



Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL Cymru's) Response to the draft Learner Travel Operational Guidance

The Association of Teachers and Lecturers represents over 160,000 education professionals across the four constituent parts of the United Kingdom. It draws its membership from teachers and lecturers, leaders and support staff in maintained and independent schools, and Further Education Colleges. As well as campaigning vigorously to protect and enhance members' pay and conditions ATL also believes that the education profession has a key role in developing education strategy and policy. ATL Cymru represents over 6,500 education professionals in colleges and schools across the whole of Wales.

Questions for Consultation

Q1. Do you have any specific comments about Part 1 (Learner Travel (Wales) Measure)?

ATL Cymru members are concerned that the operational guidance does not address health and safety issues pertaining to transport within the school day between different places where pupils are being educated. It is essential that assessments are carried out by Local Authorities. This omission to assess transport provision within the day will have significant implications for the roll-out of the 14-19 Learning Pathways policy.

Q2. Do you have any specific comments about Part 2 (Provision of Home to School Transport by Local Authorities)?

ATL Cymru members are concerned that funding streams for travel in Local Authorities often dictates the curriculum choices of pupils. The process of bidding for transport contracts in Local Authorities needs to be clear and open and not restrict flexibility for pupils.

ATL Cymru members were also concerned about proposals for Local Authorities to change the session times of schools in their area to promote sustainable modes of travel. Although the aim is to improve efficiency and the effectiveness of travel arrangements and is commendable, changing session times could cause lack of fit between institutions engaged in the delivery of the 14 - 19 Learning Pathways.

Q3. Do you have any specific comments about Part 3 (Safety)

ATL Cymru members agree that transport arrangements are not suitable if they take an unreasonable amount of time. Members also agree that (although the measure does not specify a time) journeys should be no more than 45 mins for primary school travel and 60 mins for secondary school travel. As the guidance states, it is necessary to consider circumstances, such as rurality, where the nearest school may be further away than would allow this time scale. In such circumstances the travel times of pupils needs to be closely monitored by Local Authorities to ensure they are not having an adverse impact on children and to ensure that the time they travel is not excessive.

ATL Cymru welcomes the recognition that all staff employed on contracted school transport services should comply with the enhanced disclosure procedures of the CRB. ATL Cymru members would go further and state that all contracted staff **must** comply. The safety and security of children should be paramount and this is a vital check that needs to be put into place.

Q4. Do you have any specific comments about Part 4 (Discretionary Transport Arrangements and Transport for pupils with special educational needs)?

No

Q5. Do you have any specific comments about Part 5 (Communication with Users and Schools)?

No

Q6. Do you have any general comments about the scope and balance of the guidance as a whole?

ATL Cymru members would like to stress the need for the WAG to ensure that Local Education Authorities in Wales have an adequate amount of funding to meet the obligations set out in the measure.

Q7. Is there any other information that would be useful to include in the guidance?

Contact:

Dr Philip Dixon
Director, ATL Cymru
Tel: 02920 465 000
Email: cymru@atl.org.uk