

## Freedom of Information – Response – 26696

*Freedom of Information request – SEND transport costs*

*This is a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.*

*Please could you provide the following information regarding the local authority's expenditure and activity related to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) transport for the last five financial years.*

*SEND transport expenditure*

*1. The total Suffolk annual expenditure on SEND transport for each financial year.*

<b>Year</b>	<b>SEND Transport</b>
2020-21	£15,441,000.00
2021-22	£17,148,000.00
2022-23	£23,524,000.00
2023-24	£31,888,000.00
2024-25	£34,698,097.13

*2. A breakdown of SEND transport expenditure by district within Suffolk for each year. Suffolk County Council (SCC) does not hold this information.*

*3. A breakdown of SEND transport costs by:*

*a. Type of transport used (for example: taxis, minibuses, buses, personal transport budgets, mileage payments).*

*This information is only held for the 2024-2025 financial year*

<b>Vehicle type</b>	<b>SEND expenditure</b>
Bus	£961,725.93
Mileage Payments	£896,809.43
Minibus	£1,474,863.20
Personal Travel Budget	£30,729.81
Taxi	£31,167,467.57

*b. The average distance travelled per pupil (or per journey), where held.*

*This information is not held.*

c. The average cost per pupil receiving SEND transport, where held.

Year	Average SEND passenger cost
2020-21	£7,967.49
2021-22	£7,769.82
2022-23	£9,909.01
2023-24	£11,819.13
2024-25	£11,952.50

*Complaints related to SEND and transport*

4. The total amount spent by the local authority on handling complaints relating to SEND provision, for each financial year.

5. Of these complaints, please specify:

a. How many related specifically to SEND transport.

b. A breakdown of complaints by reason (for example: transport eligibility, distance, suitability of transport, delays, safety concerns).

6. The total amount paid in compensation or financial remedies as a result of SEND transport-related complaints specifically. Please provide figures broken down by financial year.

We can confirm that Suffolk County Council holds this information; however, it is exempt from disclosure under section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act).

Section 12 of the Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit, which for local government is set at £450. This represents the estimated cost of one person spending two and a half working days in determining whether the Council holds the information, locating, retrieving and extracting the information.

Due to the way Suffolk County Council collects our data we can only provide the numbers of SEND complaints for each of the years required and whether they relate to the core reasons we report on. In order to provide information solely on SEND transport and the specific reason behind the complaint an employee would have to open every case file, read through the complaint, as there is no quicker way that we would be able to identify this information within the case file and extract the relevant information. A sampling exercise was carried out which identified that each case would take on average 5mins to go through, identify and extract the information from and there are 1,968 cases for the period in question.

Therefore we estimate that it will take us in excess of 164 hours to determine appropriate material and locate, retrieve and extract the information in reference to your request making the total cost estimate of 164 hours x £25 = £4,100.

Advice and Assistance

Whilst we are unable to provide you with the exact information you have requested if you would be happy to receive the total number of SEND complaints and the core reasons for them being made (Service Provision, Attitude and Behaviour, Communication, Incorrect Information, Data Protection and Policy and Procedures) we should be able to provide you with some information.

*Tribunals relating to SEND transport*

*7. The number of SEND tribunal cases in each financial year where transport to the school named in their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) was a primary or significant issue.*

Suffolk County Council (SCC) does not hold this information. Transport to the school named in an EHCP is not a matter for appeal under SEND tribunal, so whilst it may be considered as part of the wider discussions, it will not be a primary or significant issue when determining the school placement.

*8. For these tribunal cases:*

- a. The number conceded (settled) before a hearing.*
- b. The number heard by a tribunal panel.*
- c. The number upheld in favour of parents/families.*
- d. The number upheld in favour of the local authority.*

*9. The total costs incurred by the local authority in relation to SEND tribunal cases focusing on transport, including:*

- a. Internal staff costs (including any specialist tribunal teams).*
- b. External legal costs (solicitors, barristers, expert witnesses).*

N/A