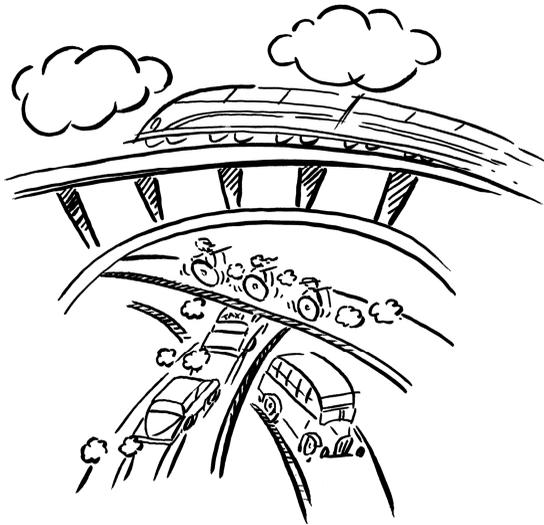


Chapter 10

Travel and getting about



For many young people, getting about on their own is an exciting part of becoming more grown up, but for some this will always be difficult without support. This chapter looks at ways of making travel easier and includes information about special allowances and concessions available to disabled young people.

TRAVELLING TO COLLEGE

Help for all young people

All young people aged 16-18 can get discounted local bus travel with a Bus ID card if they live permanently in the city, and the card is valid until the end of August following their 18th birthday. Local students in further education (FE) and higher education (HE) can also get discounted bus travel with a student key card. Full-time FE students aged 16 to 19 can get a third off their rail travel to and from college with a Sussex Student Card. For more details on all these schemes see the sections on bus and rail travel later in this chapter.

Help for people on a low income

Schools and colleges that offer further education get something called the **16-19 Bursary Fund** grant from the government. The purpose of this bursary fund is to help schools and colleges to remove some of the barriers that certain students may face in accessing further education, and it may include payment for transport. Individual schools and colleges have their own policies on how they use bursary funds so you should contact the student support service at your son or daughter's chosen further education provider to find out whether they may be eligible for assistance with transport costs from the 16-19 Bursary Fund.

The council may also offer **some direct financial help** towards travel costs over the first £10 a week for some students on a low income. In order to qualify for this, students must be living in the city and under 19 on 31st August before their course begins. Their course must be full time and at a school or college within the city but over three miles from their home. And they or their family must be on Income Support, Income Based Job Seekers Allowance, Universal Credit, Income related ESA or Child Tax Credits with a household income of £16,190 or less. They do not

normally help with travel costs for part time students, students over 19, students at private colleges or colleges outside Brighton and Hove. They can make exceptions in special circumstances, for example, for a young person with SEN, if there isn't a course more locally that suits their needs.

To apply for travel support you'll need to complete a PS1 form which you can download from the 'student support' pages of the council's website. Or you can get one from the school or college your child plans to attend or from the council at School Futures, Brighton & Hove City Council. Call 01273 290525 or email: bryan.deakin@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Help related to disability or SEN

In 2015, Brighton & Hove City Council published a new 'Transport Policy Statement' for young people in further education. You can read it on the Student Support page of the 'Children and education' section of their website at www.brighton-hove.gov.uk

This revised policy places a much greater emphasis on **independent travel**. The council has already invested in independent travel training programmes in local special secondary schools and some further education colleges and plans to do more of this in future. They hope or expect that this will mean "that many students with learning difficulties or disabilities will have learned [independent travel] skills and should normally be able to continue to travel independently when they move on to sixth form or college".

The new policy statement does recognise, however, that some young people with learning difficulties or disabilities may not be able to travel to school or college independently or may not be ready to do so when they start. In these circumstances, they 'expect' that a young person's parent or carer will transport

them to school or college but, where this is not possible, they may be able to get additional assistance with travel.

Like other students, the council recommends that young people with learning difficulties or disabilities should first speak to their chosen school or college about the travel assistance which may be available from the **16-19 Bursary Fund**.

Students with learning difficulties or disabilities or their parents or carers may also apply for **direct travel assistance from the council** using Form PS1 (as above) or via the SEN Team. There's an additional form for young people with SEND which allows you to provide supplementary information to support your application.

Each case is considered individually by a Transport Panel, taking into account lots of things like the young person's needs, whether similar provision is available in a nearer college, whether it's reasonable to expect the parent or carer to transport the young person and how complex the journey is. The panel may also seek advice from professionals who work with your child.

If transport assistance is agreed, it is *not* on a rolling basis. You or your son or daughter will need to **reapply each academic year** and each application will be considered in light of the current transport policy. The policy statement says that "travel assistance will not be withdrawn in the course of an academic year, except where a programme of independent travel training has been completed successfully." This may sound as if completion of an independent travel training programme will mean your young person will lose their travel assistance but don't be alarmed; there'd need to be proof that any training had made sure your child was not just *able* but *safe* to travel to declare it a success.

You can read more about this process, including how to make a complaint if you are not satisfied with the transport panel's findings, in the Transport Policy Statement.

PARENT TIP

- ☺ If you think your child is likely to need support getting to and from college, it's a good idea to bring it up during their transition planning meetings in Year 9 and beyond - see Chapter 1 for more about this.

INDEPENDENT TRAVEL TRAINING

As we said above, some schools and colleges are now supported by the local authority to offer independent travel training to help young people learn to get about on their own. Parents may worry about a child's vulnerability, but there are lots of advantages in the long run if your child can learn to travel independently - including opportunities to participate in social and leisure activities, training, further education and employment. And just think how it might free up your time if you don't have to be your child's chaperone or taxi service. Ask if your child's school or college is offering this training, what it will involve and how you can support your child to learn this skill.

'My son's self-confidence and self-esteem have blossomed. In his eyes, the world has become accessible and he feels that he fits in with his peers, which is so important to a teenager.'

JOURNEY PLANNING

Planning a journey in advance, especially if it's unfamiliar, is important and there are lots of local and national resources that can help.

A good place to start for both national and local travel information and journey planning is Brighton & Hove City Council's website www.journeyon.co.uk. It provides information on bus, coach, train, walking or bike journeys. Or call the council's Journey On Team on 01273 290367 or Public Transport Team on 01273 290487 for advice on local services.

For local and national rail travel, contact National Rail Enquiries or visit their website at www.nationalrail.co.uk. National Rail Enquiries provides travel information for disabled passengers and people with reduced mobility.

For coach journeys, call the National Express Contact Centre for advice on assisted travel on 0371 781 8181.

If you're planning to travel in and around London, Transport for London (TfL) has a journey planner on its website at www.tfl.gov.uk with tick boxes to flag up particular access requirement, as well as accessibility guides and maps and lots of information on assisted travel.

Online tools like the AA or RAC route planners help you to plan your journeys by road. As do well known apps like Google maps or sites like www.streetmap.co.uk. You just put in your departure point and destination and they plan your route from one point to another and provide you with text and map details to follow live or print out.

BUS TRAVEL

Local bus travel

Brighton & Hove Bus Company offers a free Bus ID card which gives discounts for 5 to 18 year olds up till the end of August after the student's 18th birthday, if they are permanent residents in the city. It offers reduced fares at any time and special

discounts on Saver passes (weekly, monthly, etc.). The old style Bus ID cards are being replaced by a smartcard called 'The key'. There is no charge for this card.

There is a different discount scheme for students over 19 who are at local universities and colleges (including City College, Plumpton, Northbrook and Sussex Downs). Find out more about how to get a Bus ID or student key card and how to use them on the bus at the One Stop Travel Shop in North Street or on the company website www.buses.co.uk, where you can see live bus times, maps and timetables.

If you have a smartphone, you can download 'On the go', Brighton & Hove Bus Company's real-time bus information app which gives you news, live bus times and service information direct to your phone.

Or if you prefer a hard copy, they publish a 'Bus Times' guide that gives details of bus routes and times and the number of vehicles adapted for easy access. You can get a copy of the guide from libraries, the council's Public Transport Team or at www.buses.co.uk

'She looks like any other teenager, but she's not like any other teenager. She's leaving school with a reading age of less than nine years. She still can't do independent travel on the bus, we have to practice journeys.'

National Free Travel bus pass

Anyone aged five or over with 'a physical or mental impairment' may be eligible for a National Free Travel bus pass which offers free bus travel with some time restrictions, e.g. travel before 9am on weekdays.

Young people will be eligible if:

- they have severe walking disabilities or they cannot use both of their arms (they must provide proof that they are receiving either the higher rate of mobility component of DLA or have a score of 8 or above in the 'moving around' category of PIP)
- they are blind or partially sighted
- they are profoundly or severely deaf
- they are without speech
- they have a learning disability
- they are aged 18 or over and not permitted to drive, or likely to be refused a driving licence due to a medical condition, other than on the grounds of persistent misuse of drugs or alcohol

They will need to provide proof: a letter from their doctor, DLA entitlement, their Personal Independence Payment (PIP) entitlement or a disability registration card.

The cards are issued by Brighton & Hove City Council. There is more detail and an application form on the council website or you can get the pass from the Brighton Customer Service Centre in Bartholomew House. Call 01273 291924 if you need any advice about eligibility or suitable documentation or email buspasses@brighton-hove.gov.uk

If your child is over 18 and eligible for the bus pass but unable to use it because of their disability, they may be eligible for taxi vouchers instead. See the section below on taxi travel.

EasyLink

EasyLink is a door-to-door transport service run by the Community Transport Service for people who find it difficult to use public transport. They run regular services for people to go

shopping. EasyLink buses have a passenger lift or low level floor, so they're ideal for people who can't manage steps or who use a wheelchair. Drivers are trained to help passengers on and off the bus and to make sure the journey is smooth and comfortable.

EasyLink buses serve all parts of the city from Portslade to West Saltdean and provide a service to and from superstores, the city centre and local shops. Buses run Monday to Friday, excluding bank holidays and return journeys cost £2.50 to £3.50. EasyLink also offers trips further afield and to places like the cinema. To register as a new user or to book a bus, contact Community Transport on 01273 677559 or email easylink@bhct.co.uk.

TRAIN TRAVEL

Local train travel for students

Brighton & Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council have negotiated a discount season ticket scheme that provides a third off the cost of daily travel by rail from home to school or college, if the cost of the journey would otherwise be more than about £10 a week. The discount is available to full-time students aged 16-19 whose home address is in Brighton and Hove, East or West Sussex. It applies to most local train journeys (not to London) and season tickets of between one month and one year.

To get the discount you need to have a Sussex Student Card and local schools and colleges have application forms for this. If your school or college is outside Brighton & Hove, East Sussex or West Sussex contact the student support team for a form by emailing bryan.deakin@brighton-hove.gov.uk

National train travel

The National Rail Enquiries website at www.nationalrail.co.uk provides information for disabled passengers about accessibility, train operating companies and the Disabled Persons Railcard, as well as accessibility maps that show which stations have lift access to platforms and information on staffing levels. If you haven't got access to the internet, call 08457 484950.

If a young person has a disability that makes travelling by train difficult, they may qualify for the **Disabled Persons Railcard** which offers the young person and an adult companion a third off most fares across the UK. The card costs £20 a year or £54 for three years. To get one the young person must provide proof they've received DLA at either the higher or lower rate for mobility for one year or longer, or at the higher or middle rate for personal care or they receive Personal Independence Payment (PIP) at any rate. Young people who are registered blind or deaf, or who have epilepsy, can also apply. Contact the Disabled Person's Railcard office on 0845 605 0525, or download an application form from their website at www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk. This site also has lots of other useful information about access and transport assistance.

National Rail also provides a Young Person's Railcard for 16-25 year olds which entitles the card holder to a third off rail fares. It costs £30 a year or £70 for three years. Visit www.16-25railcard.co.uk for more information.

Access and assistance with rail travel

If you're travelling by train and you need help you can book passenger assistance. The train operator can usually arrange for staff to meet you at your departure station, accompany you to the train and see you safely on board. Similar arrangements can

be made at your destination station and at other stations if you need to change trains.

There are several ways that you can book passenger assistance and transport operators recommend that you do so at least 24 hours in advance:

- Call National Rail Enquiries – dedicated operators will help you understand the best way to reach your station by accessible public transport, and they will connect you to the correct train company passenger assistance team for your route. Call on 08457 48 49 50
- Contact the train operating company responsible for the first leg of your journey directly. Brighton and Hove’s train operating company is Southern Trains and you can contact the company on 0800 138 1018
- Book online via the Disabled Person’s Railcard Website – Click on the ‘Passenger Assist’ button on the home page
- In person at any staffed train station.

TAXI TRAVEL

Taxi companies provide wheelchair-accessible cabs, but there are a limited number of cabs available, so you might have to wait longer. It’s best to book them in advance.

If a young person is over 18 and qualifies for a National Free Bus Pass, but cannot use buses because of a disability, they may be eligible for £70 worth of taxi vouchers a year (or £35 if applying after 1st October). The young person must be in receipt of DLA at the higher rate for mobility (or the enhanced rate of PIP) and be willing **not** to apply for the National Free Bus Pass – you can’t get both. To apply for taxi vouchers, contact the council’s Bus Pass team on 01273 291924. The following local taxi companies currently accept taxi vouchers:

- Brighton Streamline (01273) 747474
- Brighton & Hove City Cabs (01273) 205205
- Brighton & Hove Radio Cabs (01273) 204060
- Car Cabs (01273) 414141
- Hove Streamline (01273) 202020
- South Coast Taxis (01273) 301111
- Taxi Link (01273) 595959

CAR TRAVEL

Free road tax

Young people are entitled to a free road tax (Vehicle Excise Duty) disc if they:

- Receive the higher mobility component of DLA or the enhanced rate mobility component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- Have a car which is only used by them or for them. The car could be owned either by the young person, or by their parent or carer
- The first time you apply for an exemption for a particular vehicle, you must do so at a post office that issues tax discs. For subsequent exemptions on the same vehicle, you can claim at the post office, on line or by post. Application forms are also available from the government's Disability Benefits team on 08457 123456 or visit www.gov.uk

Blue Badge scheme

If your child gets the higher rate mobility component of DLA (or gets a score of 8 or more in the 'moving around' category of PIP), they will also be entitled to a 'Blue Badge'. This allows the holder to disregard some parking restrictions and makes it easier to park close to places they're visiting. In theory it is possible to get a Blue Badge if you don't claim DLA but "you

are unable to walk or unable to walk very far without experiencing very considerable difficulty". In this case the council may send someone to assess this. But for most people it is unlikely they would meet this criteria and not be getting higher rate mobility on DLA or the standard rate mobility or above for PIP. There is a fee of £10 for issuing the badge.

If a young person has a Blue Badge, they or the person driving them around need to stick to the rules about its use. For example, if they display the badge the wrong way round, or with the expiry date hidden, they can get a parking ticket.

To get a Blue Badge in Brighton and Hove, contact the Blue Badge section of Brighton's Parking Information Centre at Hove Town Hall on 01273 296270. You can also request an application form on the council's website at www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge or follow a link from there to apply via the government's website on line.

Motability cars

Motability is a scheme which means some of the money from the mobility component of DLA or PIP can be used to lease a car. If your child receives the higher rate mobility component of DLA or the enhanced rate of mobility for PIP and it has at least a year to run, you or the young person (if they are 16 and over) can use the mobility part of the allowance to lease a car, scooter or powered wheelchair. However, PIP's new tougher rules for assessing problems with walking mean that some people that get higher rate mobility payments under DLA may not get the enhanced rate for mobility when they move onto PIP. This means you will have to give back their Motability vehicle. To help people in this situation, Motability are giving support and advice in the form of a 'transitional support package'. There is more information on their website at www.motability.co.uk or ring 0300 456 4566.

Help with learning to drive

All young people can begin to learn to drive at 17 but if you receive the higher mobility component of DLA or the standard or enhanced mobility component of PIP, you can start learning at 16. In this case, you can apply for your licence three months before your 16th birthday.

Learning to drive is expensive. The Family Fund offer a grant to help eligible young people aged 16 and 17 take the first steps in learning how to drive. The Driving Ambitions grant supports the young person to get started by funding a combination of:

- Provisional licence
- Theory test
- Learning materials, such as the Highway Code or Theory test book or DVD
- First taster lesson

This is only available for an eligible young person who has not yet had any driving lessons. For more information call The Family Fund on 01904 621115 or look at their website at www.familyfund.org.uk. The Family Fund cannot provide support for ongoing driving lessons.

If you are between 16 and 24 and a Motability customer already, Motability may be able to help you with the cost of driving lessons, up to a maximum of 40 hours of tuition. Contact Motability on 0300 456 4566 to discuss this.

There are several Independent Mobility Centres around the country which provide advice about learning to drive. The nearest centre locally is the Queen Elizabeth Foundation in Surrey. Staff there can advise on what's available in Brighton and Hove and provide assessments to determine the support needed to help a person to drive. The centre also has a list of

driving instructors who teach using specially adapted cars, or who have experience of teaching people with disabilities. They can also provide information and advice on getting a car adapted for the young person's needs.

Amaze can provide contact details for driving instructors that other parents have recommended who've taught young people on the autistic spectrum to drive.

The Theory Test

The driving test is made up of a theory and a practical section. Theory tests are usually held at test centres, which are generally wheelchair accessible and offer specialist facilities for disabled people. If your local centre isn't accessible to your child, they can take the test at home or at a different centre.

There are special arrangements for people who have difficulties with written language or working with computers when taking the theory test. It usually takes around 40 minutes to complete the written test, but disabled people can apply for additional time by completing the 'special needs' section on the application form.

The Practical Test

No matter how serious a young person's disability might be, they will take the same driving test as everyone else. When booking the practical test, young people should let the Driving Standards Agency (DSA) know about their disability because they may be entitled to extra time for the test. Call 0300 200 1122 or email customer.services@dsa.gov.uk

ACCESS AND MOBILITY

Brighton and Hove

The Fed, a local charity led by disabled people, publishes lots of really detailed access information for disabled residents and visitors to the city. You can call them on 01273 296747 or look at their online 'Accessible City Guide' at www.thefedonline.org.uk.

Out of town

The Rough Guide to Accessible Britain is a good place to start looking at access elsewhere in the UK. See their website www.accessibleguide.co.uk. Another useful website is www.disabledgo.com, although this does not cover the whole country.

London can seem a challenging destination for disabled travellers, especially as many underground stations are unsuitable for disabled or wheelchair using passengers and there are no porters to help with luggage. On the other hand Transport for London (TfL) offer thorough information about transport accessibility. On the 'Plan a Journey' section of their website at www.tfl.gov.uk you can tick boxes about your access needs, for example, "I need step free access to the platform" and get routes that will work for you. They also publish lots of accessibility guides, such as 'Getting around London: your guide to accessibility' or the 'Step-free Tube Guide', all downloadable from the website.

Shopmobility

This scheme operates in many city centres and shopping centres and means the disabled person can borrow a wheelchair or scooter. Some schemes also offer an escort to do the shopping. Brighton and Hove's Shopmobility is in three locations:

Churchill Square Car Park 1, Level P3, London Road Car Park and Montague House, Kemptown. Call them on 01273 323239. Shopmobility is usually open Monday to Friday from 10am till 4pm, but opening hours can differ in the winter. It's a popular scheme, so book early. You need to register before the first time you use it and there is a small charge for hire - £5 between 10am and 4pm and £10 for 24 hours. To find out about other schemes across the country, see the national Shopmobility website at www.shopmobilityuk.org, or call 01933 229644.