, the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 Years, City

of Wolverhampton Council Budget Setting, and current Travel policy/statement/protocol documents.

Publicising the Consultation

The consultation was publicised via a number of earned and free channels including:

- direct mail to service users
- letters to parents (delivered to schools and distributed to pupils/parents)
- social media
- council magazine and newsletters
- council advertisement locations.

Third party organisations which had agreed to facilitate workshops or meetings with their members or service users were also provided with information to share via their own publicity channels to assist in the reach of the consultation.

A total of 20 social media posts reaching over 350,000 people have been sent through City of Wolverhampton Council’s social media channels including twitter and Wolverhampton Today.

These posts have been shared with Voice4parents, Wolverhampton Information and Advice Service, SENCOs and colleagues in health to share on their own channels to reach out to a wider audience.

Figure 1, below, provides an overview of the social media analysis for the Draft All Age Travels Assistance Policy Consultation.



Figure 1 Social Media Analysis for the Draft All Age Travel Assistance Policy

2.0 Consultation and Engagement

The consultation the subject of the three pieces of media coverage prior to the September launch, although a press release prepared in advance of the launch did not generate any fresh coverage.

The earlier coverage, in July 2019, resulted from the council's Cabinet considering papers about the proposed consultation, and the decision to consult being made. The links below are the three items of press coverage:

- 4 June 2019, [Express and Star \(Wolverhampton\)](#)
- 6 June 2019, [Birmingham Mail](#)
- 3 July, [Birmingham Mail](#)

A search for additional media coverage has proven unsuccessful and no coverage has been reported by the council's Communications Team.

Proposals

City of Wolverhampton has consulted on nine proposals which set out how it thinks transport assistance could be provided in future. Each of the proposals are set out in the adjacent panel and were the core focus of each of the workshops.

Feedback to each of the proposals - In Scope Feedback - has been collated and is included at Section 3.0 Consultation and Engagement Responses. Feedback received which does not directly relate to any of the proposals - Out of Scope Feedback - was also received during the consultation. This has been collated separately, and is contained within the latter part of Section 3.0.

The Consultation

Stakeholder Analysis

Stakeholder Analysis identified a core number of services users who either accessed transport assistance through Special Educational Needs and Disabilities eligibility for children, young people and adults, or because they are in receipt of a bus pass for travel to and from school. The consultation was a public consultation, so open to anyone interested in or likely to be affected by the proposals in the future.

Those in receipt of transport assistance were contacted directly and informed about the consultation, with an invitation to participate in a series of planned workshops. The Stakeholder Analysis also identified a number of other

Proposal One

City of Wolverhampton Council's current Home to School Travel policy, Post-16 Travel statement and Adult Social Care Transport protocol would be combined into a single All Age Travel Assistance policy

Proposal Two

The introduction of a personalised assessment process

Proposal Three

The introduction of charges for young people of sixth form age

Proposal Four

The removal of automatic eligibility to travel assistance in an educational establishment for Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs

Proposal Five

To provide transport only from a single address unless there are exceptional circumstances

Proposal Six

To amend and clarify the application and appeals process for Home to School Travel Assistance

Proposal Seven

To reaffirm that travel assistance is only provided to the nearest appropriate educational establishment or social care venue unless there are exceptional circumstances

Proposal Eight

To reaffirm that where individuals are eligible for transport, pick-up points will be used unless there are exceptional circumstances

Proposal Nine

The new policy aims to explain more clearly that parents are expected to accompany their children to school unless there are exceptional circumstances

2.0 Consultation and Engagement

stakeholders - professionals across the health, education, travel, and community/voluntary sectors - who may also wish to engage with the consultation, and opportunities to engage with the consultation via questionnaire and/or workshop participation were provided.

Note: The majority of people who took part in the consultation, both in terms of questionnaire responses and workshops, were services users or parents/carers of someone in receipt of travel assistance. Further, it was noted that the majority of those participating as a direct recipient of travel assistance, or on behalf of a recipient in a parent/carer capacity, were receiving support due to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities eligibility for either a child or adult.

Engagement

External Engagement

City of Wolverhampton Council was keen to continue the conversations of early 2019, and scheduled a series of engagement workshops to allow more detailed discussions around each of the proposals. Workshops were scheduled across the city, to ensure events were as accessible as possible, in recognition of the demands on time. Venues were selected for their accessibility, ease of travel, capacity and footfall. Venues included the Civic Centre, the Art Gallery, community centres, libraries, schools/colleges and a Town Hall.

City of Wolverhampton Council commissioned Results Communications to facilitate the sessions delivered to the public and to professionals to ensure impartiality. The council's Adult Social Care service commissioned Changing Our Lives and the Alzheimer's Society to facilitate sessions for Adult Service users to ensure the consultation focus groups were accessible and tailored to their needs, with only Proposals One, Five, Seven and Eight discussed; this was a decision made by the respective organisations, based on their review of the proposals under consultation and their client group. Workshops were also held in seven schools across Wolverhampton; these were facilitated by the SEND Support Officer and supported by the Project Manager. They worked closely with the schools to tailor each session according to the needs of the pupils; this included using technology including applications or APPs and an interactive presentation to encourage pupils to engage and offer their views. All workshops facilitated by City of Wolverhampton Council or Results Communications

followed the same format, and included the provision of consultation material and questionnaires where appropriate (e.g. questionnaires were made available, and comments made during discussions captured by a scribe as primary approaches). Where focus groups were facilitated by third-party organisations, we are reliant on their data capture methods, which may have differed to the primary approaches. All data captured and provided has been included in the analysis and reporting.

Internal Engagement

The Draft All Age Travel Assistance Policy consultation has been presented and discussed in a range of internal and external meetings with various stakeholders. These meetings have been used as an opportunity to request partners to share the consultation more widely with their partners and interested groups or individuals in the community. The meetings are outlined below:

- Wolverhampton Ethnic Diversity Partnership Board
- School Governors Forum Autumn term update
- SENCO Forum
- SEND and Commissioning Partnership Board
- Adult Leadership Team
- Voice4parents Steering Group
- Workshops to Private Voluntary Independent nurseries and local authority nurseries.

Consultation Materials

A range of materials to publicise the consultation, provide information about the proposals and capture feedback to the proposals was produced by City of Wolverhampton Council:

Document	Number of copies printed
Proposals Summary All Age Travel Assistance Policy	200
Equal Opportunities Form	40
All Age Travel Assistance Policy Consultation Questionnaire	140
Draft All Age Travel Assistance Policy	55
A4 Poster	50
Total	525

2.0 Consultation and Engagement

Document	Number of copies printed
Easy Read Travel Assistance Survey	40
Total	525

No copies of the Easy Read version were completed, although it was noted that a small number were taken from workshops attended by parents/carers of people receiving travel assistance.

Petitions

We are not aware of any petitions being prepared during the consultation and engagement activities, and have not been informed if any have been received by City of Wolverhampton Council.

Campaigns

We are not aware of any campaigns being prepared during the consultation and engagement activities, and have not been informed if any campaign activity known about by City of Wolverhampton Council.

Complaints or Concerns

We are not aware of any formal complaints about the consultation, and have not been made aware of any known about or received by City of Wolverhampton Council.

Some concerns were expressed by one person about participants not being listened to, that more talking was being done by the facilitator and that comments being made by participants were countered during the workshop they attended. No other comments of this nature were made or are known about.

The concerns raised were provided in comment on the workshop materials, and in an email to the Head of Service, who subsequently arranged a meeting with the originator of the comments and the facilitator, as well as other council employees present at the time. It is not for us to interpret the outcome of those discussions, however it is good practice to share feedback provided by participants at other workshops and events to gather views about suggestions, perceptions and explore similarity of views, anecdotal feedback and experience. It is by implementing this approach, that we have been able to further explore some experiences and ideas which

otherwise may not have been discussed.

Wolverhampton Information Advice and Guidance Service (IASS) identified some concerns within its questionnaire response against specific proposals. One concern was raised about the consistency of the Easy Read version of the questionnaire. We are aware this consultation has been the subject of Advice and Guidance by The Consultation Institute, but we are not privy to the guidance given in relation to consultation materials including information and questionnaires.

Of note, however, is that none of the responses to the consultation have been received in the Easy Read format.

Learnings during the Consultation

Video

Part of the engagement workshops presentation included a presentation of a young wheelchair user who independently travels, and feedback discussed during the Mid Term Review was that some participants did not feel the video was a true representation of all of those who access travel support from the council, or their wide-ranging abilities or needs.

This was a similar view to the workshops earlier in the year, when an alternative video, of two mobile pupils independently travelling by bus and navigating bus stops, road crossings and other features typical of public transport was used.

It was decided at after the Mid-Term Review to remove the video from the presentation, although participants to the later workshops were sign-posted to the availability of videos showing independent travel and what it could look like, on the internet.

Alternative Proposals

Discussions during workshops were animated, with the majority of those who attended keen to take part and be heard.

None of the proposals were challenged or countered with an alternative solution, although all were the subject of considered debate, with questions around how the proposal would be delivered, and suggestions offered about how it could be further improved to ensure a high quality service was committed to by the council, delivered by the council and its employees and contractors, and

2.0 Consultation and Engagement

experienced by those using the service, and their families and carers.

Spoiled Papers

There were no spoiled papers. Some questionnaire returns did not include responses to each proposal - this may be because they were not relevant to or of interest to the participant completing the form.

There were no illegible returns, and no returns were discounted or excluded due to lateness. To the contrary, Section 3 (page 12) acknowledges receipt of a late return from a consultee organisation which considered and agreed its response in December.

Process

We understand this consultation has been the subject of advice and guidance from The Consultation Institute. This involvement assures public sector clients and communities that due process has been carried out, and that the requirements under the various Acts have been met.

The consultation has been designed to engage as many people as possible, both in terms of those currently receiving travel assistance from City of Wolverhampton Council, and those who are not yet but may need to.

This has been supported by an Equalities Impact Assessment, and a Stakeholder Analysis Assessment, which has informed the engagement of target audiences throughout the consultation, and influenced the shaping of the messaging through the range of channels utilised by the various council teams and departments involved in the consultation.

The consultation has been the subject of a comprehensive publicity campaign, which we have not been involved in but have witnessed, and supported by a robust events plan, which has included focus group events designed to further explore themes emerging during the *Shaping the Conversation* engagement early in 2019, and further themes, issues and concerns resulting from the bringing forward of these proposals.

3.0 Consultation and Engagement Responses

Demographics

This section of the report deals with the demographics of returned questionnaires:

The following charts set out the capacity in which respondents are providing feedback:

Preface Question One

Are you a:

- Child or young person currently receiving CWC provided home to school travel assistance
- An adult currently receiving CWC provided travel assistance
- A parent or carer of an individual currently receiving travel assistance
- An NHS employee
- A representative of a charity or community group in Wolverhampton
- A City of Wolverhampton Council employee
- An employee of a Wolverhampton School, academy or other educational establishment
- A Wolverhampton Councillor or MP
- Individual (see note below)
- Other (please state) - refer to Chart 1.2

The total responses to this question exceed the 134 returned questionnaires; this is because 12 people ticked more than one of the applicable options, including:

- An adult currently receiving CWC provided travel assistance and a parent or carer of an individual currently receiving travel assistance (two people)
- A City of Wolverhampton Council employee and an employee of a Wolverhampton School, academy or other educational establishment (one person)
- A child or young person currently receiving CWC provided home to school travel assistance and a parent or carer of an individual currently receiving travel assistance (three people)
- A parent or carer of an individual currently receiving travel assistance and an employee of a Wolverhampton School, academy or other educational establishment (two people)
- A City of Wolverhampton Council employee and Other (two people)
- A parent or carer of an individual currently receiving travel assistance and a City of Wolverhampton Council employee (two people).

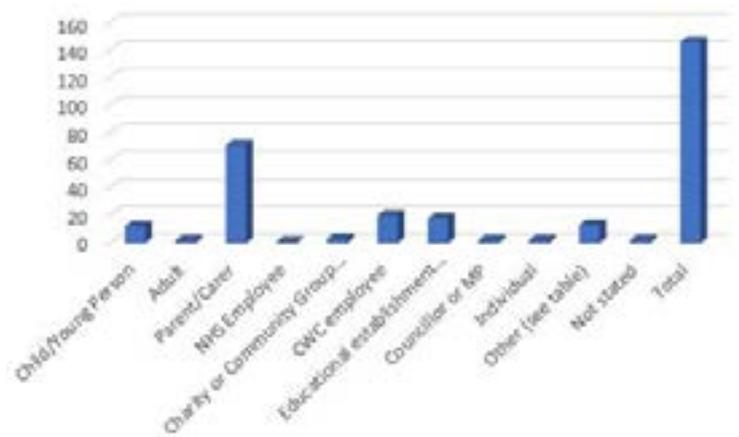


Chart 1.1 - Capacity in which respondent is completing the questionnaire

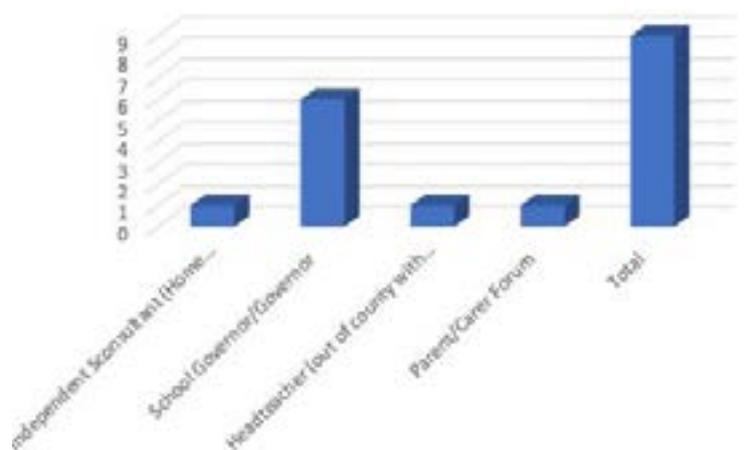


Chart 1.2 - Capacity in which respondent is completing the questionnaire

3.0 Consultation and Engagement Responses

Preface Question Two

If you currently receive travel assistance how is this provided:

- n/a
- Bus pass
- Minibus
- Taxi
- Coach
- Ring + Ride
- Direct Payment
- Other (please state) - see chart 1.4

This section of the demographics analysis sets out the range of travel assistance provided, and by how many respondents.

Note: Where a mode of transport is identified under other, this is noted verbatim as described by the respondent, and not categorised within the modes asked about in the questionnaire, although it is noted that where 'Big Yellow Bus', 'Local Authority Yellow Bus' and 'Yellow School Bus' are cited, it could be concluded that these are the 'Coach' referred to within the options provided in the question responses. They have been separated and are reported as provided by the respondents for clarity, and we make no assumptions as to what is meant by the information provided.

Multiple responses were cited by some people, as 'other' transport assistance including:

- Bus pass and mini bus (one person) under previous question
- Not Applicable, and 60+ bus pass under 'Other'
- Not Applicable, and Tail lift school bus under 'Other'
- Mini bus, and Yellow School Bus under 'Other'
- Bus pass, and None but looking under 'Other'

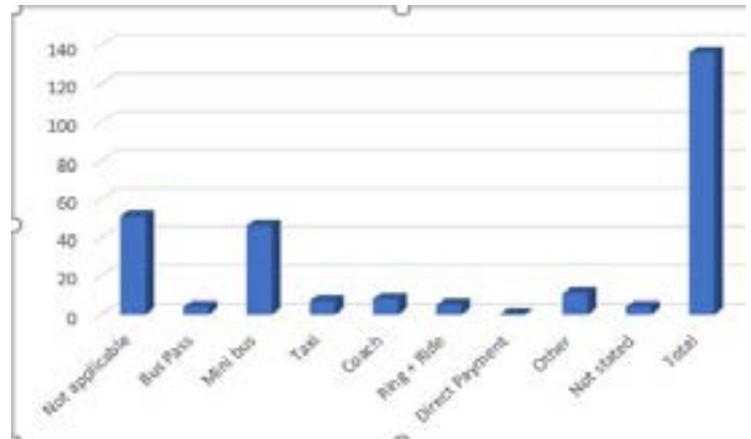


Chart 1.3 - Type of travel assistance received (and if applicable)

Travel Assistance Provided	Number of Respondents
Other:	
Bus pass and Minibus	1
60+ bus	1
Big yellow bus	2
Local Authority Yellow Bus	1
Mileage Allowance	1
School Transport	1
Taxi and Escort	1
Tail lift school bus	1
Yellow school bus	1
None but looking	1

Chart 1.4- Type of 'Other' travel assistance

Note: It is apparent from the responses that not everyone who receives transport assistance in the form of a bus pass or school transport, or who is responding on behalf of someone who does, regards this as 'transport assistance'.

3.0 Consultation and Engagement Responses

Consultation Questionnaire

This section of the report sets out the levels of engagement with the consultation, feedback to the questionnaire*, both via the online platform and resulting from workshops, and other feedback received through alternative channels e.g. email, telephone call and letter.

A total of 142 questionnaires were returned. This comprised 117 questionnaires received via the online platform, and 25 received offline, via returns during workshops and by post. These numbers include full and partial completions - partial completions are where only those questions of interest/relevance to the participant were completed.

Partial and Incomplete Returns

All questionnaires with completed responses to questions and/or explanations to responses were considered in the analysis of feedback. Only one questionnaire was graded 'incomplete'; this is because only the questions about the capacity in which the person was completing the questionnaire, and any travel assistance being received

were answered.

Of the 133 completed questionnaires returned, the majority of respondents answered all of the questions; in this context all of the questionnaires returned, with the exception of the single incomplete questionnaire previously referenced, are classed as 'partial completions'.

Not everyone provided a response to the question, and/or an explanation to their responses; all information provided has nonetheless been included in the analysis of the responses.

Completed Questionnaires

If a 'completed questionnaire' is deemed to be one which has both a response to a question and an explanation about the response, along with commentary within both of the 'general comment sub-sections, none of the returns can be categorised as 'completed questionnaires' as all had at least one question, explanation or general comment area left blank. The table below sets out the number of responses to each proposal or proposal sub-question in returned questionnaires:

Proposal	Total Number of responses (of 134 returns)	Response with accompanying Explanation	Explanation with no Response (where no box ticked)
Proposal One (1.1)	132	78	
Proposal Two (2.1)	131	65	
Proposal Two (2.2)	132	79	1
Proposal Two (2.3)	132	84	1
Proposal Two (2.4)	132	60	
Proposal Three (3.1)	130	82	2
Proposal Three (3.2)	132	76	
Proposal Four (4.1)	133	69	
Proposal Five (5.1)	132	76	
Proposal Six (6.1)	130	38	
PProposal Six (6.2)	132	80	
Proposal Seven (7.1)	131	74	1
Proposal Eight 8.1)	133	72	
Proposal Nine (9.1)	133	72	
General - Considerations	82	n/a	n/a
General - Suugestions/ Comments	63	n/a	n/a

3.0 Consultation and Engagement Responses

Audience	Facilitator	Number of Sessions Held	Number of Attendees
Professionals	Results Communications	3	29
Service Users Families	Results Communications	8	69
Adult Service Users	Changing Our Lives & The Alzheimer's Society	6	51
Pupils	SEND Support Officer	7	67
Total		24	216

Figure 2 Table showing completed engagement sessions, the audience and number of attendees during the consultation

Engagement Workshops

A total of 24 engagement workshops have been held across the city targeted at various stakeholders including pupils, parents and carers, adult service users and professionals. A total of 216 people have attended these sessions.

All workshops facilitated by Results Communications provided attendees with hard-copy formats of the consultation materials and questionnaire. The Easy Read version of the document was made available, but no copies were completed.

Note: Some people attended the workshop, having already completed the questionnaire. It is not known if any subsequently completed a second copy, or provided a partially-completed questionnaire.

It should also be noted that not everyone who attended a workshop completed a questionnaire at all.

Workshops with School Councils

Workshops were held in seven special schools across the Wolverhampton, facilitated by the SEND Support Officer and supported by the Project Manager - a total of seven workshops. Pupils aged between six and 19 took part in the workshops, with input from teachers and/or support staff during the sessions. Sessions were tailored to suit the needs and abilities of those participating, but all were asked about each of the nine proposals. Findings were prepared by the SEND Support Officer, taking data from apps used during the workshops, or repurposing sheets used during the discussions into a report.

Workshops by Changing Our Lives

Changing Our Lives held two workshops, attended by a total of 33 people. Four of the proposals were discussed

as these were regarded as being of most relevance to the participants.

Workshops by Alzheimer's Society

Alzheimer's Society held four workshops, with only those proposals relevant to or suitable for the audience of people with a diagnosis of dementia and their carers. A total of 20 people attended. The findings of those workshops were provided to City of Wolverhampton Council in a report.

Responses received by email

A total of 10 returns were received via email.

The consultation materials provided an email address through which consultees could provide their feedback. This email address - SENDTeam@wolverhampton.gov.uk - was administered by the council's SEND Support Officer directly involved with the consultation and was used to send eight emails containing comment in either an individual or organisational capacity.

Some of the emails received were not sent to the SENDTeam@ email account. One of the emails received into the SENDTeam@ account was also directly sent to named individuals, including the SEND Support Officer directly involved with the consultation, and three other recipients (it is not known if these three are internal or external to City of Wolverhampton Council).

A second email received into the SENDTeam@ account was also directly sent to the SEND Support Officer directly involved with the consultation, and one other recipient (it is not known if this person is internal or external to City of Wolverhampton Council).

A third email, containing feedback to the consultation was sent directly to named individuals, rather than to the @

3.0 Consultation and Engagement Responses

SENDTeam email account, and was sent to two primary named individuals internal to City of Wolverhampton Council, copying in two additional internal colleagues, including the SEND Support Officer involved with the consultation. This email was then forwarded by one of the primary recipients, to a fifth internal colleague, who then forwarded it to the second primary recipient and the SEND Support Officer involved with the consultation (and who was named on the original email as a secondary recipient copied in).

All of the emails received comprised:

- One bespoke response by a stakeholder organisation (transport) identifying opportunities for collaboration and support, as well as requesting amendments to the draft policy (Appendix 3a) accompanied by an email note (Appendix 3a1)
- An emailed note from a second stakeholder (public health), and requesting the opportunity to work with the council and public transport to improve the public transport offer (Appendix 3b)
- A completed questionnaire by a third stakeholder (information, advice and support) (Appendix 3c). It is not clear who completed the form, or who emailed the questionnaire return.

The remaining emailed responses were from parents or carers of people who receive transport assistance from City of Wolverhampton Council, comprising:

- An email from a parent expressing concerns about Ring + Ride and a safeguarding referral, and a lack of response or action to complaints made to both Ring + Ride and City of Wolverhampton Council (Appendix 3d)
- An email from a parent expressing concerns about Ring + Ride (Appendix 3e)
- An email from a parent supporting the proposals (Appendix 3f)
- An email from a parent expressing concerns about the proposals. From the comments made, it appears this respondent has not fully understood or appreciated the proposals, and that it is not proposed to remove transport assistance (Appendix 3g)
- An email from a former teacher (SEND) and senior lecturer (Special Education) expressing support for the proposals, and also asking questions about the assessment, application and travel training processes (Appendix 3h)
- An email from a parent supporting for the benefits of the All Age Travel Assistance policy (Appendix 3i).

The tenth email - correspondence from the Ethnic Minority Council, which considered the proposals during a meeting in December 2019, was received late but not discounted or excluded. These comments are included within each proposal sub-section within Section 4.

Responses received by post

A total of five returns were received by post. All were a printed hard copy version of the questionnaire. Two of these returns had completed the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form.

Note: It is not possible to identify if these returns were from a workshop participant, and if so which of these returns are participants who may have already completed a separate Equal Opportunities Form** during a workshop.

Note: It is not possible to identify if any of these participants to the consultation also completed a questionnaire in isolation to providing the email correspondence.

Telephone Enquiries and/or Responses

A total of ten calls were received during the consultation. None were from people wishing to provide a verbal response to the consultation proposals. All were from people enquiring about workshops being held, wishing to register for a workshop, or confirming details about a workshop.

Recommendations

1. Refer to Appendix 3a and review the comments by Transport for West Midlands and action as is deemed appropriate.
2. Refer to Appendix 3b and review the comments by Public Health, City of Wolverhampton Council and action as is deemed appropriate.
3. Refer to Appendix 3c and review the comments by Wolverhampton Information Advice and Support Service and action as is deemed appropriate. *We would advise that appropriate specialist advice is sought when considering this response.*
4. It was noted that note all email responses are tagged with 'Flag' and 'Flag Status'. Refer to Appendices 3d

3.0 Consultation and Engagement Responses

to 3i and acknowledge receipt and feed back, respond where and however appropriate and consider if follow-up dialogue is required. Action as is deemed appropriate.

5. Consider the comments provided by the Ethnic Minority Council and respond, acknowledging receipt and feed back, responding where and however appropriate and consider if follow-up dialogue is required. Action as is deemed appropriate.

4.0 Analysis of Consultation and Engagement Responses

This section of the report sets out the feedback received through all channels.

Feedback to the Consultation

The first part of this section deals with Responses to Proposals. This is set out as Quantitative and Qualitative data in Appendix 4a. **It is recommended to read all of the comments provided within Appendix 4a in relation to each proposal.**

The second part of the section deals with Out of Scope Feedback - comments and views which are not directly responding to a proposal, but which are material to the service currently being provided, and/or how it is or could be shaped.

Note: The total number of responses included all responses provided to each specific Proposal, or sub-question within the Proposal, from all questionnaires, and where provided, from third-party workshops where participants indicated their responses.

Analysis of Responses to Proposals

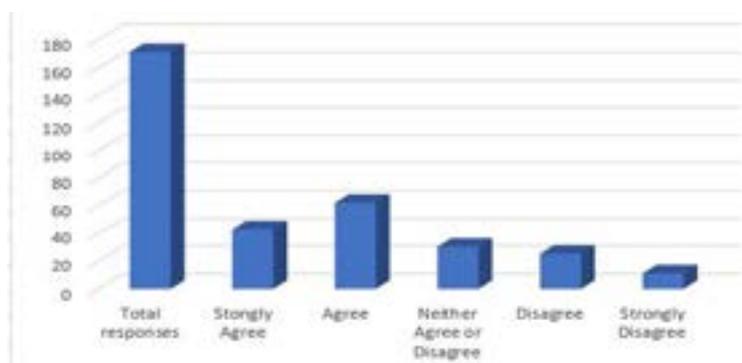
This section deals with the explanations consultees provided as part of their responses to individual proposals. These comments have not been themed or grouped according to discussion point, but have been retained as exported from the feedback file provided.

Proposal One

City of Wolverhampton Council's current Home to School Travel policy, Post-16 Travel statement and Adult Social Care Transport protocol would be combined into a single All Age Travel Assistance policy.

1.1 One policy that outlines the travel assistance provision available for all ages would be better than separate policies for each age range.

Overview



The majority of people were in favour of this proposal, with 105 Strongly Agreeing or Agreeing, 30 Neither Agreeing or Disagreeing, and 36 Disagreeing or Strongly Disagreeing.

There were mixed views about this proposal, with some people noting that they did not feel this was a matter for a public consultation, and that a consistently high quality provision was more important than being asked how policy documents should be structured.

Comments were also made about the draft policy, with people stating that it was confusing and contained information some did not regard as relevant. Some people used this explanation opportunity to provide comment on specific areas within the draft policy; these comments have been retained as provided.

Some people expressed concern that a single policy document would be a 'big mess' and that it would lead to a 'one size fits all' approach to providing travel assistance to those who are eligible. There were concerns over how pupils with special educational needs and disabilities who attend mainstream schools would be addressed within the policy, and that the single policy document would only benefit younger people.

Focus group discussions drew out similar comments to those provided in questionnaire responses, with participants making a number of suggestions about

4.0 Analysis of Consultation and Engagement Responses

what the single policy document could look like to help achieve a consistent approach and experience:

- Single policy document must be clearly sign-posted to ensure people can see which sections apply to their circumstances
- Policy must be in Plain English, and available in alternative language, Easy Read, Braille and Audio formats. A version could also be made available for children and young people
- Policy should be clear and transparent
- Policy should clearly set out the responsibilities of the council, travel assistance (where applicable) and the parent/carer. Policy should also set out how responsibility shift as a child or young person enters adulthood
- Policy document should contain information and guidance, or signposting to such resources about legal, advocacy, funding (grants and bursaries etc.), appeals process (including timing, what to expect, etc.)
- Policy should be shared with all agencies involved in the delivery of the policy
- Policy should be shared with parents/carers when adopted by the council, and parents/carers should be sign-posted to the relevant section of the policy when assessments are being carried out, or decisions have been made about the eligibility of the person being assessed for travel assistance

policy. We would recommend this panel also includes the Wolverhampton Challenge Board.

Recommendations:

- Be clear that a single policy does not remove the person-centred approach to providing the care and support an individual needs
- Ensure the proposed policy is clearly sign-posting readers to specific sections, or guidance, community resources and legal information
- Policy document should set out the current, relevant legislation about compulsory school ages and how they affect or are affected by the travel offer
- Consider how the policy can be aligned with services and support the individual is receiving to help those receiving support understand how the two are linked
- The policy should form part of the discussions during assessments so parents/carers and those being assessed understand how the support being provided is linked to the policy in place, and how any care plans are aligned to the policy provision
- Consider how often and when the new policy will be reviewed; consider the creation of a review panel of parents/carers, which can feed into a council mechanism for delivering change within any new

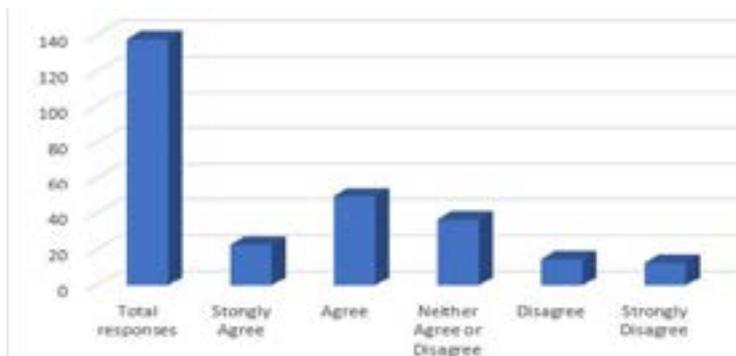
4.0 Analysis of Consultation and Engagement Responses

Proposal Two

The introduction of a personalised assessment process.

2.1 The proposed policy is clear about how a personalised assessment would be carried out.

Overview



The majority of people were in favour of this proposal, with 73 Strongly Agreeing or Agreeing, 37 Neither Agreeing or Disagreeing, and 28 Disagreeing or Strongly Disagreeing.

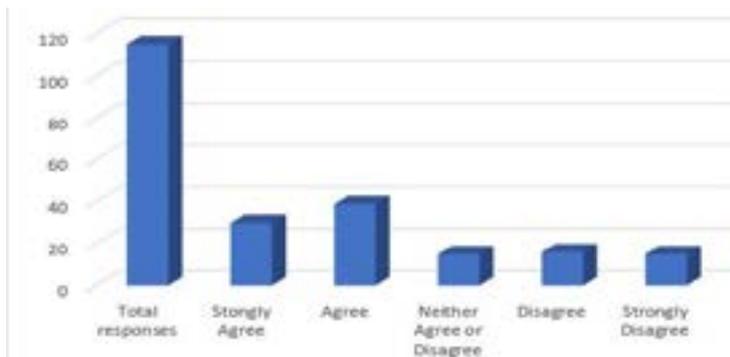
Views on this proposal were varied, with mixed opinions about the clarity provided in the draft policy. Generally, discussions during focus groups were that personalised assessments are a good idea as long as the right person does them. People were clear that a 'one size fits all' approach was not suitable and that a personalised assessment would ensure this was avoided.

People commented that they did not feel qualified to comment on the clarity of the proposed policy, that it's 'not especially clear, but clearer than more other council policies', and that 'it could be clearer'. People responding via both questionnaire, and commenting during focus groups felt more clarity was needed around what the assessment process would look like, how long it would take, when decisions would be made known to families and carers, who would be doing the assessments, and what a 'relevant professional' means.

Concerns were expressed that the assessment appeared to be more focussed on age rather than ability. Questions were asked about how changes in circumstances would be dealt with, if these changes occurred after a decision had been made, and who was making the decisions following assessment. People were concerned that the policy under consultation does not include criteria for the assessment and that this could create loopholes which the council could use to deny travel assistance.

2.2 Individuals eligible for travel assistance should receive independent travel training, to help promote their independence, unless there is a good reason why this would not be appropriate.

Overview



The majority of people were in favour of this proposal, with 69 Strongly Agreeing or Agreeing, 15 Neither Agreeing or Disagreeing, and 31 Disagreeing or Strongly Disagreeing.

Generally, the idea of independent travel training was welcomed as long as it is discussed by all involved in the provision of care and support of the individual being assessed, and that it was only introduced if appropriate and after the individual had successfully completed training.

People generally accepted that travel training was good for promoting independence, but stated that it was not going to be appropriate for all - regardless of an individual's desire to be travel trained.

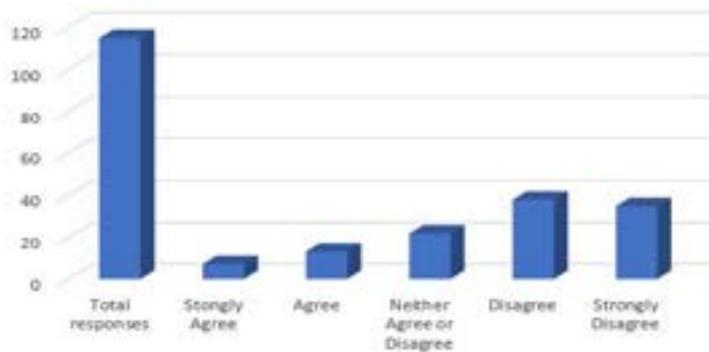
People were concerned about public transport and the risk/safeguarding issues raised, as well as how people would deal with uncertainties of late transport, changes to timetables, etc. Questions were asked about how the travel training would be delivered (how many sessions, what happens if they don't pass a section of training, and who would be delivering the training). Discussions in focus groups were focused on this area, with some people voicing their concerns about the specialist nature of some conditions, such as blindness, hearing impairment, etc., and how these would be addressed within the training packages.

People were concerned about the phrase 'eligible', stating they have had struggles with having people assessed and decision-makers agreeing they are eligible for support, only to have it overturned on appeal.

4.0 Analysis of Consultation and Engagement Responses

2.3 If, following a personalised assessment, an individual is assessed as able to benefit from a bespoke programme of travel training and then refuses to participate in the programme, no further offer of travel assistance will be provided.

Overview



The majority of people disagreed with this proposal, with 20 Strongly Agreeing or Agreeing, 22 Neither Agreeing or Disagreeing, and 73 Disagreeing or Strongly Disagreeing.

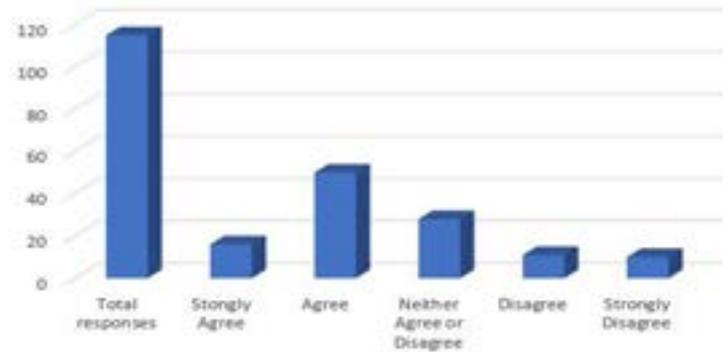
The majority of people stated that people need time to adjust to changes associated with travelling independently, and that to refuse travel assistance after refusing to participate is unfair.

People were keen to be assured that travel training could be available throughout the provision of travel assistance, and that the option to introduce it would be reviewed during regular intervals, and especially when assessments for care and support provisions are being carried out.

People were keen to see the assessment criteria and methodology behind the assessment, and felt this detail was lacking in the consultation material.

2.4 Personal transport budgets may be useful for families who are eligible for travel assistance.

Overview



The majority of people were in favour of this proposal, with 66 Strongly Agreeing or Agreeing, 28 Neither Agreeing or Disagreeing, and 21 Disagreeing or Strongly Disagreeing.

Parents were keen to state they would love the opportunity to be able to take their children to school and welcomed this proposal if it meant money to be able to do so; some questioned how it would be ensured that funds would be spent on travel.

Comments were made that some people may need advice and support on how to spend personal transport budgets, and what options were open to families. Some people felt the consideration of personal transport budgets was the council's way of saving money and that this approach would inconvenience families.

Some people stated personal transport budgets were a good way of promoting independence, and should be offered if it was felt by the individual or family that it would be of benefit.

Comments were made that staff would require training on personal transport budgets in order to accurately inform individuals and families of how they work and the options available.

Recommendations:

- Provide clarity on how assessments would be carried out, when and how often, how changes in circumstances would be dealt with, the decision-making process following assessment and when decisions would be communicated

4.0 Analysis of Consultation and Engagement Responses

- Consider assessment criteria to be more than just age-based
- Provide clarity that independent travel training would only be offered and provided to those individuals for whom it is considered appropriate, and that any recommendations to introduce travel training would be carried out following assessment and discussions with a range of people involved in the provision of support for the individual, including parents and professionals as appropriate
- Provide clarity on who would be carrying out the assessments, when they would be carried out, how often and how these assessments would be co-ordinated around other assessments related to care and support of individuals
- Clarify when independent travel training could be introduced for individuals, and what the law says about children and young people in this regard
- Provide assurances that any new travel assistance options introduced would be recommended on an individual basis, if and where appropriate
- Consider what training needs may exist and ensure clarity and consistency of information being shared about travel assistance options
- Consider risk and safeguarding issues arising from the introduction of new travel assistance options and address accordingly

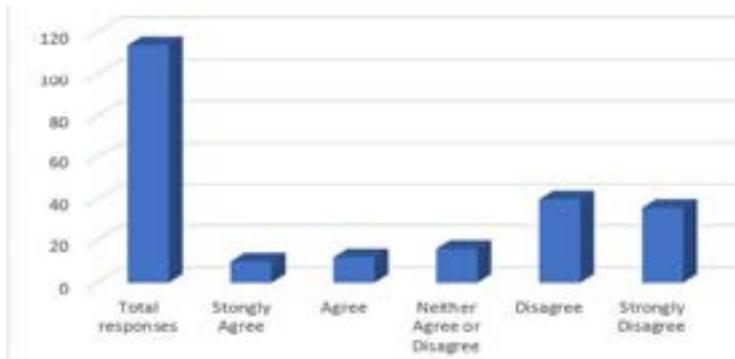
4.0 Analysis of Consultation and Engagement Responses

Proposal Three

The introduction of charges for young people of sixth form age.

3.1 Young people of sixth form age should make a financial contribution for their transport provision, which would align Wolverhampton with neighbouring Local Authorities.

Overview



The majority of people disagreed with this proposal, with 22 Strongly Agreeing or Agreeing, 16 Neither Agreeing or Disagreeing, and 76 Disagreeing or Strongly Disagreeing.

This proposal prompted animated discussions, with wide-ranging opinions.

People were concerned by what is regarded as 'low-income', and the impact this could have on a family's finances as well as on young people's opportunities to access further education post-16.

Questions were asked about the legal position of charging young people while attending compulsory education. Some people said imposing a charge was unfair as it isn't the fault of children and young people requiring travel assistance.

Some people recognised that other local authorities are charging for this assistance, and that mainstream students are currently already paying for their travel where they are not eligible for support from City of Wolverhampton Council.

Some people expressed dissatisfaction that some families are receiving support to provide travel (in both benefits and through mobility vehicle arrangements, and are also being provided with free transport by the

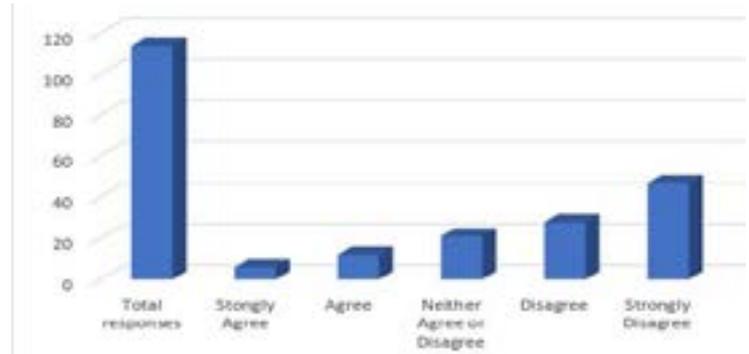
council for their child or young person. Some people felt this was 'double-funding' families; others asked why they were paying for this twice as a council tax payer.

Some people recognised that benefits payments do have an element of travel included, and that not everyone who is eligible for travel assistance is eligible for benefits which include travel components.

Some stated it would not be fair to pay and was discriminatory.

3.2 £780 per academic year or £390 if the child or young person is from a low-income family, is a fair charge.

Overview



The majority of people disagreed with this proposal, with 18 Strongly Agreeing or Agreeing, 21 Neither Agreeing or Disagreeing, and 75 Disagreeing or Strongly Disagreeing.

Similarly, this proposal prompted animated discussions, with wide-ranging opinions.

Many questioned the level of contribution proposed, and how it had been arrived at. Some people stated it was 'high', and questioned the impact this would have on families at the lower end of the earning scale. People stated that imposing this contribution could be the 'tipping point' for many families. Some expressed concern for families on a single income, and the impact this would have on a family's ability to have a holiday each year. Some people stated the family's annual holiday was a valuable respite resource and would suffer if this level of contribution was introduced.

People asked if the contribution could be percentage-based, or calculated as a percentage of the benefits the

4.0 Analysis of Consultation and Engagement Responses

individual accessing the transport is in receipt of, rather than the income of the individual's family.

Others asked if the contribution could be based on distance travelled and mode of travel; some suggested a contribution more aligned to what mainstream pupils pay for a bus pass should be considered.

Some people asked if there was a hardship fund which would be made available for families unable to afford this contribution. Others stated the cost of travel needed to be fair and consistent, but with allowances for those families unable to pay the full amount.

Recommendations:

- Consider the criteria when assessing eligibility for financial contributions (income-based, or means-tested, receipt of benefits/grant/bursaries etc. to assist with payments?)
- If implemented, consider other sources of transport support – e.g. Sixth Form Schools and Colleges which provide bus passes or other transport support for students – and how this information could be shared
- Clarify how transport for sixth form/college students is provided, who is responsible for arranging and providing, and how this is funded or if self-funded
- Clarify the law around free transport and compulsory education, and transport and post-16 education in any policy progressing from this proposal.

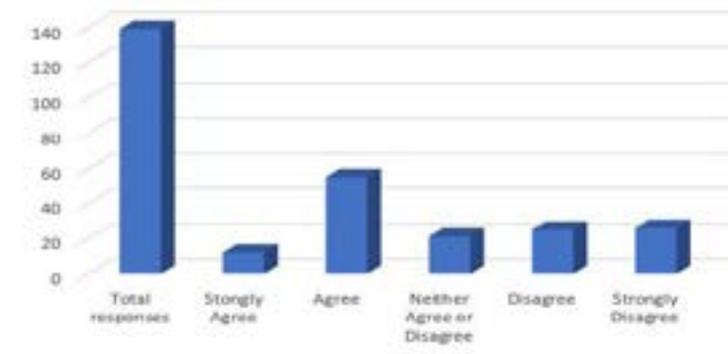
4.0 Analysis of Consultation and Engagement Responses

Proposal Four

The removal of automatic eligibility to travel assistance in an educational establishment for Social, Emotional, and Mental Health SEMH needs.

4.1 This change would ensure fairness and consistency under the new policy, as pupils with SEMH needs would be assessed in the same way as all other pupils.

Overview



This proposal divided people, with 67 Strongly Agreeing or Agreeing, 21 Neither Agreeing or Disagreeing, and 51 Disagreeing or Strongly Disagreeing.

This proposal prompted a mixed reaction. The majority of people viewed this proposal as an opportunity to treat every person receiving travel assistance as an individual, rather than those with SEMH needs being 'labelled'.

Some parents of SEMH children, young people and adults were keen to see them have the same opportunities as others; some were concerned that their SEMH needs would be ignored in an effort to save money.

People were keen to state that everyone's needs are different, and that their travel assistance options should reflect this, and respond to their needs.

Some people stated if an individual has an ECHP they should be eligible for transport irrespective of their category of need. Some suggested that psychological professionals should be included in assessments of SEMH.

Some felt this proposal was penalising people with SEMH needs, and that by removing this automatic eligibility the council would be ignoring those needs.

Recommendations:

- Clarify that the removal of the automatic eligibility means that individuals with SEMH needs would be assessed under the process proposed at Proposal Two
- Ensure that all necessary risk assessment and safeguarding measures are included within any changes implemented under this proposal
- Provide clarity that if implemented in the new policy, this proposal would not impact on an individual's ability to access the travel assistance they are eligible for.

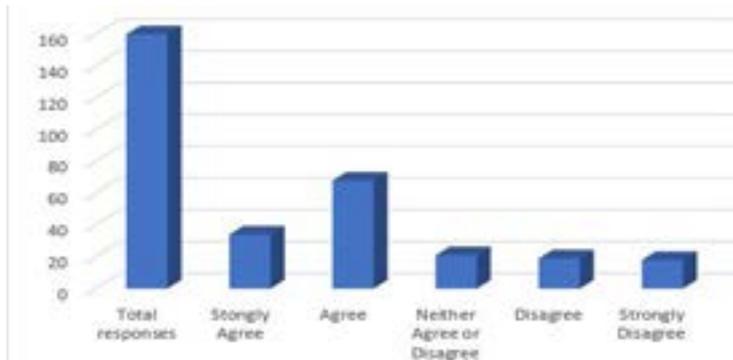
4.0 Analysis of Consultation and Engagement Responses

Proposal Five

To provide transport only from a single address unless there are exceptional circumstances.

5.1 Transport should only be arranged based on an individual's usual home address.

Overview



The majority of people were in favour of this proposal, with 102 Strongly Agreeing or Agreeing, 21 Neither Agreeing or Disagreeing, and 37 Disagreeing or Strongly Disagreeing.

Some focus group discussions on this proposal were lengthy, focussing on whether there was actually a problem that needed addressing, and whether this would impact on families with parents living apart, or where support was provided at a more than a single address.

Recurring questions and concerns among participants to the focus group, and among those completing the questionnaire were raised on the issue of an 'exceptional circumstance' and what its definition was, and on whether respite care was an exceptional circumstance.

People asked what would happen if people were stuck in traffic and could not be home in time for drop-off, if working irregular hours or overtime would be an exceptional circumstance, and if foster families would be included within this approach.

Transport professionals offered statements that bus routes are not changed for different addresses, but that individuals who need to go to a different address use a different route to their normal one.

Pupils participating at school focus groups said different addresses caused confusion and distress for those who rely on a routine.

Concern was expressed about the age of people using transport where routes are changed to accommodate different addresses, and the impact on the length of their journey.

Some people questioned if more than one address was an issue as they were not personally aware of it so did not believe it happened.

Concerns were expressed that this proposal provided no flexibility for changing circumstances; this was countered by statements that it removed a lot of flexibility and prevented people from 'abusing' the service provided.

Recommendations:

- To confirm what constitutes an 'exceptional circumstance' and where possible give examples which are recognisable to people receiving travel assistance, e.g. 'where an individual is provided transport to and from their home address, and accesses respite care at a different address as part of their ECHP, this would be an exceptional circumstance'
- Confirm the arrangements for separated families, where a court order is and is not in place
- Consider principles underpinning transport policies around length of journey and ages of passengers using transport

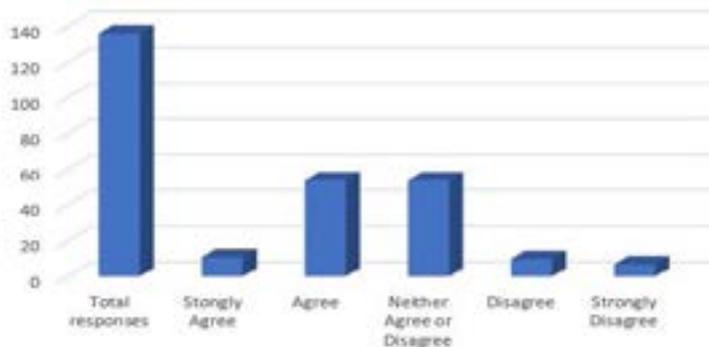
4.0 Analysis of Consultation and Engagement Responses

Proposal Six

To amend and clarify the application and appeals process for Home to School Assistance.

6.1 The proposed policy is clear about how the application and appeals process for home to school travel assistance works.

Overview



The majority of people were in favour of this proposal, with 65 Strongly Agreeing or Agreeing, 54 Neither Agreeing or Disagreeing, and 17 Disagreeing or Strongly Disagreeing.

The majority of people agreed with this statement, although some stated it was confusing, and does not include people with experience of working with people with additional needs.

Some commented that the process seemed clear, but the application of the process to individual's circumstances depended on the individuals involved.

Some stated that if the policy, assessment process and decision-making processes were robust enough and applied as they should be, an appeals process would not be necessary.

A number of people commented that they did not understand the information, or process, and were confused and upset by it.

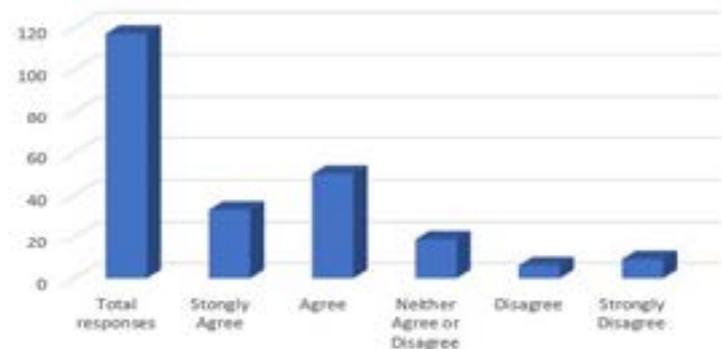
Comments were made about the need for clear guidelines to avoid deviation, and that the appeals process was not as independent as was stated in the policy as it includes Head of Service and department leads who they felt would 'toe a line'.

There was a feeling that the process could be improved with more clarity and a different panel.

Some said the appeals process should permit appeals irrespective of whether material changes had taken place, and that appeals should not rely on time-restricted information.

6.2 The Stage 2 Appeal Panel should be changed from a panel of Councillors to a panel consisting of a Councillor, the appropriate Head of Service or their representative, a senior transport officer and an appointed parent representative to reflect good practice.

Overview



The majority of people were in favour of this proposal, with 83 Strongly Agreeing or Agreeing, 19 Neither Agreeing or Disagreeing, and 15 Disagreeing or Strongly Disagreeing.

The proposed panel was welcomed by the majority of people, who also took the opportunity to suggest further improvements to it.

Many people suggested health, educational, social worker, transport, health and safety and counselling professionals, as well as family and community organisations, could also be involved with the panel to provide a breadth of expertise, experience and knowledge otherwise missing. Some asked if a SEND officer should also be on the panel.

Some questioned whether any councillors were needed on the panel; others felt having a councillor on the panel would allow their voice to be heard, as they are elected to represent their community's views.

Parents were keen to understand what a 'parent representative' would be and how this would work; some expressed dissatisfaction at not being able to take support with them to the appeal hearing, and that

4.0 Analysis of Consultation and Engagement Responses

inadequate information was provided about what is and is not permissible.

Recommendations:

- Consider amending the appeals panel to include professionals with specific knowledge and experience, to ensure that all information and contexts are understood when decision-making is taking place
- Clarify in the policy how the appeals process works, how long it takes, what evidence is required, when appeals can be lodged
- Consider if and how the appeals panel could include more independent representatives to ensure greater independence and integrity in the process
- Consider how advice and guidance to parents/carers and how this could be improved to provide greater clarity

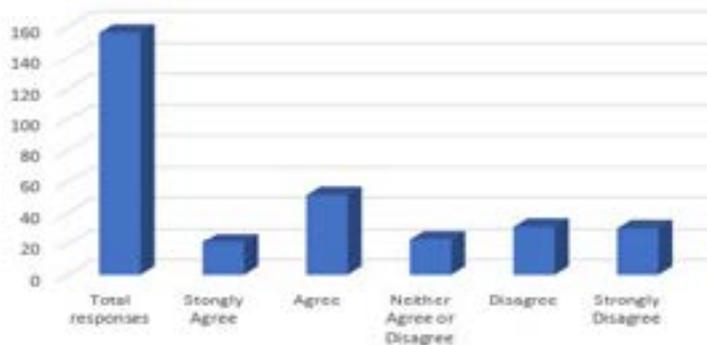
4.0 Analysis of Consultation and Engagement Responses

Proposal Seven

The policy aims to more clearly explain that travel assistance is only provided to the nearest appropriate educational establishment or social care venue unless there are exceptional circumstances.

7.1 Unless there are exceptional circumstances an individual should only receive travel assistance to the nearest appropriate educational establishment or social care venue.

Overview



The majority of people were marginally in favour of this proposal, with 72 Strongly Agreeing or Agreeing, 23 Neither Agreeing or Disagreeing, and 61 Disagreeing or Strongly Disagreeing.

People were concerned about what 'appropriate' means, and were worried about the implications of a 'nearest appropriate' location being considered inappropriate by them because of bullying issues, or other causes for concern.

People felt this takes away parental choice because any deviation from the recommended nearest appropriate location for children or adults would result in the family having to pay for travel assistance and therefore having no choice if they are unable to pay.

People were concerned about the impact on 'nearest appropriate' locations being away from their home communities and the ability of the individual to be part of their community and become familiar with it.

Some people felt this proposal is a 'get out' clause for the council to remove its legal responsibility to provide transport.

Some participants to the focus groups stated they had

no issues with the proposal; others stated there needs to be a professional involved with the decision-making on what is an 'appropriate school'. Some concerns were expressed around the language used and how this could be a barrier.

Recommendations:

- Clarify what is meant by 'nearest appropriate'
- Clarify the legal position on what the council must provide and how this proposal meets that responsibility
- Clarify the impact, if any, on parental choice
- Clarify what options may be available, if any, to address concerns about schools or day centres deemed the nearest appropriate.

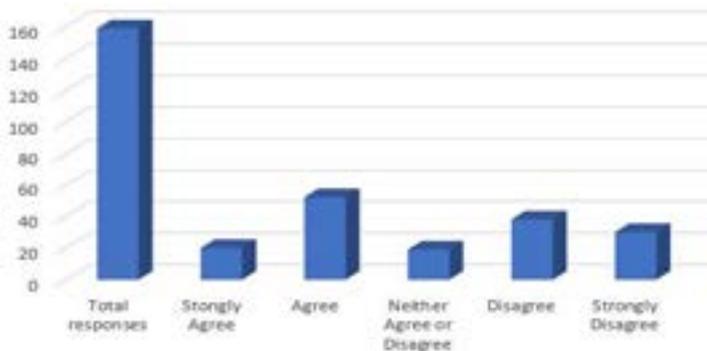
4.0 Analysis of Consultation and Engagement Responses

Proposal Eight

The policy aims to more clearly explain that where individuals are eligible for transport, pick-up points will be used unless there are exceptional circumstances.

8.1 Unless an individual has significant needs, Council-provided transport should be from a designated pick-up point, within a reasonable distance of their home.

Overview



People were divided over this proposal, with 72 Strongly Agreeing or Agreeing, 19 Neither Agreeing or Disagreeing, and 68 Disagreeing or Strongly Disagreeing.

This proposal prompted a range of views, with many expressing a belief that it was a 'backward step' without realising pick-up points are already in use, and are regarded by those who use them as 'working very well'.

Concerns were expressed about where pick-up points are or would be, if and how they would be risk-assessed to address any safeguarding issues, how weather, unreliable transport and the general risks of life would be addressed.

Many people stated this proposal and statement was a good idea, would prepare people for later life and allow them to start developing more independence and integration in communities. Some did not feel pick-up points were appropriate.

Some people were unsure of the term 'significant needs' and required clarification on that and the phrase 'reasonable distance' before making a view known.

Some felt the use of pick-up points would depend on the age and ability of the individual; others noted this would be part of the ECHP and that would be part of the

personalised assessment.

Others were concerned that using pick-up points would place vulnerable people at risk in public places; others stated their family member could not be trusted.

People took the opportunity to improve how pick-up points could be incorporated into the proposed policy, through the use of walking buses, escorts meeting people at pick-up points instead of arriving on the transport, and that pick-up points should be sheltered.

Recommendations:

- Consider the incorporation of the suggestions made to help people understand the benefits of pick-up points
- Consider offering trials to pick-up points as a travel assistance option so people can test it before committing to it
- Consider calling for suggestions of pick-up points people would accept being used, and include these when deciding where pick-up points will be designated.

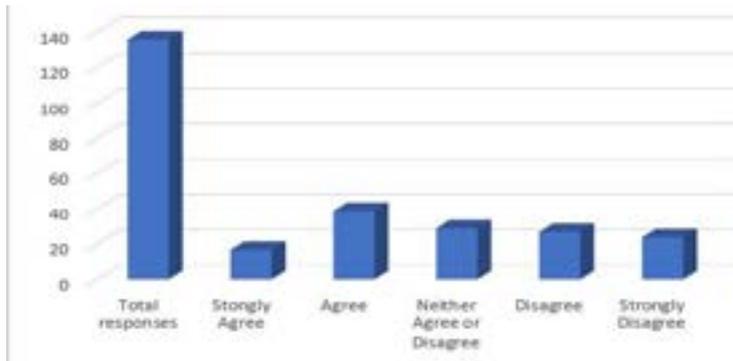
4.0 Analysis of Consultation and Engagement Responses

Proposal Nine

The new policy aims to explain more clearly that parents are expected to accompany their children unless there are exceptional circumstances.

9.1 The proposed policy is clear in explaining that parents are expected to accompany their children to school.

Overview



The majority of people disagreed with this proposal, with 56 Strongly Agreeing or Agreeing, 29 Neither Agreeing or Disagreeing, and 51 Disagreeing or Strongly Disagreeing.

This proposal is not supported by the majority of people responding to the questionnaire, although most people participating in focus groups understood it was clarifying the law and agreed it was a good idea.

Some people did ask why the council needed to make this clarification; others seemed to think the council was criticising those who are not able to take their children to school. Some seemed to think they were being told they had to accompany their 17-year old or 18-year old teenagers to school when they would not want it, having already been encouraged to promote independence.

Some people also thought this meant that they should be accompanying their children when provided with council transport.

Recommendations:

- Clarify the language which can be used and consider amending 'accompany their children to school' to 'get their children to school'
- Clarify how the responsibility changes if a child is

walking to school and if they are in receipt of council transport

- Clarify what is meant by this proposal - and that it does not remove the promotion of independence and preparing children and young people for adulthood
- Clarify where the parental responsibility ends if their child is receiving travel assistance and provide recognisable examples as reference points
- Clarify if, and under what circumstances, parents can pass the responsibility on to older siblings, e.g. where an older sibling attends a mainstream school where the child also attends

4.0 Analysis of Consultation and Engagement Responses

General Comments Feedback

Considerations

- By July so ready for September – all school and parents know by July
- The need of the whole family – implications of childcare / care for adults as we have to work!
- I feel this is a good opportunity to develop the service and involve everyone.
- One size does not fit all – there isn't a quick fix. Just because the LOP ends at 25 – life care and support doesn't. Adults count too!
- Changes will need to be implemented slowly

Suggestions/Comments

- Clear proposals and very basic information needs to reach all parents and young people
- With both children need and help and support to go to school as I live in Bilston and one goes Green Park and my 13 year old goes Westcroft School. Both my boys need transport support – it is fair for us to keep them both there
- People that know the child personally should be involved in the decision
- If parents have their own disabilities or lots of little children it can be very hard to get to two or three schools. A special needs child will make it even harder to do the school run. I don't think any special needs child should be left to get to and from school alone. Assessments must be covered by people who know how these children behave! All have their own issues.

Recommendations:

- Provide an update on the council's website, and direct to people who receive travel assistance about how their feedback has shaped the proposals following consultation and your consideration of their comments and this report
- Consider the programme of implementation, and how this could be achieved to ensure schools, transport providers (new and existing), parents and carers are aware of any changes to their travel assistance provision ahead of education or day centre terms starting in September
- Consider how changes will be implemented and whether this can be achieved and over how long a period
- Consider how the information shared with parents/

carers and people receiving travel assistance are informed about the changes, when this update is shared and how it is shared to both those who receive travel assistance and their parents/carers as well as the wider communities who may be affected now or in future.

4.0 Analysis of Consultation and Engagement Responses

Analysis of Out of Scope Responses to Proposals

Focus groups prompted many people to offer information about their experiences of as a parent or carer of a child, young person or adult who receives travel assistance from the council.

It was apparent early on that many people - the majority - have a high level of mistrust, and feel they are constantly having to fight for support they feel they are eligible for.

Many people used negative and combative language, such as 'we have to fight', 'it's a battle..', 'you have to make it sound worse', and 'why are you talking to us again, nothing has been done since the last time...' during discussions.

Specific comments were made about the council's focus on a service improvement narrative rather, and ignoring the decisions to spend significant amounts on capital project delivery.

Equally, many people attended the focus groups with a view to hearing the proposals having previously engaged with the pre-consultation travel offer conversations earlier in 2019, and wishing to have their say on the proposals. They also used the opportunity to air concerns or raise complaints about a range of areas which they felt could and should also be improved.

Many people noted that the social workers are very good, and do a good job, but that there are 'just not enough of them'.

Areas people made comments about include:

- Parents/Carers' relationships with the council and a lack of trust that the decisions have not already been made
- Issues impacting on the travel assistance provided or Independent Travel Training - these relate to service providers or highways infrastructure, as well as single-parent families struggling to cope with the stresses and demands of caring for someone with additional needs
- Implementation of the policy
- Use and implementation of technology
- Social workers
- Consistency
- Clarity around how the travel unit and assessment

- would work
- Support for parents
- Promoting independence
- Transport provision/assessment
- ECHP
- SENCO/SenStart and knowledge
- Eligibility
- Awareness of rights/support available
- Communications
- Ring + Ride, including a number of concerns by one parent
- General comments about transport-related issues
- General comments about support/life with a person who needs support
- General comments from Changing Our Lives
- General comments from Alzheimer's Society.

Two areas of concern stood out during the focus group discussions - Consistency and Communication. Both were felt to be an easy area to address, and participants to focus groups have made a number of suggestions about how these, and other areas of concern could be improved.

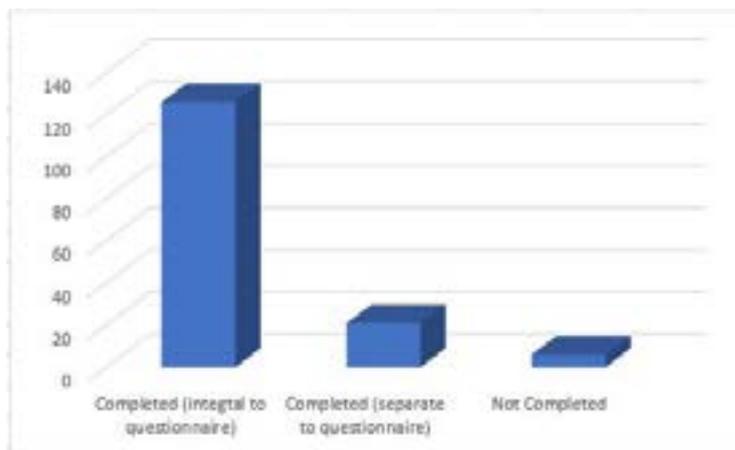
Recommendations

- Consider how the council could begin to improve relations by addressing what people regard as 'basics' e.g. communications, consistency and information being shared. This could be through the introduction of a regular email bulletin to registered recipients of travel assistance about service changes/improvements, staff updates, availability of funding through grants or bursaries, events and other information which may be of interest
- Ensuring families/carers and people receiving travel assistance are involved when decisions about transport mode are being made, or when modal changes are required and unavoidable
- Review Ring + Ride, and the service people are experiencing and consider how to best address the concerns, complaints and issues people have identified
- Review the reliability of the current service and consider how and where improvements could be made in advance of any new policy or proposals being adopted.

5.0 Equal Opportunities Monitoring

This section deals with the Equal Opportunities Monitoring form responses received during the consultation.

The following chart sets out the number of responses provided to the Equal Opportunities Monitoring forms which formed part of the consultation questionnaire.



The total number of Equal Opportunities Monitoring Forms returned, completed, was 147. This figure includes copies of the form which were both integral to the consultation questionnaire, and separate to the questionnaire. We have endeavoured to identify any duplications but have not been able to due to the anonymous nature of the forms, and not all questions being answered by respondents.

The following tables set out the responses by Equalities Opportunity Monitoring characteristics, as well as geographic area:

- Age
- Gender
- Birth Assigned Gender
- Sexual Orientation
- Ethnic Origin
- Religion
- Disability
- Postcode Prefix

Third Party Facilitated Workshops

A total of 16 people attended the workshops facilitated by Alzheimer's Society, of which four have a Dementia diagnosis.

Changing Our Lives reported Equal Opportunities Monitoring data in the same way this has been recorded

throughout the consultation. This data is included in the following tables.

Alzheimer's Society reported the Equal Opportunities Monitoring, rather than providing raw data. The data provided has been extracted and is reported beneath each tables.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring

Age

Age	Number of Respondents
Under 16	0
16-24	6
25-34	21
35-44	56
45-54	47
55-64	24
65-74	9
Totals	163

Alzheimer's Society reported 93 per cent of participants in the workshops were over 65. Seven per cent of participants did not provide a response.

Gender

Gender	Number of Respondents
Male	48
Female	123
Prefer not to say	9
Totals	180

Alzheimer's Society reported 53 per cent of participants in the workshops were male; 47 per cent female.

Birth Assigned Gender

Assigned Gender	Number of Respondents
Yes	156
No	
Prefer not to say	10
Totals	166

Alzheimer's Society reported 93 per cent of participants in the workshops identified with the same gender as they

5.0 Equal Opportunities Monitoring

were assigned at birth; seven per cent did not.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual Orientation	Number of Respondents
Heterosexual/Straight	136
Bisexual	1
Lesbian/Gay Woman	2
Unsure	3
Prefer not to say	21
Totals	163

Alzheimer's Society reported 100 per cent of participants in the workshops were heterosexual/straight.

Ethnic Origin

Ethnic Origin	Number of Respondents
Caribbean	2
Indian	5
Other Black	1
White British	115
Asian/British Asian	1
Other White	1
Pakistani	1
Asian or British Asian - Indian	16
Asian or British Asian - Pakistani	2
Black or Black British - African	13
Black or Black British - Caribbean	2
Chinese	1
Other Black or Black British	1
White Other European	2
White and Black Caribbean	1
White Gypsy / Irish Traveller	1
Totals	21

Alzheimer's Society reported 53 per cent of participants in the workshops were over White British; 27 per cent

were Caribbean and 20 per cent were Indian.

Religion

Religion	Number of Respondents
Sikh	11
Pagan	1
Christian	72
Hindu	5
Muslim	7
Prefer not to say	21
Any other religion	7
No religion	49
Totals	174

Alzheimer's Society reported 67 per cent of participants in the workshops were Christian; 20 per cent had no religion and 13 per cent did not provide a response.

Disability

Disability	Number of Respondents
Yes	65
No	94
Not sure	2
Prefer not to say	14
Totals	175

Alzheimer's Society reported 100 per cent of participants in the workshops did not consider themselves to have a disability.

5.0 Equal Opportunities Monitoring

Postcode Prefix

Postcode Prefix	Number of Respondents
WV1	6
WV2	6
WV3	8
WV4	5
WV5	1
WV6	14
WV10	18
WV11	8
WV13	3
WV14	10
Totals	77

people receiving transport assistance from geographical areas of Wolverhampton under-represented in consultation responses. Are there any geographical areas with no or lower than proportionate representation within the sample of respondents?

4. Consider how City of Wolverhampton can improve engagement activity generally with under-represented characteristics.



Alzheimer's Society reported postcode prefixes in the same way they have been recorded throughout the consultation. This data is included in the above table.

Recommendations

1. Refer to demographics of Wolverhampton, and of people receiving travel assistance by City of Wolverhampton Council, and
2. Consider if any further work is required to engage any characteristics protected by the Equalities Act 2010 under-represented in consultation responses
3. Consider if any further work is required to engage any