



Ein cyf/Our ref LW/00944/23

Julie James MS
Member of the Senedd for Swansea West

julie.james@senedd.wales

31 May 2023

Dear Julie,

Thank you for your e-mail of 2 May on behalf of Ailsa Dunn, regarding school transport for asylum seekers and refugees.

I understand Ailsa's concern and frustration regarding access to school transport for asylum seekers and refugees. The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 places duties on local authorities to assess the travel needs of all learners in their area up to the age of 19 and provide free transport for learners of statutory school age (5 to 16), to their nearest suitable school on the basis of age, distance, aptitude and safety. The local authority determines which is the nearest suitable school for each learner in their area in accordance with their school admission policy.

The Measure requires local authorities to provide learner transport for learners aged 5-16 who live more than 2 miles (if at primary school) or 3 miles (if at secondary school) from their nearest suitable school. Parents have a right to express a preference for a school but if it is not the nearest designated school as determined by the local authority, they do not have to provide transport, but do have discretion to do so.

Officials have contacted the Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers (ATCO), who have confirmed that all local authorities must adhere to the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure, in relation to their statutory duty to provide dedicated school transport to those that are eligible in line with the measure with an expectation for 'all' learners, including refugee children, to adhere to the school's admission policy and our national school transport Learner Travel (Wales) Measure policy, as set by Welsh Government. The Measure is set around fairness and equality to all that apply and in relation to school transport capacity and any safeguarding issues that would arise, if any variances existed in any admissions policy for home to school transport provision.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

However, all local authorities have discretionary powers to provide dedicated school transport provision that is over and above the base line requirement of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure.

Officials are currently exploring a range of options in relation to the future of the Welcome Ticket scheme which includes funding and whether it can be extended to include asylum seekers. A working group, including Welsh Refugee Coalition members and transport partners, have developed proposals for a longer-term approach which are presently being considered and we will look to communicate any developments as soon as possible.

In the meantime, you can advise Hay, Brecon & Talgarth Sanctuary for Refugees to contact Swansea Council School Transport team directly to discuss their school transport policy and any discretionary provision that may be accessible for the families they are working with.

They can be contacted at the following email address:

EducationTransport@swansea.gov.uk

They can also make a travel assistance request via the local authority's website via the following web link: [Travel assistance request - Swansea](#)

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee', is centered on a light gray background.

Lee Waters AS/MS

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Newid Hinsawdd
Deputy Minister for Climate Change