



# SEND TRANSPORT TOOLKIT

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# ADEPT

The Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Views expressed in this report are based on evidence provided by local authorities (LAs) and other sources during the project. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the precision of the information contained in the report, we cannot guarantee its accuracy or currency.

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# INTRODUCTION

**This collection of mitigations against home to school travel pressures has been produced by ADEPT in partnership with a number of Directors / Assistant Directors of Children's Services to help support LAs to deliver SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) travel in their local areas.**

Since the introduction of the SEND 2014 reforms, increasing demand for SEND travel, along with financial pressures on LAs and difficulties in the transport market, have meant that providing a sustainable SEND travel service has become extremely challenging.

This toolkit is not intended to provide a panacea to the challenges being experienced across SEND transport. This could only be achieved by new legislation which is fit for purpose for the 21st century, fully funded and built on meeting the needs of children. However, by describing some of the initiatives and measures LAs have implemented to help manage demand and cost associated with SEND travel, it aims to provide insight and support to LAs in managing these challenges.

This is a resource for LAs, based on shared knowledge and experience. It considers key areas of activity and describes initiatives which have been tested and implemented within the sector. It also describes the outcomes of these activities, although it should be noted that these mitigations, either singularly or in combination, cannot alone make a significant impact on the home to school travel pressures that LAs are facing. It also includes more detailed case studies of some of these initiatives.

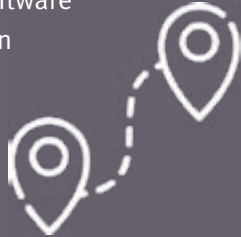


# HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT INITIATIVES AND OUTCOMES

## ROUTE PLANNING / OPTIMISATION

Route planning/optimisation refers to arranging routes and resources to maximise efficiency while minimising costs.

LAs employ various strategies, including specialised software usage and the delegation of route planning to transport operators through tenders.



### Initiatives

- Route and solo traveller reduction
- Data gathering and monitoring
- One school, one operator model
- Children from different schools sharing the same transport

### Impact

- **Increased efficiency**
- **Better use of resources**
- **Improved forecasting**

## INDEPENDENT TRAVEL TRAINING

A training programme instructing young people in independent travel methods, such as using buses, walking, or cycling, starting from Year 9 or during transition into further education.

Successful completion of training designates them as independent travellers, leading to the discontinuation of allocated transport. This may be sourced in house or externally.

### Initiatives

- Creation of ITT team and programme
- Passenger assistants (PAs)



### Impact

- **Increased supply**
- **Better use of resources**
- **Reduction of risks**
- **Reduction in demand**

## ELIGIBILITY

Students are entitled to free or subsidised travel support, which should align with national and local authority policies.



This entitlement includes children with SEND, ensuring alignment with relevant SEND legislation and individualised support based on educational health and care plans (EHCPs) which specify the child's specific needs.

### Initiatives

- Review child's transport needs
- Design of an eligibility matrix
- Need to apply for post-16 transport
- Application of SEN eligibility criteria

### Impact

- **Better use of resources**
- **Suitability matched transport**
- **Reduction in solo transport**
- **Cost avoidance**

# HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT INITIATIVES AND OUTCOMES (continued)

## COMMISSIONING

Collaborating with Children's Services department commissioners to reassess policy and practices, challenging norms, and seeking innovative ways to provide travel support, such as parental allowances and school resources, instead of default vehicle commissioning.



### Initiatives

- 'Cross-service' project team
- Council funded school minibus scheme
- Review of non-statutory and out of area transport support
- Capital investment in schools

### Impact

- **Increased supply**
- **Better use of resources**
- **Reduced demand for school transport**
- **Cost avoidance**

## PERSONAL TRAVEL BUDGETS (PTBs)

PTBs provide families with flexible financial support for their child's school transportation, allowing them to choose how they use it.



Use of PTBs differs between LAs - some offer it universally, others based on economic factors, and some exclusively for post-16 students.

### Initiatives

- PTBs as 'first offer'
- PTBs instead of high value single transport

### Impact

- **Increased efficiency**
- **Better use of resources**

## SUPPLIER MANAGEMENT & MARKET STRENGTHENING

Collaborating with transport operators to bolster resources, which may involve local authority fleet implementation and expanding the existing fleet.

Fostering partnerships through regular meetings and long-term contracts to enhance supplier efficiency and fill resource gaps.

### Initiatives

- Use of improved DPS software
- Contractor/all operators meetings
- Contract extensions/longer term
- Resource/review in-house vehicles

### Impact

- **Better supplier management**
- **Better long-term forecasting**
- **Time savings**
- **Increased efficiency**



# 1. ROUTE PLANNING/OPTIMISATION

Route planning or optimisation is the efficient planning of routes and resources to maximise use and minimise cost.

Some LAs use specialised software for this, whilst others require transport operators to undertake route planning as part of the contract.

<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Authority</i>	<i>Impact</i>
<b>Solo traveller review</b>	The review of solo travellers and their needs, looking for opportunities to combine journeys.	Hampshire County Council & Norfolk County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Increased efficiency</b></li> <li>• <b>Hampshire County Council: cost avoidance of £21,280 on average, saved per solo route decommissioned, where the child is re-allocated to a shared route</b></li> </ul>
<b>High-cost route review</b>	The review and analysis of the highest cost routes, offering Personal Transport Budgets (PTBs) or mileage where appropriate, and holding discussions with school heads to confirm what is best for the child and family.	Kirklees Council & Luton Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Increased efficiency</b></li> <li>• <b>More choice for families</b></li> <li>• <b>Luton Council: highest spend down from £350+/day to £1,500/monthly PTBs</b></li> </ul>
<b>Route reduction</b>	The review and analysis of routes to achieve alignment of college timetables so that, as far as possible, they start and end at similar times (e.g. 9am and 3pm), therefore minimising the total number of routes.	Oxfordshire County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Better use of resources</b></li> <li>• <b>Increased efficiency</b></li> </ul>
<b>Double running</b>	The review of opportunities to use the same vehicle to drop off more than one batch of children.	Hampshire County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Better use of resources</b></li> <li>• <b>Increased efficiency</b></li> </ul>
	The review and analysis of existing single taxi routes.	Bath and North East Somerset Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Better use of resources</b></li> <li>• <b>Increased efficiency</b></li> </ul>

<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Authority</i>	<i>Impact</i>
<b>Review of walking routes to school</b>	A rolling programme of reviewing ‘Walking Routes to School’ assessments to consider whether each route is safe or not for use as a walking route. There are further plans to align the decision-making process with the appeal process and ensure that the appeal panel has sufficient capacity.	Oxfordshire County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>More choice for families</b></li> </ul>
<b>Gather and monitor meaningful data</b>	Review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• high needs routes</li> <li>• route mileage</li> <li>• vehicles used on routes and what they cost</li> <li>• incidents on routes to see if long journey times give rise to more problems</li> </ul>	Dorset Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Increased efficiency</b></li> <li>• <b>Better use of resources</b></li> <li>• <b>Improved forecasting</b></li> </ul>
<b>Real time contract management</b>	The introduction of real time contract management to enable understanding of vehicle positioning and passenger numbers via smart ticketing. Future improvements include the creation of geocoded routes that will allow the use of route optimisation software (trials due to begin in autumn 2023).	Oxfordshire County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Increased efficiency</b></li> <li>• <b>Better use of resources</b></li> <li>• <b>Improved forecasting</b></li> </ul>
<b>One school, one operator model</b>	The assigning of one operator to deliver all the transport for a single school (as opposed to multiple operators working with the same school). The highest impact is likely to be achieved where schools have a smaller catchment area.	Dorset Council & Hampshire County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Increased efficiency</b></li> <li>• <b>Hampshire County Council: cost avoidance - savings of over £519k in April 23 by aligning two schools to one provider</b></li> </ul>
<b>Linking schools</b>	Linking is where one trip is completed and another begins immediately after, using the same transport and driver. This is usually applied to a route transporting school age children, followed by the commencement of a post-16 route.	Lancashire County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Better use of resources</b></li> <li>• <b>Cost avoidance</b></li> </ul>



## 2. INDEPENDENT TRAVEL TRAINING (ITT)

ITT programmes can teach some young people how to navigate transportation independently by using local bus services, walking or cycling, depending on their level of needs.

Typically, training takes place from Year 9, and most often when a young person is transitioning into further education. After successful completion, participants can be declared independent travellers and may no longer require school or college transportation by taxi or minibus. Some LAs manage their own travel training teams, whilst others outsource to third-party providers.

<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Authority</i>	<i>Impact</i>
<b>Create an ITT team and programme</b>	The implementation of a programme to assess students' independent travel abilities. This can involve the training of schools to provide the programme or council trainers directly assessing and training students.	Oxfordshire County Council & Norfolk County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reduction in demand for school and college transport</b></li> <li>• <b>Better outcomes for children and adults</b></li> <li>• <b>Norfolk County Council: cost avoidance of £243k per year</b></li> </ul>
	The Council's Transport Commissioning Service will deliver the training. Future improvements include exploring behavioural needs risk assessments and closer collaboration with schools to support students' needs.	Cheshire West and Chester Council	
<b>Increase SEND provider engagement</b>	An increase in engagement with SEND providers to maximise opportunities for effective delivery.	Oxfordshire County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Better use of resources</b></li> <li>• <b>Better outcomes</b></li> </ul>
<b>Passenger assistants (PAs)</b>	The appointment of a recruitment and training officer to oversee PA recruitment and provide in-depth training to support staff in their job role. A key part of this role involves working with families to use carers or family members as passenger assistants.	Kirklees Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Better use of resources</b></li> <li>• <b>Increased supply</b></li> </ul>

### 3. ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility is the entitlement to free or subsidised travel support for students travelling to and from school or college in accordance with national legislation, local authority policy and depending on their circumstances. LAs must follow the minimum requirements of national legislation, but they may offer more generous support, depending on local circumstances. Further information can be found in the [Travel to school for children of compulsory school age guidance](#) and [Post-16 Transport and Travel Support to Education and Training guidance](#).

Some LAs review eligibility criteria annually, employing specialist ‘Travel Review Officers’ to ensure that transport still fits the child’s needs. Others have developed their own assessment criteria and may consider other options, such as personal transport budgets (PTBs). Reviewing eligibility for free or subsidised travel support for students can help to ensure that students have the transport they need, identify students who are no longer eligible for support, and improve the quality of transport services.

<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Authority</i>	<i>Impact</i>
<b>Review child’s transport needs</b>	An annual (as a minimum) review of each child’s transport needs to ensure their transport provision still meets their immediate and expected future needs. To lead on this work, Dorset Council appointed a ‘Travel Review Officer’ who has a background in working with SEND and is a member of the transport team.	Dorset Council & Luton Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Better use of resources</b></li> <li>• <b>Cost avoidance</b></li> </ul>
<b>Application of SEND eligibility criteria</b>	The firm application of SEND eligibility criteria. This may include withdrawal of transport for children not attending the nearest school that can meet their needs.	Hampshire County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Better use of resources</b></li> </ul>
<b>Explore NHS funding</b>	The exploration of potential options for NHS funding to support transport for children with high medical needs.	Dorset Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Cost avoidance</b></li> </ul>

<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Authority</i>	<i>Impact</i>
<b>Must apply for post-16 transport</b>	The implementation of a process for post-16 transport where all families must apply for transport. Support is then only provided if it is required to facilitate attendance. Eligibility is based on individual circumstances. Distance based, tiered charges are applied for young people with SEND aged 16 and above as policy exceptions.	Hampshire County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Better use of resources.</b></li> <li>• <b>Cost savings, 19% reduction in costs. £~0.7m for 2022-2023, versus if all applications were approved</b></li> </ul>
<b>Eligibility matrix (scoring system)</b>	The development of a matrix to assess each child's needs, passenger assistant requirements, and mileage. If an officer determines solo transport is required a PTB is offered. Any parent can request a PTB, but it is granted based on economic viability and confirmed with a Transport Officer, as per the <u>LA's policy</u> . Currently, over 450 children in the LA have a PTB.	Buckinghamshire Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Better use of resources</b></li> <li>• <b>More choice for families</b></li> <li>• <b>This works particularly well for children who have complex needs and cannot be transported safely by transport operators.</b></li> <li>• <b>Minimise spend on high-cost solo transport, where a more suitable/safer option is available</b></li> </ul>
<b>Review/update eligibility criteria</b>	The revision of eligibility criteria and the assessment process for SEND transport. To strengthen this process, opportunities are identified to enhance links between schools and transport teams. Where it is considered relevant, alternative options are recommended to families, such as PTBs.	Luton Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Better use of resources</b></li> <li>• <b>Increased efficiency</b></li> </ul>
<b>Nursery placements provision</b>	The option to not provide transport to children with SEND attending nursery school (for new applicants).	Hampshire County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Better use of resources</b></li> </ul>
<b>Walking distance</b>	The implementation of a walking distance of three miles on a child's 8th birthday.	Hampshire County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Estimated cost avoidance based on 12 children £21,312 per year</b></li> </ul>

## 4. COMMISSIONING

Children’s services and travel departments collaborate to review commissioning policy and practice, to challenge the status quo and to better understand current pressures and future needs.

Several LAs do this by making more use of data analysis to explore other options, such as parental allowances or use of school resources, rather than commissioning a vehicle by default. This can lead to better use of resources, through improved long-term planning.

<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Authority</i>	<i>Impact</i>
<b>‘Cross-service’ project team</b>	A project team consisting of the school transport service, finance, IT and business intelligence staff, overseen by Directors which aims to improve transportation data, including details about passengers, volume, mode, and cost.	Bath and North East Somerset Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Better use of resources</b></li> <li>• <b>Increased efficiency</b></li> </ul>
<b>E-ticket system</b>	The implementation of an E-ticket system that can monitor the travel patterns of SEND students, and report information, such as when they haven’t travelled.	Buckinghamshire Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Increased efficiency</b></li> <li>• <b>Improved forecasting</b></li> </ul>
<b>Use of GPS</b>	The potential use of a Global Positioning System (GPS) to indicate which pick-up points have been served and report ‘exceptions’ to better manage demand.	Buckinghamshire Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Better use of resources</b></li> <li>• <b>Increased efficiency</b></li> </ul>
<b>Better data analysis</b>	To provide detailed analysis of numbers, routes, demand and daily usage data. This is then incorporated into a service dashboard to accurately forecast requirements.	Luton Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Increased efficiency</b></li> <li>• <b>Improved demand / supply forecasting</b></li> </ul>
<b>Robust scrutiny of requests</b>	A robust process in place to scrutinise requests for individual transport. This includes the option of refusing the request where there is insufficient evidence it is needed.	Norfolk County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Better use of resources</b></li> <li>• <b>Norfolk County Council: cost avoidance of £300k per year</b></li> </ul>



<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Authority</i>	<i>Impact</i>
<b>Review non-statutory support</b>	An annual review of non-statutory transport support to identify areas for potential reallocation of resources.	Oxfordshire County Council & Norfolk County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Better use of resources</b></li> <li>• <b>Cost avoidance</b></li> </ul>
<b>Out of area journeys</b>	A review of all out of area journeys to assess their viability and identify opportunities to liaise with other LAs to join up where appropriate.	Kirklees Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Better use of resources</b></li> <li>• <b>Increased efficiency</b></li> </ul>
<b>Increase supply of drivers</b>	A review of advice from the DVLA (Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency), regarding Section 88 of the Road Traffic Act 1988, to identify whether driver supply can be increased through allowing drivers to continue driving while licensing renewals are in process.	Leicestershire County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Increase driver supply</b></li> </ul>
<b>Review of Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) information</b>	Engagement with internal services to understand how the information provided in the EHCP has implications for transport, ensuring accurate allocation of resources.	Kirklees Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Better use of resources</b></li> </ul>
	The undertaking of work to understand EHCP information and link it back to transport demand to identify longer term solutions such as Personal Transport Budgets.	Luton Council	
<b>Capital investment in schools</b>	The investment in local schools catering to SEND children - to reduce travel time and costs by offering appropriate provision closer to home.	Kirklees Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reduced demand for school transport</b></li> </ul>

<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Authority</i>	<i>Impact</i>
<b>Increase use of 'additional provisions'</b>	The offering of support to SEND children to access additional provisions/satellites that are geographically more accessible, with the aim of reducing journey times.	Kirklees Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reduced demand for school transport</b></li> </ul>
<b>Support students back onto 'shared transport'</b>	The support given to students with complex needs and behaviour to return to shared transport. This work may be undertaken by the travel assessment team.	Kirklees Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Better use of resources</b></li> </ul>
<b>Review allocation of bus passes</b>	The review of student bus pass allocation to ensure accuracy of provision, in addition to the revision and renegotiation of pricing with suppliers and streamlining of the bus pass purchasing process.	Hampshire County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Better use of resources</b></li> <li>• <b>Cost avoidance, £153k annual savings in 2022/2023</b></li> </ul>
<b>Adoption of a strategic commissioning model</b>	The evaluation of the potential for strategic operators to take on extra roles such as route planning and school/family communication, where this could result in better use of resources. This can be used to empower providers with market insight, supporting them to adapt to demand and assume greater commercial responsibility.	Hampshire County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Better use of resources</b></li> <li>• <b>Improved long-term planning</b></li> </ul>

## 5. PERSONAL TRAVEL BUDGETS (PTBs)

Personal Transport Budgets (PTBs) provide flexible funds for families to utilise to arrange school transportation, such as hiring a taxi or compensating a friend. LAs may offer PTBs universally, economically, or exclusively, depending on their policies and cost-effectiveness.

<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Authority</i>	<i>Impact</i>
<b>PTBs as 'first offer'</b>	A PTB is now the first offer to parents of children with SEND who are eligible for transport. This has helped to reduce reliance on council commissioned transport, where a PTB may be a better long-term solution due to its flexibility, in comparison to transport contracts which may start as cost effective initially but can become less cost effective in later years.	Cheshire West and Chester Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Better use of resources</b></li> <li>• <b>Increased efficiency</b></li> <li>• <b>Leicestershire County Council: cost avoidance of around £7,500 per student</b></li> <li>• <b>Oxford County Council: direct positive impact on minimising contract costs</b></li> </ul>
	For Post-16 students with SEND, PTBs are default option with parents able to appeal for exceptions. This has been operating for 2 years following lengthy legal challenge and there are currently 256 PTBs in place.	Leicestershire County Council	
	The offer of a PTB or a bus season ticket as an alternative to council organised SEND transport. If this is declined, the council arranges transport. The scheme has been running for five years and has 198 students on PTBs, with 66 students using bus passes.	Oxfordshire County Council	
<b>PTBs instead of high value single transport</b>	The replacement of high-cost single transport with PTBs, where appropriate. A communications campaign is planned to highlight the change. The uptake is estimated at 5% of current transport users, with minibus users to be considered in future if it does not risk the viability of routes.	Luton Council & Norfolk County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Cost avoidance and better use of resources</b></li> </ul>

Initiative	Description	Authority	Impact
<p><b>Increase use of PTBs and PWT</b></p>	<p>The promotion of PTBs and Petrol, Wear &amp; Tear (PWT) for parents instead of council organised transport.</p>	<p>Dorset Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>24% uptake of PTBs, reduced demand for school transport</b></li> </ul>





## 6. SUPPLIER MANAGEMENT / MARKET STRENGTHENING

Supplier management refers to working with transport operators to ensure there is enough resource to undertake all the current transport contracts, as well as preparing for future changes in demand and supply.

Market strengthening refers to initiatives to strengthen the market and reduce costs for some high-cost routes. This could include the introduction of a local authority fleet and/or increasing the size and scope of a current fleet.

Some LAs host regular meetings with local transport operators to build resource in certain areas where there is a gap and commit to longer term contracts to help suppliers invest in their resources and operate more efficiently.

<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Authority</i>	<i>Impact</i>
<b>Use of DPS software that has 'reverse auction' capabilities</b>	A reverse auction allows providers to submit follow-up bids if their initial bid isn't the lowest, as opposed to traditional 'closed bid systems' with a single best price submission where the lowest bid wins. This approach aims to lower unit costs by reducing contract values. Bidders often bid ~2.5 times, resulting in lower end prices compared to closed bid systems.	Lancashire County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Cost avoidance (lower unit cost)</b></li> </ul>
<b>Improve contract management, including non-compliance penalties</b>	The review and clarification of contract management. The updated process now contains a schedule of operational and contractual requirements and penalties for breaches/non-compliance, including penalty points. When a contract reaches 20 points in a 12-month period, it will be terminated and re-procured.	Leicestershire County Council & Norfolk County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Improved contract management</b></li> <li>• <b>Improved customer service</b></li> <li>• <b>Cost avoidance</b></li> </ul>
<b>Strategic review of procurement options including DPS</b>	The review and analysis of procurement options to ensure effective resource management considering the increased demand for SEND transport.	Luton Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Better use of resources</b></li> </ul>

<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Authority</i>	<i>Impact</i>
<b>Effective use of dynamic purchasing systems (DPS)</b>	The support given to operators and small businesses to help them access the dynamic purchasing system. This could include communication to promote the awareness of the system and IT support drop-in sessions for help with the submission of applications.	Kirklees Council & Dorset Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Cost avoidance</b></li> <li>• <b>Time savings</b></li> </ul>
<b>Improved DPS</b>	The implementation and promotion of an updated DPS (DPS <sub>2</sub> ) with market-friendly improvements, such as notice periods and CPI-linked inflation (Consumer Prices Index), which were not allowed in DPS <sub>1</sub> . The promotion of the new system could be carried out by the Contract Management team meeting operators who are not yet signed up to DPS <sub>2</sub> to increase the number of suppliers.	Oxfordshire County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Increase supply</b></li> </ul>
	The development of a flexible DPS Framework and user-friendly IT system to enhance accessibility and competition among suppliers, potentially reducing costs and saving time.	Leicestershire County Council & Norfolk County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Improved contract management</b></li> <li>• <b>Improved customer service</b></li> <li>• <b>Cost avoidance</b></li> </ul>
<b>Improved licencing process</b>	Work undertaken with the licencing team to develop a smoother process for operator approval, thereby making it easier for new suppliers to join.	Kirklees Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Increased supply</b></li> </ul>

<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Authority</i>	<i>Impact</i>
<b>Contractor meetings/ 'all operators' meetings</b>	The creation of more regular meetings with contractors to improve relationships and mutual understanding of the pressures the council and operators face, thereby supporting the strengthening of the market.	Dorset Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Better management of suppliers</b></li> <li>• <b>Strengthening of the market</b></li> </ul>
	A comprehensive operator meeting schedule undertaken and twice yearly 'all operator' meetings. This gives opportunities to current operators to make the council aware of issues in the market and to discuss future plans.	Oxfordshire County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Improved long-term forecasting</b></li> <li>• <b>Improved communication with contractors, including on wider goals such as 'carbon reduction'</b></li> </ul>
<b>Interim vehicle provision for schools</b>	The ability to provide vehicles to a school temporarily so they can operate their own bespoke transport timetables until a more regular timetable can be supported.	Dorset Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Maintain supply during transition periods</b></li> <li>• <b>Reduce reliance on higher-cost alternatives</b></li> </ul>
<b>Provide an in-house fleet of vehicles</b>	The piloting of an in-house fleet of vehicle to cover some routes more efficiently or where there is limited market supply.	Buckinghamshire Council & Kirklees Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Increased efficiency</b></li> <li>• <b>Better use of resources</b></li> </ul>
	The procurement of the types of vehicles that cost the most to operate. These are then offered to contractors for use on council routes as 'driver only' contracts.	Dorset Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Cost avoidance</b></li> <li>• <b>Better use of resources</b></li> </ul>

<i>Initiative</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Authority</i>	<i>Impact</i>
<b>Contract extensions/ longer term</b>	A temporary offer to operators of e.g., a 3-5% uplift on the current contract price to help them with stability and continuity for their business, to reduce the likelihood of needing to retender the contract.	Buckinghamshire Council & Luton Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reduced need to retender, as most operators accepted the extension</b></li> <li>• <b>Cost avoidance</b></li> <li>• <b>Time savings</b></li> </ul>
	The potential to offer longer term contracts as an option to reduce the time and cost spent on retendering and support longer term investment/commitment from suppliers.	Oxfordshire County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Cost avoidance</b></li> <li>• <b>Time savings</b></li> <li>• <b>Market strengthening</b></li> <li>• <b>Environmental impact: promoting electric vehicles and higher European standards</b></li> </ul>
<b>Providers manage passenger assistants</b>	The transfer of line management responsibilities for passenger assistants (PAs) to providers, thereby moving the employment related risks to the provider.	Hampshire County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reduction of risks borne by council</b></li> <li>• <b>Better use of resources</b></li> </ul>
<b>Review of in-house fleet of vehicles</b>	A review of the in-house fleet of smaller vehicles, to move away from high-cost taxis to greater use of the internal fleet, where the vehicles are more appropriate for the task. The current fleet of 70 vehicles is used primarily to transport children with SEND to school. There is potential to increase the size of this fleet and consider the operation of a small number of coaches to further reduce the need for higher-cost external market provision.	Leicestershire County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Better able to meet demand</b></li> <li>• <b>Cost avoidance</b></li> </ul>



## 7. SPEND TO SAVE SCHOOL MINIBUS SCHEME - HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### 1. The challenge:

- Increasing demand for home to school transport, at the same time as the cost and difficulty in securing suitable transport continues to rise.
- Schools struggling to afford the cost of maintaining/purchasing a school minibus to transport students to and from important school events.

### 2. The mitigation:

- Introduction of a school minibus scheme offering brand new leased minibuses supplied by the council's transport management and funded by the council.
- Eligible schools (those with courses for SEND students where enough Hampshire students are eligible for Home to School Transport) operate home to school SEND transport for those students identified by the council.
- In return, the school receives a fully funded and maintained minibus to use for other activities, such as offsite curriculum visits, sporting events and other excursions.

### 3. The impact:

- Estimated savings of £0.8m per year.
- Increase in supply of home to school transport.
- Cost avoidance for each school's transport budget.
- Incentive for mainstream schools to offer places and courses to SEND students.
- Ability for school to transport their students to key school events.
- Regular in-person contact between school staff and parents.

More info: [Spend to Save School Minibus Scheme \(Hampshire County Council\)](#)

*"We contacted Spend to Save in June and had the minibus/route in place for the start of September, really efficient service!"*

**The Mountbatten School, Romsey, Hampshire**

*"The minibus has given the school a huge amount of flexibility in transporting children to school and has given the school more of a presence in the local community. It has improved contact with the parents and the school too, as they are able to see a school employee daily...It has allowed us to transport children to and from school and has allowed the school to have face to face contact with parents which was not possible before."*

**Wallop Primary School, Stockbridge, Hampshire**

*"We have a minibus on site to use as when we need. This means we can attend more sporting events and transport the children to other events that might otherwise have proved to be too expensive... Having our own minibus has benefited the school."*

**Binsted CE Primary School, Binsted, Hampshire**

## 8. NEW SCHOOL RUN TAXI LICENCE - LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### 1. The challenge:

- Rising demand for home to school transport services: Leicestershire County Council has seen a 45% growth in demand for home-to-school transport over the last five years, which is expected to continue to increase by around 6% each year based on current trends.
- A reduction in the supply of drivers: Leicestershire has experienced a significant decline in the number of licensed drivers with more than 50% of the current demand being met by the external taxi market. There is a genuine recognition of the need to work more closely with the market to support sustainable delivery of services.

### 2. The mitigation:

- Introduction of a new ‘school run/trip only’ private hire licence to help meet rising demand for school transport services.
- The new licence is quicker and cheaper to apply for.
- The licence allows private hire drivers to carry out dedicated school run journeys as part of a contract with the council.
- Drivers cannot carry out any other ‘taxi’ services and, unlike a full private hire licence, the new licence has no requirement for the driver to take a council test.
- Applicants still need to pass ‘fit and proper person’ criteria, including meeting standards on driving ability, safeguarding, medical fitness and DBS checks.

### 3. Expected impact:

- Rise in capacity (number of drivers) in the home to school transport sector (20 recruited as of spring 2023) and potential savings for the county council’s home to school transport budget, due to the easier and lower cost licencing process.
- Reduction in time taken for new drivers to obtain the new school run taxi licence.

More info: [New school run taxi licence launches](#)

*“Leicestershire County Council is not alone in struggling to meet the demand for school transport services, so we hope by introducing this type of licence we could help to attract more drivers into the trade, supporting the County to deliver this valuable service.”*

**Councillor Les Phillimore, Blaby District Council’s Portfolio Holder for Housing, Community and Environmental Services**

*“If people come to us and want to do school transport, they would usually have to apply for a standard private hire driver licence. This means going on a course which could take 16 weeks [..]. This new licence makes the whole process easier and simpler.”*

**Andy Mahoney, Director, 24/7 Ltd taxi group**

## CONTRIBUTORS

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- Bath and North East Somerset Council
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- Dorset Council
- Hampshire County Council
- Kirklees Council
- Lancashire County Council
- Leicestershire County Council
- Luton Council
- Norfolk County Council
- Oxfordshire County Council



# ADEPT

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