**Personal Transport Budget – A personalised solution for Home to School Travel Assistance**

Like all local authorities in England, Havering Council has statutory responsibility to provide free home to school travel assistance for all eligible students residing within the borough.

Although most students continue to attend school without asking for support from the Council, as they make use of community based resources and sustainable forms of travel, such as walking, cycling, use of public transport and others.

However, some students still require some forms of travel assistance from the Council.

The challenge is that travel assistance needs to be tailored to the needs of students, as a seat on Council-commissioned transport may not be suitable due to complex healthcare or SEN needs of the students.

Also, not all students would be able to access travel training programme.

The Council also has a responsibility to empower and increase independence of students and their families, so that they can make their own private transport arrangement which is suitable to their own specific family circumstances.

Last year, Havering Council changed the fuel reimbursement offer to a personal transport budget (PTB), as this removed some limitations of fuel reimbursement, especially for families without a family car.

This option also supports students to maximise the use of other resources and existing support within their community, instead of relying on transport arrangements organised by the Council. At present, the number of people using personal transport budgets has doubled from the last academic year to the present 2023/24 academic year, and almost 100 students and their families are now benefiting from a personal transport budget.

This number is set to increase, as PTB fits into the Council’s cost efficient and sustainable vision, and it encourages children and young people to become more independent and resilient in their future lives. Below are two of the comments from families benefitting from PTB.

***“I can now leave home for work on time. I do not need to wait for Havering passenger bus to turn up anymore, as PTB allows me to pay my next door neighbour to drop my daughter at school, since she will be driving her own children to the same school” -*** Parent of a student with special educational needs and disabilities in Havering.

***“As a result of my son’s sensory needs, he struggles with sharing transport with other children, and this is causing stress in his daily routine. However, I also have to take his younger brother to a different school, but I cannot be expected to be at two different places at the same time. I now use PTB to pay for his sibling breakfast club, by dropping him earlier at school. Since then, my son now enjoys his trips to school, and it increases the quality time we spend together as a family” -*** Parent of a student with special educational needs and disabilities in Havering.

For more information on various ways to make use of personal transport budget, we have created a special web page for this, which you can access here - <https://familyserviceshub.havering.gov.uk/kb5/havering/directory/advice.page?id=9iMGmVKfR40&localofferchannel=0>

You can also contact CAD Transport on 01708 434785or email CADTransport@Havering.gov.uk