

PAUL FAWCETT
EDUCATION AND INSPECTION ACT 2006

- Getting in (admissions policies – parental choice)
- Getting taught (inspections, curricula and governors)
- Getting expelled! (exclusions)
- **Getting there (school travel and travel plans).**
- **Commences April 08**

Part 6 of the 2006 Act

- LEAs awarded (by bidding process) Pathfinder status are able to pilot changes to the existing (Ed Act 1996) pupils' entitlement to free travel to their nearest suitable and available school.
- This is currently over 3 miles walking distance (2 miles if pupil under 8)

In “Pathfinder” Areas

- 1996 existing free travel criteria dis-applied
- e.g. could be replaced by a flat fare irrespective of distance (Hodges proposal HoL 1980) or by Yellow Buses provisions.
- BUT Pathfinder LEAs must provide a means tested free travel entitlement for protected pupils in appropriate conditions.

Definitions

- Protected pupils - free school meals or parent(s) receiving family tax credits.
- Appropriate conditions - that there are not three or more nearer suitable qualifying schools.
- Free travel - 2-6 miles, or, if attending faith schools, 2-15 miles.

Other provisions

- School bus services will no longer need to be registered under PPV Act 1981
- “Scholar” travel (16-19) now responsibility of the Learning and Skills Council
- LEA’s and Schools’ duty to prepare sustainable travel plans.

TWNW Comments

- Parental choice can be incompatible with sustainable travel - could promote longer journeys to school.
- May be negative modal shift by pupils previously entitled to free travel.
- Flat fares may be more equitable

TWNW Comments - continued

- Free travel over two miles could promote obesity, capacity constraints and higher LEA costs.
- Not just a bus problem - some significant pupil flows on rail in the NW.
- School bus services are often jointly procured and integrated with registered local services - allowing unregistered operation could be unhelpful, and would make timetable information harder to access.

TWNW Comments continued

- **Cross boundary journeys between Pathfinder and non Pathfinder LEAs will be complex.**
- **LEAs, LTAs, Health and Social Service Departments often in breach of their statutory duty to co-operate (TA 85 s88)**
- **LT Bill provisions re Permit Minibuses and use of PHVs as taxi buses may be helpful.**
- **Overall, Part 6 of the Education and Inspection Act 2006 is still the “elephant in the room”. Ignore at our peril.**
- **today’s pupils = tomorrow’s full fare passengers.**

Stop Press

- LTT 1st June 2008
- Dept Communities Families and Schools (DCFS) have rejected all 23 LEAs' Pathfinder bids and will now work with LGA to look at ways of progressing!