

January
2017

School Transport Highlight Report



1. Introduction

Family Voice Peterborough (FVP) has been invited to have a seat on the Governance Project Board for the Passenger Transport Review. Before attending the first meeting a poll was created in the FVP SEND participation Facebook group to gather information from parents around school transport for SEND children and young people.

As of January 11th 2017 143 parent carers have seen the post, with 17 parents commenting about home to school transport as well as taking part in a poll. The poll asks parents whether their child/young person:

- a. Travels in a taxi with other children
- b. Independent travel
- c. School bus
- d. Taxi on own

This is just a basic poll asking what types of home to school transport the children/ young people use and if there has been any issues while using this.

This report is basic gathering information to start, this will then formalise into a more in depth questionnaire later in the year as well as focus groups to be held around home to school transport

2.0 Poll Results

2.1 143 parents have read the poll in the FVP SEND Participation group on facebook, Only 34 parents have answered the poll question.

2.2 a. Taxi with other children – 21

2.2 b. Independent travel – 7

2.2 c. School bus – 5

2.2 d. Taxi on own – 1

2.3 comments from parents:

2.3.1 *No complaints so far this year*

2.3.2 *Well, this year has been nothing but problem with the taxi and escorts. They belittle the children in the taxi. Shout at them and have now on 3 occasions made them late for school. I have to stand outside daughters school to wait for my son's son as won't bring to my door. The taxi driver really scares e he has asked personal questions which he really has no need I knowing ie where my husband works etc. Plus also asked me what hours he works etc. plus also asked me what the problem the other parents have as another mum had to complain due to escort allowing a child to run from taxi about the back of here without anyone being there for him.*

2.3.3 *We had huge problems with transport , after 3 years with the same company , escort and child , this year they just turn up at the door late on the day and said Hi, I am your taxi driver , and expect for things to go smoothly, I wish. There was 3 children in the car 2 of them did not like the escort so seats were shuffled and re-shuffled , so more stress. And finally the majority of the parents had other commitments and we not happy with pick up times, school listened and done a route to accommodate everyone which both transport and taxi company ignored , to in the end adhere to it after complaint after complaint from parents. Since then been fine. Regarding the escort I find her really caring towards my eldest which is a positive from previous escort, same from Taxi driver, I understand that they have to follow orders and our problem was with people higher in the chain. I know that some parents at COPASS were not happy a lot of changes in taxi providers after one starting to pick up the child and then be transferred to another driver , etc , etc*

2.3.4 *I am appealing at the mo as been refused it but really struggling to get over other side of peterborough to D's school but dont have a option as want him in education. just cant be in 2 places at once and didnt really have a choice in the matter*

2.3.5 *We have had a nightmare with transport this year so far!! Taxi driver changed but escort the same. We complained about the escort last year as she was rude and ignorant to us and the children in the taxi. Obviously nothing was done about it as she is back this year!! The taxi is always late by at least 10 minutes every day. Myself and my sons school have complained to the council but it hasn't made any difference. There are 3 children in the taxi with this one escort, and I know for a fact that one of the children has to have 2:1 at all times at school, so how is it deemed safe to have*

him plus two others in the car with one escort? We have had great experiences before with transport but this year is disgusting!!!

- 2.3.6 *Most of the escorts are lovely but I don't like how they change people at the end of term as this makes it look acceptable to go off with strangers , Josh has also been smacked by a driver a few years ago and I got a taxi which was the ones they use for school pick up and my seat came off its rail and through me across the taxi still sat in the chair this happend 3 days before the kids went back to school , I am just glad it wasn't one of our kids xx*
- 2.3.7 *Hit and miss as he has no escort but if time of pick up has to be changed (after school clubs) then a volunteer driver which can often be unsettling x*
- 2.3.8 *My daughter gets picked up by school transport her escort has been unkind a few times to her been a few change of driver one who was rude*
- 2.3.9 *We've had problems this year. At the start of the term he was in a mini bus with lots of different children and was so distressing for him with all the noise. Transferred him to a different taxi yes it was quieter but he was sat in the taxi for anything up to an hour each way and found it very hard to cope with so in a result ruined his school day and weekends as was stressing out about the taxi too much. They have since made a few changes but took a while to sort out and took lots of phone calls xx*

I have been told that we are having to pay for school transport next year, as we get dla for our kids so that's what it can be used for

please can I ask who told you this

My sons school

*your children got an EHCP if they have then you won't pay for it but DLA is meant to help them get around so maybe that's why they have said that
My son has been in a special needs school for 3 years and when I had his parents evening a couple of months ago the head teacher had asked the teachers to mention that we will have to pay for transport next year*

Unless they get paid for mobility and I would reckon HRM why would you pay this out of the care part of your DLA? I would not be surprised if the government finds a way in the future to say either school transport or mobility package but not both as a form of cost saving.

- 2.3.10 *Have been really lucky, got good bus drivers, lovely escort on Amy's bus, just don't like how they change it all every year and have to drive to pick up points because won't do home- school service*
- 2.3.11 *No problems on college transport so far, although they do run late in the mornings sometimes (traffic probably?). Escort is always cheerful*
- 2.3.12 *No escorts as senior in a unit within mainstream. No problems with the transport itself but when you have a taxi of ASD children disagreements are going to occur and nobody to intervene*
- 2.3.13 *The bus that picks up K is fantastic, no complaints x*
- 2.3.14 *I take my son to school, does that count as independent travel or does that mean child travels alone on public transport please? Thing is, transport can't collect before I*

leave or drop before I get back from collecting my other children from school, so I can't use transport, does that mean I have no relevance to this survey?

2.3.15 *Taxi for secondary school has no escort, had issue with 2014/2015 with kids fighting and taxi driver shouting that he will pull over and kick the kids out on a busy road (told by daughter) this year September 2015/ 2016 taxi driver turns up anytime between 8:05 and 8:10 doesn't speak good English car is supposed to be a people carrier but doesn't look like it and all three kids are squished in the back with one in the front driver does not help my daughter with the bags in or out of the taxi especially when she has more than one bag i.e p.e kit, art folder (is massive, has stopped bringing it home, will not open boot to store it), cooking equipment. We have the same taxi for this school term (2016/2017) on numerous occasions she has been picked up by a different driver and car, parents and kids not told at night and a couple of times in the morning and sometimes missed and in December was picked up by a different driver and had to go to the other students house which made them all late and a couple of times not dropped off at the door had to walk around the corner home*

4.0 Analysis

4.1 pick-up times can be an issue – a pick up time is given at the start of term in September but then as the school year progresses these may change – this can have a knock on effect to the rest of the family especially when having to get other children to another school.

4.2 Escort issues – not speaking good English, rudeness, not understanding need of the SEN children within the vehicle

4.3 attitude of driver – rudeness at times, not helping young person when they are overloaded with bags ie opening the boot of the taxi when having pe kit, cooking bag, art folder etc as well as school bag

4.4 incorrect information being given to parents from the school (not from the LA transport team)

4.5 All these issues have come from the comments above in 3.0, and I am sure that there will be more issues that come to light after a questionnaire goes out.

4.6 FVP is holding a focus group in March for discussion around code of practice for drivers and escorts