

Tracey Crouch MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Kent County Council
Home to School Transport Consultation
Room 2.35
Sessions House
Maidstone
ME14 1XQ

5 May 2011

Home to School Transport Consultation

I am writing to register my, and a vast number of my constituents' concerns at Kent County Council's proposal to withdraw free transport for pupils attending their nearest grammar or denominational school.

The existence of grammar schools and the freedom for parents to choose denominational schools for their children to attend are characteristics of our successful education system in Kent. It is therefore worrying that KCC is proposing to withdraw funding and its support for these schools by discontinuing free transport for their pupils.

Whilst I appreciate that KCC is currently providing this support additional to its statutory requirements, you will be aware of the disproportionate impact this proposal will have owing to Kent having the largest number of grammar schools in the country. As the portion of my constituency which falls under the Kent LEA does not have any grammar or denominational schools, this proposal will have an even greater impact on my constituents who rely on free transport to their nearest grammar or denominational schools in Maidstone, at least 5 miles away. This proposal, which wrongly assumes those who attend these schools are able to afford alternative transport, discriminates against high achieving children from poor backgrounds and it is frustrating that our selective education system and freedom of choice stands to be undermined.

It is unfortunate that KCC have suggested the Kent Freedom Pass as a viable alternative for parents at a time when the cost of living is rising and the annual fee for the pass is set double in September 2011.

I accept that savings have to be made across KCC's budget however, I do sympathise with parents who will feel discriminated against by this proposal, and I strongly urge the Council to rethink its proposal so as not to undermine parental choice for our excellent selective and denominational schools.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tracey Crouch".

TRACEY CROUCH MP

Chatham & Aylesford

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