

**Cheshire West and Chester Council  
Children and Families  
Personal Travel Budget**

A personal travel budget (PTB) assists with travel costs from home to an educational establishment for children and young people with a statement of special educational needs (SEN) or education health care plan (EHCP) or a learning difficulty assessment (LDA).



The Children and Families Act 2014 brings about the opportunity for parents or carers of children with additional needs who are eligible for home to school/college travel assistance to receive a personal travel budget (PTB). Cheshire West and Chester Council is committed to personalisation, promoting independence and improving personal outcomes and considers travel arrangements to be an integral part of a child/young person's educational provision.

A PTB will help you to arrange your child's home to school/college travel arrangements in a way that suits your personal circumstances. It allows families to make flexible arrangements, monitor the quality of their child's transport directly or work with other families to achieve the best possible travel arrangements for their children.

The benefits of a personal travel budget include:

- freedom and flexibility for you to choose the most appropriate travel arrangements for your child that best fit with your personal circumstances
- choice and control over how funding is used to get your child to and from school/college safely, on time and ready to learn, in a way that suits you, your child and your family
- ensuring resources are distributed in a fair way according to need
- allowing you to explore opportunities to share with other parents and potentially increase your buying power
- offering you an alternative to the traditional services arranged by the Council offering you an opportunity to enhance your child's independence skills
- covering the cost of child care for siblings to allow you to take your child to school.

## Frequently asked questions

### Who can get a personal travel budget (PTB)?

A PTB is available to you if your child is eligible for travel assistance in accordance with the home to educational establishment transport policy.

<http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=320>

## **Why make travel to and from school/college more personal?**

To support family circumstances and improve the home to school/college journey for your child, for example:

- some families would like to take their child to school but can't afford to
- some children find the journey too long, tiring and stressful
- some children want to attend after school activities which they can't because the
- school taxi/bus leaves at the end of the school day.

## **How do I get a PTB?**

Should you decide to take up a PTB we will ask you to sign an agreement letter. This sets out your role and the Council's role in the PTB process to keep your child safe and to ensure that their attendance at school/college and ability to learn are positive experiences. The Council will then make the arrangements to transfer the PTB to your bank account.

You will then be able to arrange and manage your child's travel arrangements in a way that best suits you, your child and your family. If your circumstances change (for example your family moves house) the eligibility for travel assistance will need to be reassessed and the PTB may need to be re-calculated or withdrawn.

## **How much is my PTB?**

The PTB calculation is based on the distance between home and school/college for the days that your child attends school. The distance is measured using the shortest route and is from home to school to home for each journey.

Further information about eligibility and how a personal budget may work for you is available from Children and Families via telephone 0300 123 7039 or email [schoolorganisation@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:schoolorganisation@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)

## **What can you use a PTB for?**

You can spend the PTB how you like, as long as your child travels in a way that ensures their safety, encourages their attendance and they arrive at school/college on time and in a positive manner ready to learn.

## **Some ideas for spending a PTB include:**

- purchasing a travel pass for yourself or a trusted adult to accompany your child on public transport
- paying for a passenger assistant for your child to walk to school/college or to travel by public transport, or arrange to do this yourself
- covering the cost of driving your child to school/college covering the cost of cycling with your child to school/college
- covering the cost of child care for a sibling to enable you to take your child to school/college
- pooling PTBs with other parents and arranging shared travel, such as shared driving responsibilities, walking buses or joint taxi bookings.

## **How is a PTB paid?**

Payments are made from the Council directly into your (the parent/carer's) designated bank account, in advance, on a half termly basis (seven payments per school year). You must provide the appropriate bank details at the time of signing the agreement.

### **Can a PTB be stopped at any time, if it doesn't work out?**

Yes, a PTB can be stopped at any time either by the Council or parent/carer. Should your circumstances change substantially we can arrange alternative forms of travel assistance, usually within a week of your notice. Additionally, in assessing your child's attendance at school/college, if this should fall below 80% (this means 64 half day sessions or 32 full days) in a school year.

The Council is committed to improving outcomes for children and young people and in providing the most appropriate travel assistance including independent travel training. If children and young people are assessed as being ready to learn to travel independently, then our dedicated team can work with families to ensure that a smooth transition takes place.

### **Does a PTB have an impact on other benefits?**

No. PTBs do not have an impact on any other benefits.

### **Will a PTB continue in future years?**

A PTB will be reviewed on an annual basis. As children and young people grow older, it is likely that they will wish to become independent travellers. Independent travel is an important life skill and can help children and young people to access further education, training, social and employment opportunities. You can enrol your child for travel training at any time with Children and Families via telephone 0300 123 7039 or email [schoolorganisation@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:schoolorganisation@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)

### **Are receipts of spending a PTB required by the Council?**

No. The PTB scheme leaves the flexibility and control of spending with parents/carers. The Council will monitor your child's attendance at school/college and will pick up any potential issues through the school/college record of attendance and fitness to learn once at school/college.

### **How do I apply for a personal travel budget (PTB)?**

Say yes to a PTB to give you the flexibility and control of your child's travel. Contact Children and Families via telephone 0300 123 7039 or via email [schoolorganisation@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:schoolorganisation@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)