

Personal Transport Budgets - SEN Transport Information and Guidance for Parents, Guardians and Carers

Introduction

A Personal Transport Budget (PTB) is a payment designed to help you to get your child to school. It is available to SEN children who have been assessed as eligible to receive Home to School transport by Leicestershire County Council.

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

www.leicestershire.gov.uk/send-school-transport

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

Benefits of a PTB

Some examples of the benefits of a PTB are:

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

Applying for a PTB

An application for a PTB can be made by:

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

If you would like to apply for a PTB, then please click on the following link to complete the application form: www.leicestershire.gov.uk/PTB

Calculation of the PTB amount

The amount of PTB payment that you will receive will be determined by your child's age, number of days travelling and by the distance from your child's home address to their school.

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

A Ready Reckoner is available on the PTB website to provide you with an approximate indication of how much PTB you may receive. Please click on the link below to access the PTB webpage and the Ready Reckoner: www.leicestershire.gov.uk/PTB

Change of circumstances

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

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

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

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

If any change to your circumstances means that your child's eligibility to transport assistance is withdrawn, then the PTB payments will cease.

Change of payment

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

- Your child's attendance falls below 90%.
- Your child regularly arrives late at school in the mornings.
- Your child arrives at school in an unfit state to learn.
- The travel arrangements that have been put in place for your child using the PTB are deemed to be unsuitable or unsafe.
- Your child accesses short – break stays away from the family home.
- There is a change to national legislation and/or the Council's policies.
- You have more than one child or other member of the same household each receiving a PTB and attending the same school or another school nearby.

- Your child is not of statutory school age such as those attending Nursery (Under 5) or those in Post 16 education as you may be required to make a financial contribution as per the SEN Home to School Transport Policy, this can be viewed at: www.leicestershire.gov.uk/send-school-transport

Review of PTB arrangements

Each PTB will be in place up to the end of the academic year after the arrangement has started. It will be reviewed on a regular basis and you must reapply for each new academic year.

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

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

Payment of the PTB

The PTB will be paid into a nominated bank account every calendar month in advance.

In exceptional circumstances alternative payment arrangements may be made by agreement between you and the Council.

Using the PTB

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

You will:

- have control over how the payment is used that allows you to get your child to school.
- accept responsibility for the decisions made regarding the use of the payments and understand what the consequences are for misuse.

You **cannot** use your payment:

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

Although you have control over how payments are spent, the money can be reclaimed by the Council if it is not used in accordance with this Guidance.

If you are granted a PTB, you may wish to discuss this with your child's school as they may be in a position to put you in touch with other parents who also receive a PTB. You could look into working collectively to ensure the best use of the PTB for all of the children and families.

Terminating the PTB agreement

You may terminate the agreement by providing at least one calendar month's written notice to the Council, but note that the earliest date that this Agreement can be terminated is 31st October in any academic year.

You must also tell anyone you have engaged to provide services under the PTB.

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

Full Terms and Conditions

You are advised to read the full set of PTB terms and conditions. To request a copy please email TO@leics.gov.uk or telephone 0116 305 0002.

You may also view further information, by visiting the following website:

www.leicestershire.gov.uk/PTB

Feedback

The overall feedback from parents that have used the PTB has been positive, see below some of the comments that have been made:

HERE'S WHAT THEY SAY:

“ I previously had to wait for a scheduled taxi to arrive before being able to take my other children to school. Now all my children can leave at the same time. ”

“ I would encourage other families to use the personal budget and definitely recommend it. ”

“ I receive regular payments with no admin or paperwork each month ”



“ All families that are eligible and able should move to personal budgets – parents that can, should. ”

“ My children arrive at school relaxed and happy. Due to their needs, my children sometimes become stressed and struggle to travel on a bus with other children. Also they can leave home much later and get home earlier. I can assure they are content going into school. ”

Frequently Asked Questions

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

A. No. The payments are not taxed and will not impact on other benefits that you may receive. This is because the PTB is a payment made in relation to the child not the parent and is a grant that can be used in a variety of ways not just a 'mileage allowance'.

Q. If I have two or more children with SEN, all of whom are eligible for transport assistance, can I claim a PTB for each child?

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

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

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

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

A. No. Once the payments are made to you, you can use them any way you wish to in order for your child to get to and from school every day. However, the Council retains the right to check that payments are being spent correctly and lawfully.

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

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

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

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

Q. If I apply and am granted a PTB but find that at a later date it doesn't work for my child or my circumstances change, can I change back to the previous transport arrangement?

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

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

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

General Information

This guidance is amended from time to time as and when national legislation or council policy changes.

If you want to confirm whether this guidance is the most up to date version, or if you require any further information on the guidance, please telephone:

0116 305 0002

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

Or write to:

Customer Service Centre (E&T),
Leicestershire County Council,
County Hall,
Glenfield,
Leicestershire
LE3 8SR

Or Email: TO@leics.gov.uk

Or visit our website: www.leicestershire.gov.uk

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