

Topic of Importance Response

Deadline for response:	31 January 2021
Topic of Importance	Transport and Communication with Parents (Including link to original paper)
Areas for Consideration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For PCC to produce a FAQ based on the questions parents ask year on year and place this on the Local Offer. 2. For PCC to provide information to parents on the process and timescales around home to school transport procurement and post this on the Local Offer. 3. For PCC to aim to give parents at least one week notice of their CYP's home to school transport arrangements (provider, pick-up/collection time) at the start of the new autumn term.
Who is this response from? (ie, service, panel, person?) Please consider all relevant areas suggested above, and state where areas are not applicable.	Clare Buckingham (Strategic Education Place Planning Manager). This response has been compiled by Peterborough City Council's Passenger Transport Team (PTOT)
Response from local authority / services	<p>Thank you for sharing with us the outcome of the consultation/survey work you carried out regarding communication around transport issues experienced by parents. It provides useful insights for us and we welcome any opportunity to hear from our service users and to look at any improvements which could be made to the services we provide.</p> <p>The Council's SEND and Transport services are acutely aware of the importance of effective pre-planning of transport arrangements for children before they start a new education placement involving new transport arrangements and communication of those arrangements. In a normal year most parents would have received the information about their children's transport arrangements at least a week before the start of the autumn term and would have had the opportunity for them and their child to meet the driver and passenger assistant for their journey to school if they wanted to. Unfortunately, 2020 was far from a normal year. The officers in PTOT were working flat out since before the end of the summer term to put transport arrangements in place but could only get so far in their preparations without the Department for Education's (DfE) transport guidance with regard to the impact of Covid 19 on transport arrangements. Councils had been told to expect this guidance by mid-July. It was finally published late on the afternoon of 11 August just three weeks before the start of term.</p> <p>The delay was made worse because schools were on holiday and, therefore, it was not possible to make contact quickly where there were specific issues or requirements which needed to be addressed before transport contracts could be confirmed with operators. The picture was complicated further as several smaller operators went out of business during the first lockdown which had an impact on coverage and meant that a number of routes, unexpectedly, had to be re-tendered. We fully accept that not receiving notification of transport arrangements</p>

	<p>until a day or two (or even later) before the start of the new school year is not acceptable for children with SEND and their parents, and hope that, whilst the above does not excuse the instances where this happened, it is helpful in explaining why, unfortunately, this was the case for some families in August/September 2020. We are grateful to families for their understanding and patience during that period.</p> <p>All three of the Areas for Consideration can and should be taken forward and the Council would welcome a future follow-up survey (ideally a wider one and undertaken in normal times) if FVP are minded to do so, as that would enable the Council to receive feedback on the improvements which it is committed to making.</p>
<p>Actions / Impact of considerations (please use bullet points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A comprehensive list of FAQs has been completed and shared (1 above) ● We are in the process of synthesising the information (dispersed through the FAQs) on process and timescales around procuring home to school transport provision (2 above) into a leaflet format ● We aim to improve on our track record to give parents at least one week's notice of their CYP's home to school transport arrangements (provider, pick-up/collection time) at the start of the new autumn term

Template note: One set for each service, group, panel to review.