

Personal Travel Budgets



Information for families of pupils who
are eligible for travel assistance

June 2023

Bolton
Council

1. Introduction

A Personal Travel Budget (PTB) is a sum of money which can be used to make arrangements to get your child to school.

There are a range of ways a PTB can be worked out, and several ways in which a PTB can support you to make transport arrangements. Further information is detailed throughout this booklet.

You should be aware that any statutory age travel solutions provided by Bolton Council will end as soon as your child has completed Year 11. **For post-16 learners a new application must be made.**

2. Am I eligible for a PTB?

Children who are eligible for home to school travel assistance, assessed in line with our Travel Assistance Policy, will be eligible for a PTB where it is determined that a PTB will:

- Contribute to an efficient use of public resources
- Deliver better outcomes

3. How will my PTB be calculated?

We do not have a standard formula to work out PTB's, all PTB's are considered on an individual basis. We will give each case the special consideration it deserves. Our team will sit down with you to understand what the barriers are to you making your own travel arrangements, whether we can find a solution, and finally agree an amount to support you to make your own arrangements. Examples of different ways in which a PTB could help include:

- Reimbursing you, or a family member, with a mileage allowance for transporting your child to and from school.
- Covering the childcare costs of another child (e.g., breakfast or after school clubs) so you are free to take your child to school.
- Covering the costs of transport for another child. For example, by providing a bus pass.

For more examples of PTBS, see the FAQs section.

Once an amount for the PTB has been agreed and accepted you will be asked to return an agreement, which has been provided alongside this information booklet. Once the agreement has been signed and returned, we will pay your PTB each month according to the number of days your child attended school during that period. Please see Section 5 for more information about payments.

4. How can a PTB help me?

PTBs can provide multiple advantages to individuals and families. Some of these benefits are highlighted below:



Flexibility

Travel when it is convenient for you. You decide when you want to drop off and pick up, rather than fitting into taxi or minibus schedules.



Control

Personal travel budgets are 100% voluntary. If your arrangements are not working, you can discuss an alternative transport solution with our team.



Bespoke

A personal travel budget allows you to decide what is best for your child. You can establish routines and feel confident they won't change.



Independence

Prepare young people for adulthood as you can decide what level of independence is appropriate for your child and adjust your arrangements as they develop and grow.



School contact

Get regular updates on your child's progress and have better relationships with the staff supporting your child.



Socialise

The school run can be a social event and a really good way to make friends and talk to other parent/carers.

5. Key responsibilities – The legal bits

Bolton Council

Our part of the PTB agreement, we will:

- Provide a PTB to support the attendance of your child to their learning setting, in line with your PTB agreement.
- Pay the PTB to your nominated bank account in monthly instalments. The value of monthly payments will reflect the number of days the child attended school during the month. Where payments in arrears do not suit personal circumstances, we will work with you to agree a payment schedule that supports you to get your child to school.
- Make alternative travel arrangements within 30 days of being advised by you that you wish to terminate the agreement.
- Generally, review your child's individual travel assistance needs before each academic year or when circumstances change (See section 6 of this booklet for further details).
- In the event that a change of circumstances requires us to adjust or terminate the agreement, we will first discuss this with the parent/carer before entering into a new agreement.

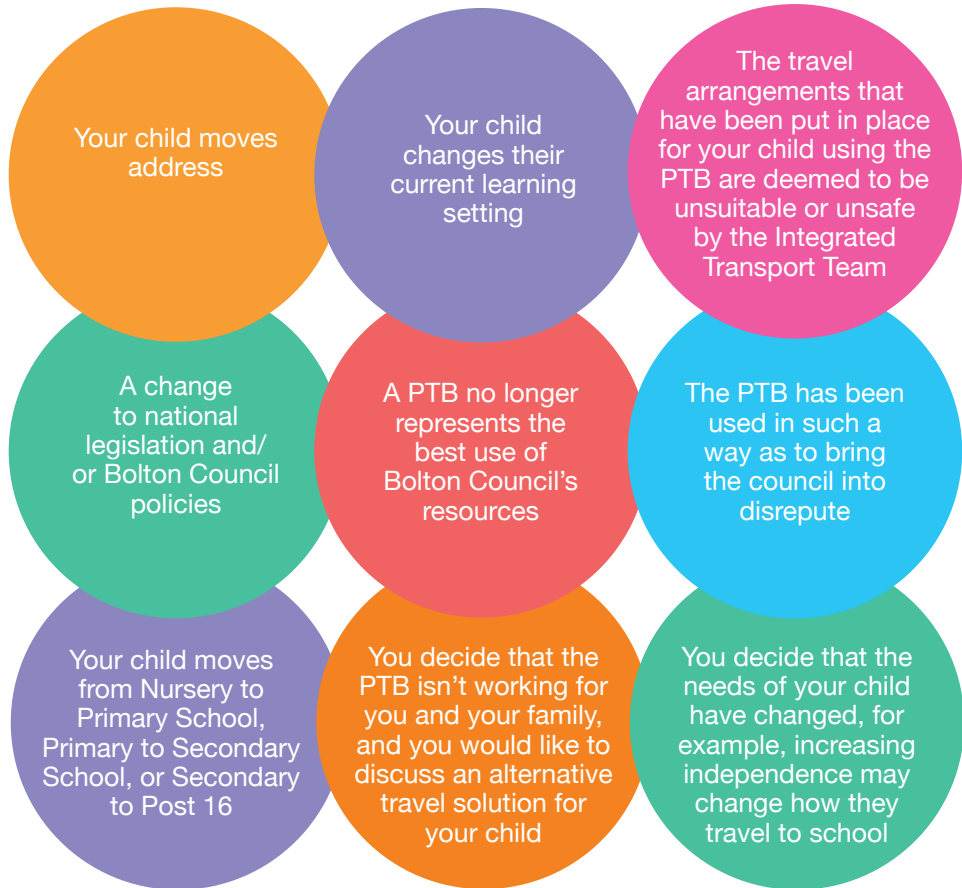
Parents/carers

Your part of the PTB agreement, you will:

- Arrange your child's travel to their learning setting.
- Ensure that the travel arrangements you put in place for your child are safe and secure.
- Ensure that your child attends school and arrives at their learning setting on time and ready to learn.
- At the end of each month, inform Bolton Council's Integrated Transport Team (ITU@bolton.gov.uk) of the number of days your child attended school. This will be used to calculate the PTB amount to be paid.
- Immediately inform Bolton Council's Integrated Transport Team (ITU@bolton.gov.uk) of any changes in circumstance that may require a review of the agreement. If you are unsure whether a change in circumstances will affect this agreement, you must contact the Integrated Transport Team.
- Agree that we can change or terminate the agreement forthwith if you do not comply with the terms set out in the agreement and this booklet.
- Provide us with 30 days' notice if you wish to terminate the agreement and require alternative arrangements to be put in place.
- Agree to return all or part of the PTB if requested by us following the change or termination of the agreement.
- Use the PTB solely for the benefit of your child and ensuring their attendance at school.

6. Re-evaluating your PTB

As part of your PTB agreement, your PTB may be re-evaluated if you have a change in circumstances or fail to adhere to the agreed terms and conditions. Reasons for re-evaluating the PTB include (but are not limited to):



Where a PTB is suspended or terminated by Bolton Council we will be responsible for making transport arrangements within 30 days.

You have the right to request the termination of this agreement and for alternative transport arrangements to be put in place. You must provide Bolton Council's Integrated Transport Team with 30 days' notice. During this period, you will be responsible for ensuring arrangements are in place to facilitate your child's travel to school.



Frequently asked questions

1. What is a Personal Travel Budget?

A Personal Travel Budget (PTB) is a payment to a parent/carer, as an alternative to transport provided by Bolton Council, for children and young people eligible for home to school travel assistance.

A PTB enables families to arrange home to school travel in a way that suits them, including making flexible arrangements.

2. What are the advantages of a Personal Travel Budget?

There is no definitive list of the advantages of PTBs, as these can be unique to each family and their needs. However, the main advantages include:

- Flexibility: A PTB offers families the flexibility to make choices which fit their own needs and routines.
- Increased choice and control for families over what arrangements they put in place to ensure their child arrives at school safely, on time, and as independently as possible.
- Greater opportunities to meet school staff and other parents/carers.

3. How much will I receive for my Personal Travel Budget?

The amount you receive for your PTB will vary based on your personal circumstances.

If a mileage allowance is the most suitable support for you, this will be calculated based on the total distance you will need to travel from the child's normal place of residence to the school and back.

If other forms of support are more appropriate, such as childcare for a sibling (e.g., breakfast or after school clubs) while taking your child to school, these will be considered when agreeing the final amount.

4. How will the Personal Travel Budget be paid?

We will make arrangements to pay your individual PTB directly into a bank account of your choice. This may be a personal account or an account your child already has for direct payments.

Payments will be made every month and will be paid according to the number of days your child attended school during that period. For example, if your child attended school for 15 days during September, in October you will receive a payment equivalent to 15 days. In line with Section 5 of this booklet, please inform Bolton Council's Integrated Transport Team of the number of days your child attended school during that period.

In line with Section 5 of this booklet, at the end of each month please inform Bolton Council's Integrated Transport Team (ITU@bolton.gov.uk) of the number of days your child attended school.

This will be used to calculate the PTB amount to be paid.

It remains a priority that children continue to access and attend school, if payments in arrears do not suit your personal circumstances, we will work with you to agree a payment schedule that supports you to get your child to school.

5. What happens after I have been offered a Personal Travel Budget?

If you have been offered a PTB you will be asked to sign an agreement (provided alongside this booklet). This sets out your role and Bolton Council's role in the PTB process and will contain a form for completion with details of your chosen bank account, into which the money will be paid.

The council will make arrangements to transfer the PTB funds into your chosen bank account. You can then arrange and manage your child's travel arrangements in a way that best suits you.

6. What can I spend a Personal Travel Budget on?

If you are interested in receiving a PTB, we will have a conversation with you to understand what type of support would help you to make travel arrangements that best suit your personal circumstances.

The PTB should be spent in such a way as to ensure your child gets to and from school comfortably and safely, in a way that guarantees their timely attendance in line with the school academic calendar. Suggestions could include:

- You can arrange with a nominated and appropriate adult to take your child to school.
- You can car share or book a joint taxi with other parent/carers where their child/children are going to the same school as your child.
- You could purchase a travel pass for an adult to accompany your child on public transport to get to school.
- You could buy travel passes for your other children so they can get home whilst you're collecting your child who receives the PTB.
- You could use it to cover the childcare costs of another child (e.g., breakfast or after school clubs), so you are free to take your child to school.

The PTB must not be spent on anything not agreed as part of the agreement.

7. Will I need to provide receipts to show how I have spent the Personal Travel Budget?

No, we want to give families using PTBs as much freedom and flexibility as possible. Families can choose to spend the personal travel budget however they wish, so long as it is used to get their child to school safely, on time and ready to learn. In line with Section 5 of this booklet, please inform Bolton Council's Integrated Transport Team of the number of days your child attended school each month. Payments will then be made by us, monthly in arrears.

8. Could my Personal Travel Budget be reduced or stopped?

Improving school attendance is a priority for Bolton Council and all the schools in Bolton. We want PTBs to help make the journey to school better and more flexible for children and families and so help them attend school every day.

With this in mind we will keep in touch with you and your child's school to make sure that the PTB is helping your child get to school. If the school or the Council have concerns about attendance, we will contact you and if attendance fails to improve, we reserve the right to withdraw the PTB and recover the costs incurred if necessary.

As part of your PTB agreement, your PTB may be re-evaluated if you have a change in circumstances or fail to adhere to the agreed terms and conditions.

9. Can I choose to stop a Personal Travel Budget?

You do not have to accept a PTB, but in taking one you accept that unless your circumstances change significantly it is expected that you will normally continue with it for the full academic year.

The council's priority is to support families in making their PTB work for them. We can offer advice on how to use the PTB and it may be adjusted if the needs and circumstances of the parent/carer/child have changed. If your circumstances change significantly and you no longer want to have a PTB, you will need to notify the Integrated Transport Service.

The council will set up alternative travel arrangements as quickly as possible. However, it could take up to 30 working days and during this period it will be your responsibility, by continuing to use your PTB, to ensure your child attends school.

10. What happens if my normal travel arrangements that have been made using a Personal Travel Budget are not available?

There are situations when the normal travel arrangements that are in place cannot be used, for example, if you normally transport your child in your own car and you are ill, or the car breaks down. You will need to have other ways to get your child to school in these situations.

The council is unable to provide alternative transport in these circumstances and if your child is absent due to you not being able to get your child to school, the PTB may be reduced or withdrawn.

11. Will my Personal Travel Budget cover training days when my child is not at school?

No, it won't. The budget will be calculated over a normal school year of 38 weeks.