

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

31 JANUARY 2018

QUESTION 1 in accordance with Standing Order No.36

Peter West to ask the Chair of the Committee:

16 - 25 Railcards

The "Transport policy statement for learners aged 16-18 in Further Education (and continuing learners aged 19 and over) for 2017-18 states that "For rail travel, a 16-25 Railcard can be purchased via the local rail station. This entitles young people to save 1/3 on most train fares. For more details, see www.16-25railcard.co.uk" For most people in the 16-19 age band this is not useful as these railcards cannot be used for peak time travel. GWR require anyone 16 years or older to pay full adult fares for these journeys. Can you update the document please? Additionally can you make representation to GWR asking them to justify their policy ?

REPLY by the Chair of the Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Education Committee

I invite Councillor Gavin, the Lead Councillor for Children's Services and Families to make the response on my behalf.

REPLY by the Councillor Gavin, Lead Councillor for Children's Services and Families:

Thank you Mr West for your question.

The Local Authority has no statutory duty to provide Transport to Post 16 students, but it is a requirement of the DfE that Authorities publish details of local Post 16 provision on their website annually.

It is expected that Local Authorities include details of any reduced travel rates that may benefit students. The railcard has been included although it does not usually permit peak time travel. There are students whose courses may not require on-site attendance on a full-time basis or who have to travel between campuses and placements during the day who may benefit from reduced rate rail fares at non-peak times, which is why this has been included in the Transport Policy Statement. I apologise if you found our statement confusing, we will amend the wording of the policy to make it clearer.

Great Western Railway is a private company and as such sets its own charging policy, though this is regulated by The Office for Rail and Road.

The charging of full adult rates for 16 to 18 years olds during peak time is the common practise among transport companies as demand for seats exceeds capacity available. Sadly, Mr West this council, along with all others in the country has no control over the charging policies of private transport companies. Now, if the railways were re-nationalised and taken back into public control it would be a different story.