

PROCESS FOR ASSESSING WHETHER OR NOT WALKING ROUTES TO SCHOOLS ARE UNAVAILABLE

Definition

A route is available if it is a route along which a child, accompanied as necessary, can walk with reasonable safety to school.

1. Process

- (i) Request to assess a route for availability (normally from member of the public, but also where the LEA is providing free transport at odds with LEA policy).
- (ii) Request from Children & Young People's Service Department to Environment & Transport for an investigation of the route.
- (iii) Environment & Transport to investigate, including site visit, information on traffic volume where available and accident record.
- (iv) Written record of site visit and other information (standard format).
- (v) Findings considered within E&T, and an assessment made as to whether or not the route is available.
- (vi) Assessment and findings sent to Children and Young People's Services Department
- (vii) Any review to be considered by Assistant Director of Environment & Transport.
- (viii) - If a route is assessed as not available, free transport is to be arranged with immediate effect.

- If a route is assessed as available, but free transport has traditionally been provided, the LEA is obliged to consult affected parties before withdrawing the free provision. Consideration would be given to withdrawing the free transport on a phased basis, eg by applying withdrawal of entitlement to new pupils only.

2. Assumptions

- (a) If there is no suitable public footpath or footway a walking route is available if it is acceptable in two respects: walking alongside the road, and crossing the road where necessary.
- (b) It is assumed that pedestrians will face on-coming traffic, but it is acceptable for them to cross if it is safer on the other side of the road.
- (c) Site visits will cover the whole route but focus on parts of the route with potential hazards, and as far as possible will take place at the time in the

morning when children would be travelling to school.

- (d) Assessments relate only to traffic and highway conditions. The existence or otherwise of street lighting or public transport are not taken into account.

3. Assessment Criteria

Whilst the following criteria are specific, professional judgement will be exercised to take account of local circumstances.

- (a) Crossing a road is acceptable if:

- There is at least 4 seconds' sighting time for vehicle drivers to see pedestrians, AND
- A pedestrian has to wait no more than 40 seconds to cross the road.

A series of timings will be taken to arrive at an average timing for purposes of assessment.

- (b) Walking alongside a road is acceptable if:

- there is a footpath with a reasonably even surface, OR
- the road is greater than 6.5 m wide and there are less than 240 vehicles per hour, two-way, of which no more than 24 are HGVs, OR
- for roads up to 6.5 m in width, there are less than 240 vehicles per hour, two-way, of which no more than 24 are HGVs, AND there is at least 4 seconds' sighting time for vehicle drivers and there is a reasonably even and firm verge to step on to. A series of timings will be taken.

- (c) The availability of suitable footpaths, bridleways etc, which do not necessarily follow roads may be taken into consideration.

- (d) Assessments may identify improvements to routes which if undertaken would make the route available, even if the route is deemed to be not available in the interim.