

Personal Budgets (Version 6 – March 2015)

Appendix 1 – Newcastle Personal Budgets for  
Transport

## *InFocus: Newcastle Personal Budgets for Transport*



*Over the past 2 years Newcastle City Council (NCC) has worked with parents through the parent forum to come up with ways of promoting the use of Personal Transport Budgets (PTB's).*

Uptake had been slow and it was felt that this was due to the culture change needed in attitude around transport provision. It was generally felt by parents that any other way of accessing the transport offer was 'too much hassle' or 'too complicated'.

From past experience we know that parents' speaking to parents is a really effective way of bringing about a change in attitude as well as raising the profile of what the offer could be.

### **Approach**

We started to use a different language in our communication with parents, instead of Transport provision we started to talk about **travel support**.

We set up **regular meetings with the parents forum** to discuss issues around travel and to involve them in coming up with ideas for doing things differently.

We **developed an interim post** which gave **added capacity** to some of the development work round PTB's. This enabled briefing sessions to happen across different staff teams such as early year's providers, Connexions, SEN education, children's social care etc.

A targeted piece of work was done and families were all sent letters introducing PTB's. Those who had indicated an interest for a 1-1 conversation were contacted and the concept around PTB's was explained and letters sent as follow up with an indication of amounts the family would be eligible for.

This 1-1 contact was helpful in discussing peoples reservations and gave opportunities to myth bust and talk options through.

We also asked our [Pass it on Parents](#)<sup>i</sup> group to help us capture some 'good news' stories from those parents who had started to try out a personal budget.

These stories and one talking [head teacher DVD clip](#)<sup>ii</sup> are used on our [Local Offer](#)<sup>iii</sup> site to illustrate the benefits of having a flexible pot of money. This info' is also on the 'Pass it on Parents' facebook page. By working closely with [Skills for People](#)<sup>iv</sup> and Pass it on Parents it has meant that we have doubled the coverage and started to get the information out there about a different way to manage a child's travel which can have great benefits for the whole family.



Pass It On Parents

We have also linked the use of PTBs **to support our Independent Travel Training (ITT) program**. We have done a lot of focus group **work with young people** about travel and they are really keen to be able to travel independently and to be able to do this at a younger age. In response we want ITT to be a big part of our core offer and where parents aren't eligible for free travel we are offering PTB to cover the cost of travel passes. This has helped us to **develop a 'can do' culture** as we know the sooner we can get young people travelling independently the more life opportunities come their way. PTBs give everyone a bit more flexibility to be more creative about travel and enabling children and young people real travel experience as well as benefiting a diminishing budget. In terms of personalisation we are finding that these opportunities are what young people want and we need to keep going with a culture change approach across staff and parent /carers.

We haven't got huge numbers taking up PTB's but we feel we are doing all we can to promote this as another option for families. We are also confident that this is part of a big culture change we are delivering to break the reliance on taxis and mini bus transport options. To further support this we are also in the process of developing a travel app '**SelfTrav**' with **O2 telefonika** and **KMS solutions**.

### **Travel App**

This is being developed with parent carers and young people and will support everyone to feel more confident about independent travel. A key feature of the App is the **option for parent /carers to track the**

**journey and for the young person to send an alert should they get into difficulty.**

We are at the developmental stage and hope to share more about the product once testing has been carried out. **Involving parents and young people** in these developments **have been crucial** to coming up with solutions that work and will be an ongoing important part of the process.

**Personal Stories of the Success of Personal Travel Budgets collected by [Pass it on Parents](#)<sup>v</sup>**



Parent S lives in Byker and son H goes to Thomas Bewick School at West Denton Newcastle at the other end of the city. After having a daughter that goes to school locally in Byker, S hated the idea of sending son H off on a bus to West Denton every day.

By taking her daughter to a local school every day, she makes contact with school staff and other parents in the local community regularly, and couldn't imagine it any other way. So when S found out there was a travel budget she was pleased that they would be able to use it to pay for petrol to take H to school over in West Denton themselves. This way S feels that she has daily contact with school. H loves to be taken in and then picked up by his dad in the car every day. Every night H runs out of school smiling when he sees his dad, they are very pleased to be able to have a travel budget. **SJ, parent of H**



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I have always taken my son Charlie to school (Hadrian School) as he had a tracheostomy when he first started at the age of five and there was no one trained on the bus. I have always enjoyed taking him to school as I have got to meet some other parents doing the same. I have enjoyed meeting them socially and it was through chatting with the parents that I got to find out about a travel budget. I also attend the school coffee mornings where parents meet up.

When I first enquired I had to wait a while before I received anything, but now I receive about .40p a mile which is paid to me monthly (a payment of around £13) I drive him by car, I live very close to school so it is no problem at all. If I was ever ill another family member would be able to walk him there. I enjoy being able to take him in and Charlie enjoys it too.

Charlie doesn't have a tracheostomy now but he will continue to go into school with myself as it would be strange for him now to go on the bus. **JS, Parent of Charlie**



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I receive a personal travel budget. Joseph has a brain tumour and when he first started at Hadrian school we were advised by his oncology team due to the chemotherapy that he would be more prone to infections and illnesses with his weakened immune system. He is also type 1 diabetic and his blood sugars can dip very quickly. By having a personal travel budget my dad is able to take and collect Joseph from school and he knows how to treat all his conditions. It also gives me peace of mind knowing that Joseph will be at happy (he struggles to bond with new people especially if he doesn't see them very often). That's not to say that we wouldn't consider school transport in the future but the PTB does really work for us at the moment. If you need any more info just let me know. **GM, Parent of Joseph**

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We moved to Newcastle and J was getting a taxi to school in Gateshead. He started to get a bit embarrassed that he was arriving in a taxi, so when I heard about travel budgets I decided I would encourage him to use a bus which would give him more independence. J had no confidence for a long time, he wouldn't go out of the door and certainly wouldn't use public transport.

After some time of going out and about on buses he decided he would like to go to school on a bus and not use the taxis anymore. I now use the travel budget to buy a monthly bus pass for J and he goes to school everyday using two buses. This has given him so much confidence that he goes out with friends now (bus or no bus) and is much more independent. **MW, parent to J**

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F is 16 and travels to Newcastle Bridges school at Kenton from High Heaton. Organised taxis have been a great option in the past, especially in bad weather etc. But now the flexibility of a travel budget is better for a few reasons. F is working towards GCSEs and is staying behind for revision clubs. An organised taxi wouldn't collect her at a later time, so she now gets the bus home herself. Also she can go to town with friends if she chooses. Mum K thought having a budget would give F more independence now that she is 16. She is responsible for finding the fares as she manages her own money. All this and using public transport herself is giving her more confidence. There is a little bit of money left for petrol so dad can collect her when needed. The main bonus for the family is the flexibility it has given them. **KJ, parent to F**

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#### Further information

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For more information about Newcastle's social care Personal Budgets please visit: <http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/care-and-wellbeing/childrens-social-care/individual-budget>

For more information about Newcastle's Personal Travel Budgets please visit: [www.newcastle.gov.uk/education-and-learning/benefits-and-educational-grants/personal-travel-budget-ptb-for-children-with-additional-needs](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/education-and-learning/benefits-and-educational-grants/personal-travel-budget-ptb-for-children-with-additional-needs)

For more information about Newcastle's Local offer please visit: <http://www.newcastlefis.org.uk/kb5/newcastle/fsd/localoffer.page?familieschannel=3&sorttype=field&sortfield=title>

Pass It On Parents

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<sup>i</sup> Pass it on Parents website, available at

<http://www.newcastlefamiliesunited.com/pass-it-on-parents/>

<sup>ii</sup> Headteacher video clip on independent travel, available at

<http://www.newcastlefis.org.uk/kb5/newcastle/fsd/advice.page?id=pWBsMoGmZY>

<sup>iii</sup> Newcastle Local Offer, available at <http://www.newcastlefis.org.uk/localoffer>

<sup>iv</sup> Skills for People website , available at <http://skillsforpeople.org.uk/>

<sup>v</sup> Pass it on Parents website, available at

<http://www.newcastlefamiliesunited.com/pass-it-on-parents/>