

Talking about School Transport

The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure (2008) Review 2021



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Summary Report



Hello

School transport is an important part of education in Wales

Lots of children and young people in Wales use school transport to get to and from school.



The Welsh Government wants school transport to be safe and good quality.

We have a lot of good school transport across Wales.

Does school transport need to change?

There are some things that need to improve. In 2020, we decided to look at how the law was being followed and find out what mattered to people.

A review to help Welsh Ministers decide

The results of this review will be sent to Welsh Ministers. It will help them make decisions about the future of school transport.

About the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure (2008)

Back in 2008, we passed a law called The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure (2008).

It set out rules and standards so all learners have safe school transport. Some of these rules include making sure learners have their right to free transport that meets their needs now.

Who we spoke to

We got feedback from:

- learners
- parents
- teachers
- local authorities
- transport companies, and other partners.

This booklet tells you about what people told us and what we want to focus on going forward.



About the review

Where things stand

School transport is an important part of making sure everyone has access to an education.

School transport is free for learners aged 5-16 who:

- live at least 2 miles from the nearest primary school
- live at least 3 miles from the nearest secondary school
- live in a family with low income.



Some facts

 **108,455**
pupils travel to school by vehicle each day in Wales



65%

of pupils can have school transport if they chose

6,022 
use local bus services



9,288

have Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

 **3,500**

have special needs and get school transport with a dedicated driver they know and trust



School transport reduces traffic and pollution

£106 million

a year goes to local authorities for school transport. Local authorities choose how to use this money



In urban areas, it can cost up to **£200** per learner



In rural areas, it can cost up to **£400** per learner

Time for a review

Lots has changed over 13 years. New laws and policies have changed how we work and make decisions.

The Equality Act (2010) – legally protects people from discrimination.

The Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 – is our legal commitment to children's rights and the UNCRC.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – means that legally we have to think about how the decisions we make now affect the future.

The Wales Transport Strategy – is a plan to reduce the affects of poverty on families and make all transport easier to use.

The conversation

What we talked about

We checked if:

- local authorities were following the rules
- learners were getting the transport they needed
- the travel arrangements for post-16 learners
- the travel arrangements for nursery education
- the travel arrangements for older ALN learners
- if the 2-mile or 3-mile rule needed to change, and other things.

Feedback

2-mile and 3-mile rules

60% of people raised issues about the 2-mile and 3-mile rules.

Some local authorities reduced the distance rules for learners, others didn't.

Post-16 learners

Local authorities don't have to give free transport to post-16 learners who go on to further education or training. However, some local authorities:

- provide free school transport for post-16 learners
- provide free school transport for older learners with ALN.

Under 5's

Local authorities don't have to give free transport to under 5's. However, a few local authorities offer nursery school travel.

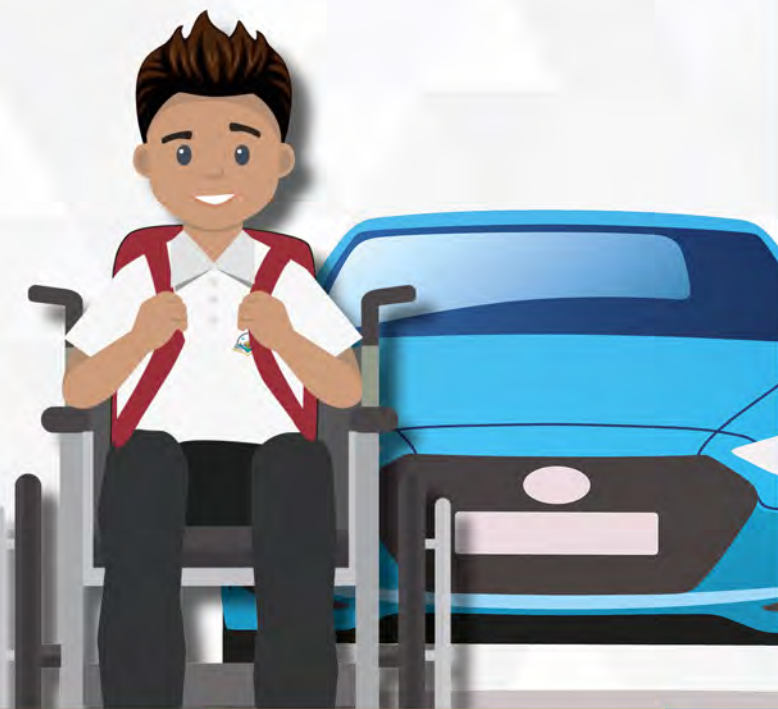
Welsh medium and faith schools

Some local authorities give free travel to a Welsh medium school or faith school even when it's not the nearest school available, others didn't.



People said we needed to:

- update the guidance
- give parents more information about their responsibilities and what happens when children split their time between two homes
- give more guidance on transport for 6th form students who split their time between school and a college
- improve networks, parking at schools and infrastructure
- make sure the law and its guidance are clear, so decisions are easier to make
- give local authorities more support
- consider the challenges and benefits of giving school travel to nursery aged children
- consider the costs of change.



Options for Welsh Ministers

Option 1

Wait and take forward changes to the Measure in the next Senedd Term.

A Senedd term is 5 years. The next election is in 2026.

Option 2

To move forward and connect changes to The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure (2008) with other work we're doing to:

- improve transport and make it more environmentally friendly
- meet the needs of learners up the age of 18
- meet the needs of learners with ALN
- and other plans to deal with poverty and improve life across Wales.

We recommend Option 2.

We don't want to wait till 2026.

To do nothing risks:

- more learners being treated unfairly
- codes and guidance becoming out-of-date
- local authorities finding it harder to make decisions
- more harm to the environment.

Next steps

Ministers will decide which option they want to choose.

Change takes time. Whichever option they choose, we will continue to collect evidence and find out what's important to people across Wales.

Thanks for reading!

