

Multi-million-pound funding package for school transport

Thousands of students will be supported with new dedicated school and college transport to get them to school or college in the autumn term, the Education Secretary said today.

Delivering on the national priority for all children and young people to return to full-time education in September, local transport authorities will receive more than £40 million funding for the autumn term.

This funding will help them create extra capacity and allow hundreds of thousands more students to use alternatives to public transport, while social distancing measures remain in place. We will review further arrangements in the future should it be necessary.

Students and staff who have the option to walk, cycle or use a scooter are encouraged to do so, benefitting from £2 billion of government investment to increase active travel. This will be supported by a new campaign due to be launched shortly to reduce demand on public transport at peak times and minimise overcrowding.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Ahead of delivering on the national priority of all children and young people returning to full-time education in September, I am asking every staff member and student to plan now how they will get to school or college. If it is possible to walk or cycle, please do.

While our public transport system has almost returned to full service, I know thousands of people will choose to get active and find alternative modes of transport, because with distancing measures still in place it is important that we all play our part to ensure everyone is able to get to school safely, and on time.

For those that have no other option than public transport, this investment for local authorities will mean more students will be able to travel on dedicated home to school and college transport, creating even more capacity where it is needed most.

Local transport authorities will be allocated the funding to reflect the number of children and young people in the local area and how far they have to travel. This includes students travelling to education or training, as well as anyone supervising or escorting students to education provision.

Students returning to further education in September will also benefit from this investment. Local authorities should work with providers and set out

their travel arrangements for 16-19 year olds, taking into account that students in further education often rely more on public transport and travel further to get there.

Local authorities continue to have a statutory duty to provide free home to school transport for all eligible children of compulsory school age, including children who attend their nearest suitable and whose special educational needs and disabilities mean they are unable to walk there. This will continue alongside the offer of other modes of transport for more students.

The Department for Transport has also today announced further funding for the bus and light rail sectors to help increase services ahead of expected increase in public transport use in September.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

Today's funding will allow local authorities to procure dedicated extra capacity in our transport system to help students get back to their colleges and schools in time for the education restart in September.

But we need everyone to do their bit and help even further by cycling or walking where they can, whether they're a student going back to school or a parent commuting into work. We're making sure people have the support they need to do that, with £2 billion of investment backing our ambitious new Cycling and Walking plan unveiled by the Prime Minister last week.

Local authorities will be provided with new detailed guidance next week which has been developed with the sector and Public Health England, which sets out details they need to plan for transport arrangements in September.

The support package announced today reaffirms that it is a national priority for all children and young people return to full-time education in September.