



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Template reviewed Nov 2021

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. 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: School transport policy review

OneDrive link to report/policy:

Proposed Home to School transport policy 2023 (post-consultation)

Proposed Post-16 Transport Policy Statement 2023-24 (post consultation)

Related policies:

Date: January 2023

Type of strategy, policy, project or service: Statutory

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 & Improvement Manager

Email address: Cheryl.platts@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Briefly describe the aims and objectives of the proposal below:

The Council has a statutory duty to prepare 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](#).

Following a key stakeholder review of the school transport policies by internal and external stakeholders (i.e. [FACT Bucks](#) and the [Bucks SENDIAS Service](#)), a 6.5 week public consultation took place from 19 October to 4 December 2022.

There were no major changes proposed for the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement for 2023-24. We proposed additional clarification of the policy intention in areas where this was required, as well as an uplift to the fees payable for Post-16 SEND Council arranged transport for a fee.



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In preparing for consultation the proposed changes to the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement needed to be mirrored in the Council's Home to School Transport Policy (the H2ST Policy), therefore we consulted on both policy documents simultaneously. After the consultation closed, all comments received were reviewed by senior officers.

Several changes were made to the draft policies because of consultation feedback received from the public, FACT Bucks and Bucks SENDIAS; these post-consultation amendments are highlighted in *italics* throughout the updated draft Home to School Transport Policy and Post-16 Transport Policy Statement 2023/24 attached at appendix 1 and appendix 2 respectively.

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, the H2ST Policy and consultation documents, and is providing a service which meets the needs of children and young people who require transport assistance whilst ensuring value for money. There are, however, no costs savings associated with any of the proposals.
- Asking for views on proposals to update the content of the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement and the H2ST Policy by providing clarification and more detail to some parts of the policy documents.

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 and there are no major changes proposed for the school transport policies. We have asked for public and other key stakeholder views on proposals to update the content of the Statement and the H2ST Policy by providing clarification and more detail where required.

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

Please explain your answer: There are no 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 and H2ST Policy.

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

Please explain your answer: There no substantive changes to the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement or H2ST Policy, and no change to the level of assistance that children and families will receive. The proposals aim to ensure that families can understand the school transport policies more clearly so that the documents are more accessible and easier to understand. As a result of consultation feedback, several changes were made to the draft policies to make them easier to understand. Other than the annual review of charges for Post-16 SEND



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Transport, there are no changes to the Statement/H2ST Policy which will affect service users as the policy intention is unchanged.

Does this proposal affect employees? No

Please explain your answer: Employees will not be affected by these proposed changes to policy, other than to be aware of the clarifications provided in the policy documents.

Will employees require training to deliver this proposal? Yes

Please explain your answer: There will be training for employees to ensure that they are aware of any changes agreed by the Leader following the review of the consultation findings. This is part of continuous development, therefore BAU.

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

Please explain your answer: A public consultation ran from 19 October to 4 December.

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	<u>None</u>
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Details:

Disability*

Positive	Negative	<u>Unclear</u>	None
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Details: The updated post-consultation proposals aim to ensure that families can understand the school transport policies more clearly so that these documents are more accessible and easier to understand, which we perceive to be a positive impact. However, there may be a negative impact on Post-16 students with SEND who are eligible for transport assistance as we are proposing a fee increase of 3% (see Poverty).

Pregnancy & maternity*

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

Race & Ethnicity*

<u>Positive</u>	Negative	Unclear	None
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Details: The updated post-consultation proposals aim to ensure that families can understand the school transport policies more clearly so that the documents are more accessible and easier to understand. This could also benefit families where English may not be the first language.

Marriage & Civil Partnership*

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

Religion & Belief*

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

Sex*

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

Sexual Orientation*

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

Gender Reassignment*

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

Gender identity

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

Carers

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

Rural isolation

Positive	Negative	Unclear	<u>None</u>
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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 (age 5 to 16 years). However, the Council is required to facilitate the attendance of all those of sixth form age 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.

The introduction of Personal Transport Budgets for 2021-22 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 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 (less than the Council's proposed inflationary rise of 9.9% for fees and charges) has been proposed for 2023-24, the discounted fee for financial hardship still applies.

Under the current Post-16 Transport Policy Statement 2022-23, Post-16 students with SEND who choose Council arranged transport are charged a fee. The full annual fee is £927, which will be reduced by a third to £618 p.a. for families who can evidence financial hardship.

Applying a 3% uplift to the fees payable for Post-16 SEND Council arranged transport will set prices to £954 p.a. for the full fee and £636 p.a. for the reduced fee from the start of the



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2023-24 academic year. These fees are pro-rata based on the no. of days travelled per week, as follows:

No. of days travelled per week	Annual fee 2023-24 AY	Reduced annual fee 2023-24 AY
5 days per week	£954	£636
4 days per week	£764	£508
3 days per week	£572	£382
2 days per week	£382	£254
1 day per week	£190	£127

The fee is a contribution to the cost of transport procured by the Council.

The Council also continues to consider exceptional circumstances (i.e. severe financial hardship) on an individual basis.

There are no proposed changes to service provision for the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement 2023-24 or the Home to School Transport Policy 2023. This EqIA has been updated post-consultation and the proposed changes are due for approval in April 2023 as a Key Decision (Leader/CM). If the proposed changes are not agreed, this EqIA will be revisited.

Have you completed an DPIA for this project/change? No

(As you are completing an EqIA, you may also require a DPIA - for more information please contact dataprotection@buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

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

Officer completing this assessment: Cheryl Platts

Date: 25/08/2022, revised 13/10/2022. Post-consultation revision 31/01/2023

Equality advice sought from: Natalie Donhou-Morley Date: 14/10/2022 Post-consultation revision approved 08/02/2023

Service Director sign off: Lindsey Vallis Date: 17/10/2022 Post-consultation revision approved 09/02/2023

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

Date: (Please insert Date)

Next review Date: Pre-key decision – March 2023

If required please complete part B (full assessment) – Not required