

## Labour Group Amendment - Oldham Group Motion

Moved by: Cllr Elaine Taylor

Seconded by: Cllr Mohon Ali

### 1. Reason for Motion

To ensure that children living in temporary accommodation (TA) in Oldham **or are from Oldham but are housed out of borough** are not disadvantaged by their housing situation and can maintain stability in education. “No child should be punished for their family’s housing situation”.

### 2. Background (Latest Facts)

#### Oldham picture

- At 31 March 2025, there were 562 households in temporary accommodation in Oldham (Table TA4).
- In Q1 2025 (Jan–Mar) there were 310 households with children (748 Children between 0–18) in TA (most recently published government data).
- TA is intended to be short-term (around six weeks), but Oldham data show many households remain beyond 6 months across B&B and nightly-paid placements.
- Composition (Oldham, 31 Mar 2025):
  - B&B: 173 households (incl. cases over 6 months).
  - Nightly paid, self-contained: 259 households (many 6–12 months and 1–2 years).
  - Hostels: 5 | Private sector leased: 87 | LA/HA stock: 38.

#### National/GM context

- England total: 131,140 households in TA (31 Mar 2025).
- Law already provides free school travel if:
  - >2 miles (under 8) or >3 miles (8+), or
  - no safe walking route, or
  - child cannot walk due to SEND/disability/mobility needs.
- Locally, children with an EHC Plan are supported from a SEN perspective and continue to receive travel assistance where already in place.
- GM operating practice: when a family is in paid nightly TA in another GM borough, they can apply for bus passes from the host borough, but only if they meet standard distance criteria—leaving a gap for many placed nearer than the mileage thresholds yet far from their original school.

**Political momentum:** The Manchester Evening News campaign calls for free bus passes for children in TA living >30 minutes’ walk from school. As of 25 Aug 2025, six GM MPs publicly back the campaign. ~~No GM local authority has yet adopted a borough-wide concession.~~ **Oldham Council could be the first local authority in Greater Manchester to adopt this campaign, however we need to ensure that this is the right approach for families.**

**Why discretionary action is needed** Children rehoused (often suddenly) can face long, complex, and costly journeys to their existing school—leading to lateness, absence, and stress. The statutory mileage rules do not cover many TA cases; discretionary support is therefore required to protect educational continuity.

### 3. Current Position in Oldham

Oldham complies with national transport duties and supports pupils eligible under distance/safety/SEND criteria. Children in TA who fall short of mileage thresholds (or are rehoused across GM) face a policy gap. Acting now would make Oldham the first GM authority to introduce a dedicated concession for children in TA.

### 4. Proposal

This Council resolves:

1. To perform a piece of analysis to see if extending free school travel (bus pass or taxi, as appropriate) to all school-aged children living in TA in Oldham, irrespective of statutory mileage thresholds is the most appropriate way to support families.
2. To instruct ~~officers in Children's Services, Education and Transport to:~~ relevant officers to:
  - Define eligibility based on verified TA status (including placements within and across GM).
  - Develop delivery models (bus passes, pre-approved taxi contracts, or hybrid models), with clear safeguarding standards.
  - Assess financial implications and identify funding sources ~~(e.g. Homelessness Prevention funding; partnership with TfGM and operators; targeted charitable/hardship support).~~
  - Liaise with Transport for Greater Manchester to ensure that work isn't being duplicated
- ~~3. To report back to Cabinet within 12 weeks with:~~
  - ~~— A recommended delivery model;~~
  - ~~— Estimated budget and funding options;~~
  - ~~— An implementation timetable aiming to begin before the next academic term~~
3. Report back to Cabinet with recommendations for delivering support to families and how this would be funded
4. To ensure the scheme embeds safeguarding, equality and inclusion, and aligns with existing SEND/EHC travel assistance so support is continuous where already in place.

## 5. Additional Resolution

This Council further resolves to:

- ~~Call on Oldham's two Members of Parliament to publicly support the campaign for free school travel for children in TA across Greater Manchester.~~
- Write to the borough's 3 MPs asking them to support the campaign
- ~~Urge the Mayor of Greater Manchester to introduce a region wide scheme that guarantees free transport for children in TA, ensuring no child is penalised for their families housing situation.~~
- Write to the other 9 leaders of Greater Manchester Authorities, as well as the Mayor of Greater Manchester, asking them to work alongside Oldham Council to provide this as a GM wide initiative.

## 6. Expected Outcomes

- ~~Improved attendance and punctuality for children in TA.~~
- ~~Educational continuity and wellbeing during periods of acute housing instability.~~
- ~~Oldham leadership in closing a known policy gap ahead of GM peers.~~

## 7. Recommendation

~~That Oldham Council supports this motion, becoming the first authority in Greater Manchester to guarantee free school travel for children in temporary accommodation, setting a clear and compassionate standard for others to follow.~~

Amended Motion to read:

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2. To instruct relevant officers to:

- a. Define eligibility based on verified TA status (including placements within and across GM).
  - b. Develop delivery models (bus passes, pre-approved taxi contracts, or hybrid models), with clear safeguarding standards.
  - c. Assess financial implications and identify funding sources
  - d. Liaise with Transport for Greater Manchester to ensure that work isn't being duplicated
3. Report back to Cabinet and the Corporate Parenting Panel with recommendations for delivering support to families and how this would be funded
  4. To ensure the scheme embeds safeguarding, equality and inclusion, and aligns with existing SEND/EHC travel assistance so support is continuous where already in place.

## **5. Additional Resolution**

This Council further resolves to:

- Write to the borough's 3 MPs asking them to support the campaign
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