

Equality Impact Assessment Template

Please complete this template using the [Equality Impact Assessment Guidance document](#)

Version 4: January 2019

Title of proposal (include forward plan reference if available)	Education Transport Policy SMBC02/07/2019
Directorate and Service Area	Education, Skills and Employment
Name and title of Lead Officer completing this EIA	Melanie Barnett Group Head, Inclusive Learning, Education, Skills and Employment
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Names and titles of other officers involved in completing this EIA	
Partners involved with the EIA where jointly completed	
Date EIA completed	June 25 th 2019
Date EIA signed off or agreed by Director or Executive Director	
Name of Director or Executive Director signing off EIA	
Date EIA considered by Cabinet Member	

1. The purpose of the proposal or decision required

See [Equality Impact Assessment Guidance](#) for key prompts that must be addressed for all questions

(Please provide as much information as possible)

This EIA is about the potential changes to the Home to School/College and Adult Learner Transport Policy. The aim is to ensure that the local authority is statutorily compliant and identify where efficiencies and savings can be made and where the delivery of services can be improved for existing and future individuals who access them.

Following the consultation, if decisions to pursue the proposals are made, this will impact mainly on young people with special educational needs aged over 16 years.

The Local Authority intends to still provide assistance to those who need it the most, however, with increased choice for parents, carers and young people as part of the revised transport model. The revised model is intended to provide better outcomes for individuals, particularly in relation to preparing for adulthood, through the most appropriate transport assistance being provided dependent on the individuals needs and circumstances. This will also provide better outcomes for the local authority through effective and efficient use of resources.

The Local Authority must ensure its Home to School/College and Adult Learner Transport Policy is fit for purpose and is compliant with the legal requirements and code of practice, this will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure the policy is up to date and remains fit for purpose.

In addition to the annual review of the policy there will also be an annual review of the assistance provided to children with special educational needs and disabilities to ensure that the child or young person is still eligible for assistance and the most appropriate form of assistance is being provided.

In relation to young people and their carers it is anticipated that any impact will be positive i.e. achieving better outcomes for the individual through personalised services e.g. independent travel training and the potential introduction of a personal transport budget option. This will provide more flexibility for families to make arrangements which suit their needs.

2. Evidence used/considered

Extensive research was carried out to review other local authorities home to school transport policies and offers as well as appeals processes. In addition, statutory guidance around home to school transport and the SEND Code of practice 2015 was also reviewed.

Consultation documents and findings from other local authorities were also viewed and considered. The information viewed varied dependent on the purpose of the changes being proposed. What was apparent was the number of local authorities who were changing their policies as a result of the issues with post 16 travel assistance and not being statutorily compliant.

A review of the current processes and data has also been undertaken to identify areas where improvements could be made. In particular this has highlighted areas of improvements that are required around how eligibility is determined and the type of assistance that is required.

Below are some of the documents that have been reviewed. This list is not exhaustive:

- Department for Education (DfE) 'Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance' and 'Post-16 transport to education and training
- Sandwell Transport User Data
- Sandwell Parent Mileage Data
- Equality Act 2010

3. Consultation

The consultation ran from 12 June 2019 until 22 July 2019 which is in line with the 2014 Statutory Guidance on home to school travel and transport. Individuals and organisations directly affected, relevant stakeholders and other interested parties were notified of the proposed changes to the Home to School Transport Policy by letter or email and were encouraged to take part in the consultation. This included:

- Parents / carers of pupils who are currently provided with travel assistance. All parents received an individualised letter to their home address. A total of 667 letters were sent
- Headteachers of all schools in Sandwell
- Elected Members of Sandwell Council
- Members of the SEND partnership board.

Consultees were asked to respond to the consultation via the Council's website. In addition, the option was also provided for a paper copy of the consultation.

Further details of consultation outcome to be added

4. Assess likely impact

Please give an outline of the overall impact if possible.

There is no potential for discrimination or adverse impact identified. The Local Authority anticipates that some changes if implemented may bring positive impacts to the young people and their families particularly in respect of independent travel training and more flexibility with personal budgets for transport allowances.

The proposed policy 2019/20 explicitly references the expectation of engagement with independent travel training and the assistance the Local Authority will offer for children and young people who are assessed as being able to achieve this skill, which will lead to positive outcomes. This will mean that more young people can travel independently aged 16+ and will positively enable, those that are able, to gain the life skills which will assist the transition into a meaningful adulthood.

In addition, the likely impact of the policy will be:

- Easier to read with clear and transparent eligibility and suitability criteria and appeals process
- Enables accessibility to educational establishments so that children, young people and adults can participate in education and learning
- Supports sustainable travel
- Supports and promotes independence
- Offers a range of travel assistance solutions to support choice and flexibility for families.

Please complete the table below at 4a to identify the likely impact on specific protected characteristics

4a. Use the table to show:

- Where you think that the strategy, project or policy could have a negative impact on any of the equality strands (protected characteristics), that is it could disadvantage them or if there is no impact, please note the evidence and/or reasons for this.
- Where you think that the strategy, project or policy could have a positive impact on any of the groups or contribute to promoting equality, equal opportunities or improving relationships within equality characteristics.

Protected Characteristic	Positive Impact ✓	Negative Impact ✓	No Impact ✓	Reason and evidence (Provide details of specific groups affected even for no impact and where negative impact has been identified what mitigating actions can we take?)
Age	X			The proposed policy is now consistent for those in school and in college aged 16+ and no longer discriminatory. This will provide a positive impact for children and young people particularly those over 16 years of age with SEND. The policy allows for the Local Authority to assess whether transport is necessary having taken into account other transport options. For those young people without SEND there is the provision to apply for assistance on the basis of financial hardship.
Disability	X			The main group affected will be those with SEND. It is anticipated the benefits afforded by greater choice and improved outcomes will mitigate any potential negative impact. Local authorities have a responsibility for all children and young people who cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school because of their mobility problems or because of associated health and safety issues. The majority of children and young people accessing door to door travel assistance have SEND. The proposed

policy supports this group of people to access education and learning to meet their assessed needs. The proposed policy sets out a range of travel assistance solutions and is aimed at promoting independence and providing life skills, this includes Independent Travel Training.

Gender reassignment			X	
Marriage and civil partnership			X	
Pregnancy and maternity			X	
Race			X	
Religion or belief			X	
Sex			X	
Sexual orientation			X	
Other				

Does this EIA require a full impact assessment? Yes

If there are no adverse impacts or any issues of concern or you can adequately explain or justify them, then you do not need to go any further. You have completed the screening stage. You must, however, complete sections 7 and 9 and publish the EIA as it stands.

If you have answered yes to the above, please complete the questions below referring to the guidance document.

5. What actions can be taken to mitigate any adverse impacts?

6. As a result of the EIA what decision or actions are being proposed in relation to the original proposals?

7. Monitoring arrangements

8. Action planning

You may wish to use the action plan template below

9. Publish the EIA

Where can I get additional information, advice and guidance?

In the first instance, please consult the accompanying guide “Equality Impact Assessment Guidance”

Practical advice, guidance and support

Help and advice on undertaking an EIA or receiving training related to equalities legislation and EIAs is available to **all managers** across the council from officers within Service Improvement. The officers within Service Improvement will also provide overview quality assurance checks on completed EIA documents.

Please contact:

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