



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1555
Ein cyf/Our ref KSNWT-01662-25

Carolyn Thomas MS
Chair - Petitions committee

11 November 2025

Dear Carolyn,

Thank you for your letter of 06 October to the Cabinet Secretary for Education regarding Petition P-06-1555: To review all guidance on Home to School Transport for all of Wales. Free access to an education, submitted by Tina Collins. I am responding due to my portfolio responsibilities.

I really appreciate the opportunity to provide the Committee with my views prior to your first formal consideration of this petition. I recognise the significant level of concern surrounding learner travel, as evidenced by the language used in this petition.

I note that the petition is calling for the Welsh Government to review all guidance on home to school transport for all of Wales. Over the course of this Senedd term, the Welsh Government has undertaken an internal review of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure itself which culminated in the publication of a [Recommendations Report](#) in March 2024. This report set out a modest pathway for this Senedd term in a realistic, affordable and pragmatic framework.

One of the key recommendations was to review and revise the guidance that supports learner travel. This work has been ongoing and a [consultation on the revised operational guidance](#) document was opened in June this year. I recently announced the extension to the closing date for this consultation exercise (to 28 November) so as many people and organisations can inform and influence the future policy direction.

In addition to this, in March this year I requested time for a Government debate to discuss this complex issue, and in May I held a summit bringing together representative bodies to discuss the challenges and practical solutions for improving learner travel in Wales. The summit report outlines the workstreams that have been established to take forward some of this work and I have committed to holding a follow up event early in 2026. I have attached a copy of the summit report for your information.

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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.

The Cabinet Secretary for Housing and Local Government responded to a short debate on learner travel on 8 October. The work of the campaign group that Tina Collins is involved in was clearly articulated by Heledd Fychan.

As set out in our response to the debate, we do not disagree with the sentiment behind the wording of the petition. We all want to ensure that our children and young people do not face barriers to accessing education, and we are taking a cross-governmental approach. This Government has increased the household income threshold for the Education Maintenance Allowance, providing financial support to an addition 3,500 students. We have invested £6.5m this financial year in Family Engagement Officers to help support attendance. I have secured £22 million to introduce £1 bus travel for all our young people – over 29,000 16-21 year olds have already signed up, which is fantastic. I have also committed £110 million this financial year to active travel routes, the active journeys programme and safe routes in communities grant. All this will help make our school streets safer. This is all in addition to the £6.1 billion the Welsh Government has provided to local authorities in core revenue funding and non-domestic rates this financial year to spend on delivering key services, including learner transport.

The author of this petition and representatives of the campaign group have been set up in response to the changes made within their local authority. The changes they are campaigning against are a local authority decision, reducing their discretionary school transport provision to align with the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure. I am in regular dialogue with the leader of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and confident that the local authority will continue to monitor the situation whilst taking practical and precautionary steps to manage the implications of their policy changes, including implementing a £100,000 hardship support fund for secondary schools across the local authority.

I want to reassure the Committee that I am listening and see this is a priority area for improvement in partnership with our local authority delivery partners, who are responsible for delivering learner transport provision to eligible learners.

I would be grateful if you and Committee members could use this opportunity to raise the profile of the consultation that is open until 28 November. I am keen for us to use this exercise to really help inform the development of the guidance and policy thinking in this area.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Skates', with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Ken Skates AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Drafnidiaeth a Gogledd Cymru
Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales