



# Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template June 2021 - Draft 3

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) was introduced as part of the Equality Act 2010, which protects people from discrimination in the workplace, in the provision of services and in wider society.

The duty requires all public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people

Public bodies demonstrate this due regard in different ways, including producing robust equality impact assessments when considering changes to policies and services.

An EqIA enables us to check the potential impacts on residents and employees of our policies, services and projects. It's an opportunity to challenge how we currently do things.

Carrying out an EqIA should not create extra work; it should be part of your normal service planning process. Most of the information required should already be available to you through other work already undertaken e.g. service user monitoring, analysis of complaints and national research.

The purpose of an EqIA is to *take account* of equality as plans develop, to promote and assist the consideration of equalities issues arising in plans and proposals and to ensure that where possible adverse or disproportionate impacts are minimised and positive impacts are maximised. As such where possible an EqIA should be started at the outset of a project/proposal and continually be developed and reviewed until a final proposal is adopted. An EqIA should be used to ensure decision makers have all the information they need regarding potential impacts to ensure they have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty when making judgements.

Carrying out EqIAs should be an integral part of policy or service development/change and larger projects may need more than one EqIA if different areas are impacted by the change.

Any project that requires consultation will automatically require an EqIA.

All approved and signed EqIAs are recorded in a central register. Please email your completed draft EqIA to [equalities@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@buckinghamshire.gov.uk). Previous EqIAs can be made available for information upon request. For any questions or if you require support in completing your EqIA please contact Maria Damigos and Natalie Donhou Morley directly.



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## Part A (Initial assessment) - Section 1 - Background

Proposal/Brief Title: Post-16 Transport Policy Statement review (post consultation)

Web link to report/policy: [Draft Post-16 Transport Policy Statement 2022-23](#)

Related policies: [Home to School Transport Policy 2021](#)

Date: January 2022

Type of strategy, policy, project or service:

Please tick one of the following:

- Existing
- New or proposed
- Changing, update or revision
- Other (please explain)

This assessment was created by:

Name: Cheryl Platts

Job Title: Transport Policy & Project Manager

Email address: [cheryl.platts@buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:cheryl.platts@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

### Briefly describe the aims and objectives of the proposal below:

The Council has a statutory duty to prepare, consult on and publish an annual Post-16 Transport Policy Statement (the Statement). This Statement specifies the arrangements for transport that the Council considers it necessary to make in order to facilitate the attendance of sixth form students receiving education or training. The Statement is published in line with the statutory duties under the Education Act 1996, including s.509AA and s.509AB and takes into account the Department for Education statutory guidance – [Post-16 transport to education and training - January 2019](#).

The following changes were proposed for the Statement for 2022-23:

- to update the content of the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement to make it clearer to parents by providing clarification and more detail to some parts of the Statement.
- that the annual fee for Council organised transport for Post-16 students with SEND who are eligible for transport assistance is increased to £927 from £900 (£618 for the reduced fee, from £600) from the start of the 2022-23 academic year (3% increase based on RPI). This is in line with the Council's MTFP requirement that all fees and charges are reviewed annually.



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We undertook a [formal public consultation](#) on the proposed changes over 6 weeks from 18 October to 29 November 2021.

## What outcomes do we want to achieve?

The key outcomes of the review are:

- To ensure that the Council is meeting its statutory duties for home to school transport as set out in the Statement and consultation documents and is providing a service which meets the needs of young people who require transport assistance whilst ensuring value for money.
- To update the content of the Statement by providing clarification and more detail to some parts of the Statement.

Does this proposal plan to withdraw a service, activity or presence? No

Please explain your answer:

There is no proposal to withdraw any service or activity. In our consultation we asked for views on proposals to update the content of the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement by providing clarification and more detail to some parts of the Statement, and the proposed 3% inflationary increase to the annual fee for Council organised transport for Post-16 students with SEND who are eligible for transport assistance.

Does this proposal plan to reduce a service, activity or presence? No

Please explain your answer:

There are no service reductions proposed through this policy update.

Does this proposal plan to introduce, review or change a policy, strategy or procedure? No

Please explain your answer:

There are no major changes proposed for the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement.

Does this proposal affect service users and/or customers, or the wider community? Yes

Please explain your answer:

There is no change to the level of assistance that children and families will receive. The proposal aims to ensure that families can understand the Statement more clearly so that the documents are more accessible and easier to understand. We have also proposed, in line with corporate requirements, to apply an inflationary increase (3%) to the annual fee for Council organised transport for Post-16 students with SEND who are eligible for transport assistance.



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Does this proposal affect employees? No

Please explain your answer:

There are no substantive changes to the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement which will affect employees. The changes which affected employees occurred as a result of the changes to the Statement for 2021-22 i.e. service areas incorporated additional processes into their Business as Usual activities in order to accommodate the necessary functions required to administer Personal Transport Budgets, as well as accepting payments for transport from parents who chose to pay for the annual fee for Council arranged transport.

Will employees require training to deliver this proposal? No

Please explain your answer:

As above, the changes which affected employees occurred as a result of the changes to the Statement for 2021-22.

There are no changes to the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement which will require training other than in the normal training undertaken due to changes of staff.

Has any engagement /consultation been carried out, or is planned in the future? Yes

Please explain your answer:

A [formal public consultation](#) ran for 6 weeks from 18 October to 29 November 2021.

## Section 2 - Impacts

Please highlight potential impacts (including unintended impacts or consequences) for each protected characteristic\*/equality groups below. Where there are negative or positive impacts please give more details of the impact. Where the impacts are unclear please explain why.

Age\*

Positive

Negative

Unclear

**None**

Details:

Disability\*

**Positive**

Negative

Unclear

None

Details: Due to the changes to the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement for 2021-22, the introduction of Personal Transport Budgets gives students, parents and carers the freedom and choice to arrange suitable, bespoke transport arrangements to meet the



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student's needs, if they wish to do so. Alternatively, families can choose Council arranged transport for Post-16 students for an annual flat fee (inflationary increase proposed for 2022-23, to bring this fee to £927).

## Pregnancy & maternity\*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	<b><u>None</u></b>
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Details:

## Race & Ethnicity\*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	<b><u>None</u></b>
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Details:

## Marriage & Civil Partnership\*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	<b><u>None</u></b>
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Details:

## Religion & Belief\*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	<b><u>None</u></b>
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Details:

## Sex\*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	<b><u>None</u></b>
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Details:

## Sexual Orientation\*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	<b><u>None</u></b>
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Details:

## Gender Reassignment\*

Positive	Negative	Unclear	<b><u>None</u></b>
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Details:

## Gender identity

Positive	Negative	Unclear	<b><u>None</u></b>
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Details:

Carers

Positive	Negative	Unclear	<b><u>None</u></b>
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Details:

Rural isolation

Positive	Negative	Unclear	<b><u>None</u></b>
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Details:

Single parent families

Positive	Negative	Unclear	<b><u>None</u></b>
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Details:

Poverty (social & economic deprivation)

<b><u>Positive</u></b>	Negative	Unclear	None
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Details: Due to the changes to the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement for 2021-22, families can choose between a Personal Transport Budget, or Council arranged transport for Post-16 students for an annual flat fee. The resumption of annual charging in 2021-22 was mitigated by the introduction of a pro rata fee for those students who attend part time. Students and families can also apply to schools or colleges for a bursary to support them with transport costs.

However, any family able to evidence financial hardship are automatically charged a discounted annual fee (i.e. two thirds of the full fee).

Furthermore, families who are experiencing severe financial hardship can apply for a fee review to further reduce or waive the discounted fee. On application and provision of the requested evidence, the Council will consider exceptional circumstances on an individual basis. This review is based on the family's circumstance via the [Post-16 Severe Financial Hardship Transport Exceptions Panel](#).

In making a decision, we will consider whether sufficient evidence of severe financial hardship has been demonstrated.

If the financial hardship is likely to be temporary, we may be able to delay or extend the period over which the reduced annual fee will be paid. We can consider reducing the annual



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fee further to a level that is reasonable to enable parents to meet their essential living needs. Where there is evidence that the financial hardship is likely to be long-lasting and very severe, we will consider waiving the annual fee completely.

Military families / veterans

Positive

Negative

Unclear

None

## Section 3 – Is a full assessment required?

**If you have answered yes to any of the initial assessment questions in section 1 of this EQIA, or have indicated a negative or unclear impact in section 2, it is likely you will need to complete part B of the EqIA form. Should you need guidance as to whether a full EqIA is needed at this time please contact Maria Damigos or Natalie Donhou Morley before continuing.**

Following completion of part A, is part B completion required?

- Yes
- No
- Not required at this time

Explain your answer:

The Local Authority's statutory duty to provide free home to school transport ends when a child is no longer of compulsory school age. However, the Council is required to facilitate the attendance of all those of sixth form age i.e. those students in school years 12- 14 who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday. This may involve travel assistance but the Council does not have to provide this assistance free of charge.

The substantive changes to the Home to School Transport Policy in 2019 introduced charging for transport assistance for Post-16 SEND students from September 2019; however charges were paused for the academic year 2020-21 due to the impact of Coronavirus. This was an exceptional decision. Contribution charging resumed in 2021-22.

Due to the changes to the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement for 2021-22 as [agreed by the Council's Cabinet on 30 March 2021](#), the introduction of Personal Transport Budgets gives students, parents and carers greater choice, flexibility and control over transport arrangements to meet the student's needs. Alternatively, families can choose Council arranged transport for Post-16 students for an annual flat fee.

A detailed [Equality Impact Assessment](#) was completed in December 2020 to reflect the substantial changes introduced to the Statement for 2021-22.

The resumption of annual fees in 2021-22 was mitigated by the introduction of a pro rata fee for those students who attend part time. Students and families can also apply to schools



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or colleges for a bursary to support them with transport costs. The fee is a contribution to the full cost of the transport provision.

Whilst a 3% annual fee increase has been proposed for 2022-23, the discounted fee for financial hardship still applies. The Council also continues to consider exceptional circumstances (i.e. severe financial hardship) on an individual basis.

Less than 10 families have enquired about a fee review due to severe financial hardship and as at the date of this EqIA, none had returned their application forms. We believe that a few families have sourced alternative funding via one of the [two bursaries available](#). Early indications therefore appear to be that by advising families of specific funding which way not have been accessed otherwise, there is a neutral/positive impact on those who may fall under or be part of the group 'Poverty (Social & Economic Deprivation)'.

We will keep this under review and a full EqIA will need to be completed if a negative or unclear impact is identified at a later stage.

**There are no proposed changes to service provision for the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement 2022-23.**

## **Section 4 – Sign off (Only complete when NOT completing Part B)**

Officer completing this assessment: Cheryl Platts    Date: 19/01/2022

Equality advice sought from: Natalie Donhou Morley / Maria Damigos    Date: 19/01/2022

Service Director sign off: Sara Turnbull    Date: 28/01/2022

CMT sign off (*if deemed necessary by Service Director*) sign off: (Please insert name) Date:  
(Please insert Date)

Next review date: 19/07/2022