

School transport frequently asked questions

Question:	Response:
Why is the transport being re-tendered?	Transport is currently provided by contractors who are on a Transport Framework. The framework has an expiry date and has been extended as far as possible. EU procurement law requires that a new framework be in place by July 2019.
What are the timescales for the new framework and re-tender?	Work is currently underway to have the new framework in place early in 2019 and to re-tender the majority of routes by April 2019. A small number of routes may remain in place until July 2019.
How will the re-tender affect pupils and their parents / carers?	Pupils eligible for transport to and from school will continue to receive transport. Some pupils may notice no change at all if their current contract is unchanged. Others may notice a change of contractor / driver / passenger attendant, depending on the outcome of the tender process.
Will this affect the transport for my child?	Your child will continue to receive transport, but whether your particular arrangements change will not become clear until the tender process is completed and routes are allocated to contractors. Some routes may not change at all.
How will I know whether transport for my child will change?	We will keep you informed of progress at key stages in the tender process and as soon as the implications for your child are confirmed, we will be in touch to let you know whether your child will be affected or not.
I have an individual taxi for my child; will this change?	All the routes currently undertaken will be under review and where appropriate routes will be consolidated to ensure the most efficient way to deliver children to school; however every effort will be made to ensure minimum disruption to pupils on transport and to take account of the specific needs of each pupil.
Will all the current routes stay the same?	No. there will be a re-routing exercise in advance of the tender process and whilst some routes may remain exactly as they are, others may change in order to ensure value for money.
What is a re-routing exercise?	It is a review of all the vehicles used and routes they take to transport eligible pupils to school to make sure that value for money is maintained and that environmental impacts are minimised. A re-routing process will be undertaken prior to the tender process, starting in November 2018.
How will a change of contractor be managed?	The changeover of contractors will be carefully managed and there are plans in place for specific communication with parents / carers and schools and for dummy running of routes and introductions of new

contractors to parents and pupils. This is a process that is regularly undertaken as routes and individual requirements change, but particular planning will be put in place for change after the tender process.

Will all pupils on transport be affected?

It is unlikely that all will be materially affected as some routes and / or contractors may not change during the tender process. It is likely that many will notice some change from April 2019, even if it is only some new faces in the vehicle with them.

What if a pupil has particularly complex needs such as autism?

In this minority of cases, particular attention to the handover planning will be put in place and specific process agreed in advance with parents and carers to ensure a smooth handover. In very extreme cases a special dispensation may be considered to remove the need for a change of contractor, but those meriting such an approach are expected to be minimal.

Why has there been no consultation?

Council rules do not require the authority to carry out full consultation as the service itself is not changing, only the manner in which it is delivered. However the Council understands that changing travel arrangements for children can cause stress and concern and we will keep you informed throughout and work with you to minimise disruption should changes be required.

I can't remember this happening before; is it a normal part of Council operations?

This is part of a normal re-tendering process for the Council and one it is obliged to undertake by EU law. We will be ensuring parents can engage with us, feedback and be informed all the way through the process and we will listen to your views so that we can take them into account now and into the future to improve the change process.

What communications are being put in place for parents and carers and schools?

A specific communication plan will be in place to keep all parents / carers and schools up to date with overall progress. Clear, specific information will be generated for individual families on how they and their children will be affected once the detailed tender process has been completed and individual arrangements finalised.

How will the changes impact schools?

In terms of children attending school, those who currently receive transport will continue to be brought to school and taken home as normal. The main change that schools *may* see is that there will be different vehicles / drivers / passenger assistants on some routes when the tender is completed. The Travel and Transport Services team will work directly with schools to establish new arrangements and to minimise disruption.