



My Ref: FOI6374
Enquiries to: Information Requests
E-Mail: informationrequests@barnsley.gov.uk

Dear Requester,

Re: Request for Information – Freedom of Information Act 2000

I wish to confirm that the council has completed its search for the information which you requested.

The information requested and our findings are as follows: -

In one sentence: we are asking for a small set of yearly numbers — how many families applied for school travel assistance for a child with special educational needs or a disability, how many were refused, how many refusals were challenged, and how many challenges succeeded.

This request is going to every English local authority with education functions, so please answer for your authority only. We need numbers only: no personal data, no case files, no explanations of individual decisions.

WHO THIS COVERS

Children of compulsory school age (roughly ages 5 to 16) where the application for travel assistance was made because the child's special educational needs, disability or mobility problems mean they cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school. (This is the eligibility route under section 508B of, and Schedule 35B to, the Education Act 1996.) We call these "SEND-ground applications" below.

If your records cannot separate these from other transport applications, that is fine — see "If any of this is difficult" at the end.

WHAT WE ARE ASKING FOR

For each academic year — 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26 (year to date) — please provide:

- 1. Applications decided: the number of SEND-ground applications your authority made a decision on.**
- 2. Refused in full: of those, the number where no travel assistance of any kind was awarded.**
- 3. Stage 1 challenges: the number of those refusals the family asked you to look at again (your first review or appeal stage, whatever it is called locally).**
- 4. Stage 1 successes: of those, the number where the outcome changed so that some assistance was awarded.**

5. Stage 2 appeals: the number that went on to your second (final) appeal stage — an appeal panel or equivalent.

6. Stage 2 successes: of those, the number where some assistance was awarded.

And one non-numerical question:

7. Who currently decides your Stage 2 appeals: (a) a panel independent of the original decision-makers, (b) elected councillors, or (c) a council officer? Please also provide a copy of, or a link to, your current home to school travel policy and appeals procedure.

A a panel independent of the original decision-makers

[Home to school/college travel assistance policy](#)

A TABLE YOU CAN SIMPLY FILL IN

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26 (to date)
1. Applications decided			
2. Refused in full			
3. Stage 1 challenges			
4. Stage 1 successes			
5. Stage 2 appeals			
6. Stage 2 successes			

	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026
Applications decided	451	582	617
Refused in full	87	97	179
Stage 1 Challenges	24	24	35
Stage 1 Successes	8	15	9
Stage 2 Appeals	0	1	1
Stage 2 successes	0	0	1

IF ANY OF THIS IS DIFFICULT

- Cannot separate SEND-ground applications? Give the same numbers for children with an Education, Health and Care plan instead; if that is also not held, give them for all home to school transport applications for children of compulsory school age. Just tell us which basis you used.

- Your appeal process has a different shape? Use your actual stages and briefly say what they are — we will map them to Stage 1 / Stage 2.

- Years: count each decision, review or appeal in the academic year (1 September to 31 August) in which its outcome was issued. Please do not spend time

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matching appeals back to the year of the original refusal. For 2025/26, figures up to the date you run the search are fine — please just state that date.

- **Format:** whatever is easiest for you — numbers typed into the table above, a system export, or an existing internal report. If your policy is to suppress small numbers, "fewer than 5" is acceptable.

- **Cost limit:** if answering one of the questions would take your team over the cost limit (section 12), please still answer the rest and tell us which question was the problem, in line with the section 16 duty to advise and assist — we will refine it.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact Information Requests Via email.

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are unhappy with the way the Directorate has handled your request, you may ask for an internal review. Please clearly mark your correspondence 'Complaint' and address it to:

Barnsley MBC
Information Requests Team
PO Box 634
Barnsley
S70 9GG
email: informationrequests@barnsley.gov.uk

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: -

Customer Services Team
Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Email: <http://www.ico.org.uk/foicomplaints>

Kind regards,

Information Requests Team, Barnsley MBC

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