



A new way to travel to school



Personal Travel
Assistance Budgets

What is a Personal Travel Assistance Budget?

A personal travel assistance budget (PTAB) is a sum of money provided to parents/carers of children with special educational needs or disabilities who are eligible for travel assistance.

A PTAB allows parents/carers to arrange personalised, flexible travel arrangements that suit the needs of their child and family.

Parents/carers can use their budget in any way that they wish to ensure that their child attends school regularly and arrives and leaves on time. A PTAB can be refused or withdrawn if these conditions are not met.

The sum provided will be based on the distance travelled from home to school and their child/young person's individual needs.

To be eligible to receive a PTAB the child/young person must meet the London Borough of Bexley's Travel Assistance Policy criteria. The PTAB is granted at the discretion of the council. It is not automatically granted upon request.

Why is the Council offering Personal Travel Assistance Budgets?

The London Borough of Bexley is looking at new ways to offer sustainable travel assistance. PTABs offer families more choice and control.

What are the benefits of having a Personal Travel Assistance Budget?

- Parents/carers have greater choice and control over how their child travels to and from school. Provides freedom and flexibility to choose the most appropriate travel arrangement that best fits their personal circumstances. Parents/carers can explore different types of travel arrangements with their child.
- PTABs will not affect any of the other benefits a family already receives.
- Parents/carers will not need to show the council how their PTAB is spent. Parents/carers can spend the budget however they like as long as their child is supported to attend school regularly and on time.
- A PTAB can give parents/carers opportunities to meet their child's teachers and other parents more often.

Who can apply for a Personal Travel Assistance Budget?

Parents/carers can apply for a PTAB if their child is eligible for home to school travel assistance and if it is assessed that a PTAB can meet their needs.

As part of the assessment, if a child is eligible for travel assistance, the Council will look at whether there is an existing method of transport that their child could use before offering a PTAB.

Who isn't eligible or cannot apply for a Personal Travel Assistance Budgets?

- Children/young people who have been successfully travel trained.
- Children/young people who are able to travel independently on public transport.
- Families of children under five and young people who have completed Year 11 education.

How does the council calculate the amount of Personal Travel Assistance Budgets to offer?

The amount of PTAB that parents/carers can receive is calculated based on the needs of their child/young person and distance from their home to their school.

This means that a PTAB will be tailored to the needs of each family. Generally there are five distance bands that are used to calculate the amount offered:

Bandings	Personal Travel Assistance Budgets (paid in 11 monthly instalments over the school academic year)
3 miles and under	£1,000 p.a.
3.1 to 5 miles	£1,200 p.a.
5.1 to 7 miles	£1,800 p.a.
7.1 to 10 miles	£2,500 p.a.
10.1 to 15 miles	£3,500 p.a.

How can parents/carers apply for a Personal Travel Assistance Budget?

Parents/carers can apply for a PTAB if their child has previously been assessed as eligible for home to school travel assistance.

An application pack is available through the Bexley Local Offer website or can be requested by emailing BITU@Bexley.gov.uk.

Parents/carers will be informed in writing of the outcome of the application usually within 30 working days of receipt of the application or later if additional information is required.

If a PTAB is agreed parents/carers will receive a letter with the agreed amount, contracts and a frequently asked questions information sheet.

If a PTAB is not agreed and the child/young person is eligible for alternative travel assistance, parents/carers will receive a letter outlining their child's travel assistance offer.

What can parents/carers spend their Personal Travel Assistance Budget on?

Parents/carers can spend their budget how they like as long as their child/young person is supported to attend school regularly and on time.

Some ways PTAB have been used include:

- Covering the cost of fuel for a family car.
- Buying a travel pass for a parent/carer or a trusted adult to accompany their child.
- Paying another parent who drives to the same school to take their child.
- Overcoming barriers that prevent parents/carers from accompanying their child such as childcare arrangements for other children.
- Paying for an escort to walk their child to school.

Can a parent/carer stop their Personal Travel Assistance Budgets if it doesn't work out for their family?

A PTAB is voluntary; Parents/carers can stop their contract by giving us written notice at least four weeks in advance. This allows the Council time to terminate their contract/payment and to make alternative travel arrangements for their child. We will ensure that their child has travel arrangement in place on the first day of the next half term. However, in the meantime it will remain parents/carers responsibility to ensure their child attends school.

How will the Personal Travel Assistance Budget be paid?

Payments will be made by the Council into a designated bank account in 11 monthly instalments over the school academic year. Parents/carers will need to provide bank details with their contract.

Will Parents/carers continue to get Personal Travel Assistance budgets until their child leaves school?

As children get older, it's likely they will wish to become independent travellers. Independent travel is an important life skill and can help young people to access the social and employment opportunities they wish to. Parents/carers can start supporting or training their child to travel independently, or they can talk to their school about Independent Travel Training. For more information on Independent Travel Training visit Bexley Local Offer on www.bexleylocaloffer.uk

How often does the local authority review a child's eligibility for a Personal Travel Assistance Budget?

All children and young people's eligibility for travel assistance will be reviewed at least annually. Travel assistance will also be reviewed when there is a significant change in circumstances, such as a change in home address, school or a change in the child or young person's needs. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to notify the Council immediately of any changes that may affect the provision of travel assistance.

Any changes to provision of travel assistance will normally be implemented from the beginning of the next school half term / school term or sooner where possible.

This leaflet is to provide general information.

For general SEN and disability support information including the London Borough of Bexley's Home to School Travel Assistance Policy visit www.bexleylocaloffer.uk

If you have enquiries regarding your child's travel assistance offer or to find out more about Personal Travel Assistance Budgets (PTAB) contact: Bexley Integrated Transport Unit (BITU) E-mail - BITU@Bexley.gov.uk or call **020 8303 7777** and ask for Bexley Integrated Transport Unit.

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