
**EQUALITY IMPACT
ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE**

Equality and Diversity UK Ltd

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Template

The Equality Act 2010 has outlined Protected Characteristics as covering: **Race, Disability, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Religion or Belief, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Gender reassignment, Maternity and Pregnancy and Age.**

Protected Groups refers to people who share a protected characteristic. The General Equality Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.**
- **Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**
- **Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**

Undertaking an EIA helps organisations comply with the General Equality Duty as it involves proactively considering the three aims of the Duty as part of the decision making process.

This involves considering how organisations act as employers; how they develop, evaluate and review policy; how they design, deliver, and evaluate services, and how they commission and procure services from others.

Policy/Procedure/Function Details

Name of Policy/Procedure/Function* - Home to School/College Travel and Transport Policy	
EIA Carried out by:	
Date:	21/10/2024
Equality and Diversity Coordinator: (QA)	Liz Morton
Date:	
Head of Department:	Charlotte Finch
Date:	21/10/2024
Date Passed to Governance Services Unit:	This is a draft document currently under review. Full impact assessment to be published following stakeholder engagement. This EIA will be updated with the outcomes from that work and engagement with stakeholders (including public consultation) to enable reassessment and for it to be represented as part of the decision-making process.

*In this template the term 'policy' is used as shorthand for what needs to be equality impact assessed. Policy needs to be understood broadly to embrace the full range of policies, practices, activities and decisions: essentially everything we do, whether it is formally written down or whether it is informal custom and practice. This includes existing policies and any new policies under development.

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Section 1 – Initial EIA - to be completed for all policies

A.	What is the purpose of this policy. Consider explicit and implicit aims	<p>Halton Borough Council have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 (as amended by the Education and Inspections Act 2006) and associated regulations and guidance, to ensure that suitable travel arrangements are made, where necessary, to facilitate a child's attendance at school. The desired outcomes are that available school transport services reflect the Acts of Parliament concerned and that those students entitled to free travel under the arrangements currently stipulated use the services provided.</p> <p>Schedule 35B of the Education Act (1996) defines eligible children as those categories of children of compulsory school age (5-16) in an authority's area. Halton Borough Council's current Home to School Transport Policy set out provision for both statutory and non-statutory services.</p> <p>A statutory service is provided where an application meets the legal criteria to access services.</p> <p>Non statutory services reflect the discretion the council considers.</p> <p>Examples of that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Children under 5 years of age who are accessing a nursery provision within an all age setting and are on the School roll- Parental disability- Post 16 travel- Discretionary applications on a case by case basis. <p>The overall cost to the Council of the provision of home to school travel is significant and rising. The current EIA has been devised to accompany an options paper that will be presented through service and corporate governance structures that detail the opportunities to reduce costs of these services. The current policy makes provision for eligibility above and beyond statutory requirements that have associated costs, and several of the options presented provide an opportunity to review these 'discretionary' elements. The potential changes to the scheme would provide a contribution to savings the Council is having to find in response to budgetary pressures alongside a focus on obtaining skills that facilitates pupil's independence and support transition to adulthood.</p> <p>The current to the Home to School/College Travel and Transport Policy is set out in three parts as follows:</p>
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		<p>Part A – Travel support to access education for children and young people of age 16 and under. Part B – Travel support to access education/training for young people Post 16 Part C – Application, Review, and Appeals processes</p> <p>The current paper sets out options for possible amendments to the current policy that may reflect changes in Part A, B and C of the policy.</p> <p>The options explored within the paper are:</p> <p>Option 1- Introduce and Promote Personal Budgets for statutory travel aged children Option 2- Review and track children turning 8 and apply change of distance criteria Option 3- Review provision of transport for pupils under the age of 5 years Option 4- Review provision of transport for pupils post 16 Option 5- Escalation of Independent Travel Training Option 6- Central Pick ups Option 7 – Motability Vehicles</p>
B.	<p>Does the policy have an impact on staff or the wider community that the organisation has links with? Please give details</p>	<p>Stakeholders who may be affected from options presented include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children and young people of statutory school age - Children and young people of non-statutory school age - Parents/carers - Schools and colleges - Early Years settings - Transport providers <p>Some proposals may impact on individuals with protected characteristics. The EIA is necessary to understand any potential impact and necessary mitigation that is required.</p>
C	<p>What results/outcomes are intended? How are these measured? What factors could contribute or detract from the outcome?</p>	<p>Nationally, local authorities are facing increased pressure on Home to School Travel budgets. Halton has seen a increase both in terms of the number of children with EHCP’s accessing transport alongside an increase in costs associated with procuring transport contracts, and the council acknowledge that pressure will continue to increase in future. This has prompted a review of the to the Home to School/College Travel and Transport Policy, in order to identify opportunities to manage demand and pressures on the service.</p>

D	Is there is any evidence that the policy relates to an area with known inequalities? Please give details	The Home to School/College Travel and Transport Policy relates children with SEND needs including neurodiversity needs, physical and cognitive disabilities alongside complex health needs.		
E	Will/Does the implementation of the policy result in different impacts for protected groups and the general population of the organisation?	The children and young people who may be more greatly impacted by the presented options are those of non-compulsory school age who are currently accessing non statutory transport, should this offer not be available in the future.		
		Yes	No	Explain your reasons
	Disability	x		
	Sexual Orientation		x	
	Sex	x		
	Gender Reassignment		x	
	Race		x	
	Marriage/Civil Partnership		x	
	Maternity/Pregnancy		x	
	Age	x		
	Religion or Belief		x	
	Others groups identified: i.e. socio economic status; neurodiversity etc			As above

If you have answered 'Yes' to any of the questions, then you are required to carry out a full Equality Impact Assessment – please go to section 2

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Section 1: Result of initial Equality Impact Assessment

The above-named policy has been considered and does not require a full equality analysis	
Initial EIA Carried out by:	<u>Does require full assessment</u>
Date:	
Agreed by: Equality and Diversity Coordinator: (QA)	<u>Does require full assessment</u>
Date:	

Section 2 – Full Equality Impact Assessment

1a. Does the policy impact differently on people from any of the Protected Groups?				
	Negative Impact	Positive Impact	Neutral Impact	Please describe the impact for each of the protected groups and outline the evidence for your conclusion
Disability	X		X	<p>The Home to School Transport policy has specific entitlement to transport for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.</p> <p>The current policy has a specific criteria for transport support in relation to children of parents who cannot accompany their children due to temporary or permanent illness or disability. Retention of this clause is likely to have positive impact on parents and carers with disabilities.</p> <p>In relation to escalation of Independent Travel Training, this is likely to have a positive impact on children to increase independence and community connections and health benefits where walking/cycling is involved. It is noted that there may be a disproportionate negative impact where future approaches fail to consider individual disability needs'. It is reasonable to ask parents and young people to consider travel training, but this should not be a blanket policy. It should be based on individual assessment and tailored to the young person's needs, and some young people may never manage independent or supported travel by public transport.</p> <p>This is similar to the centralised pick up approach which, for children with disabilities that affects them from accessing pick up points independently, presents additional challenges. Local authorities now expect parents to take children to pick up points instead of collecting children from home, which does fall within legislation, however local authorities have a duty to provide 'non-stressful' transport arrangements. Therefore any requests must be within a safe walking route within a reasonable walking distance from home.</p>

Sexual Orientation				It is not anticipated that there will be an impact on residents depending on their sexual orientation. This data is not collected for pupils and therefore cannot be commented upon further.
Sex	x			<p>Gender is not a distinguishing factor in the application process or the allocation of school transport. There should be no greater impact on this group than on any other. It is noted that there is generally a small overrepresentation of boys with SEN generally so impacts may have a marginal disproportionate impact on males.</p> <p>In terms of parents/carers there may be an adverse impact women more than men. This is largely due to the fact that women are often the main carer for children/young people so may be impacted from options presented in the paper.</p>
Gender Reassignment				It is not anticipated that there will be an impact on residents depending on their gender reassignment. This data is not collected for pupils and therefore cannot be commented upon further.
Race				Race is not a distinguishing factor in the application process or the allocation of school transport. There should be no greater impact on this group than on any other.
Marriage and Civil Partnership				It is not anticipated that there will be an impact on residents depending on their marriage/civil partnership. This data is not collected for pupils and therefore cannot be commented upon further.
Maternity/ Pregnancy				It is not anticipated that there will be an impact on residents depending on maternity/pregnancy. This data is not collected for pupils and therefore cannot be commented upon further.
Religion or Belief				Personal circumstances will be considered during the assessment process however it is not anticipated that there will be an impact on residents based on their religion or belief.
Age				<p>As this proposal considers a specific age group, the Protected Characteristic of Age is impacted. There is likely to be a disproportionate direct impact on early years students and on 16–18-year-old SEND learners.</p> <p>Early Years (pupils under the age of 5 years). While there is no legal obligation to provide free transport for this age group, a blanket refusal could potentially be considered discriminatory (for example, if a four year-old attends a special school some distance from home and could not access education without transport). Additionally, there may be children with identified SEND under 5 years of age in nursery settings, that might</p>

			<p>have high levels of absence without transport while waiting to turn statutory age. This may impact on early identification of needs and support. Given the importance in early intervention, this may result in need for high cost interventions later on in their education.</p> <p>Provision of transport for pupils post 16. While there is no legal obligation to provide free transport for this age group, a change in provision for post 16 children may result in them not engaging in further education, increasing Halton’s NEET cohort. This may disproportionately affect children both educationally and socially, with national data highlighting that young people with SEND are generally less likely to achieve qualifications and more likely to be NEET (not in education, employment or training)¹. Halton has experienced a rise in Post 16 NEET numbers for children with an EHCP in 2023 and anecdotally a further growth is likely in 2024. Lack of transport/travel opportunities for provision that may further impact on these figures as specialist provision is more likely to require further to travel and travel out of borough.</p> <p>In terms of enforcing use of Motability Vehicles when a young person turns 18 is likely to have a neutral impact, as the children and young people are already benefitting from a Motability vehicle and should therefore have limited difficulty accessing education.</p>
Socio economic status			<p>Halton’s current charging structure for post 16 contributions offers a reduction for those on a low income. As one option presented considers an increase in contributions, families of children on lower incomes would be affected differently than those on higher levels of income. A universal increase in charges will disproportionately impact on lower income families. Other mitigations against increased charges also exist such as 16-19 bursary which is accessible to students on a low income.</p> <p>Removal of discretionary services may have a high impact for a minority of students either living in remote areas with no access to either public bus services or private transport, or on low income and unable to afford daily fares.</p> <p>The option to promote personal budgets for all statutory school aged children would be by consent. Therefore it is likely to have a neutral impact. Children and families who will benefit from the more flexible system will access personal budgets and for those who won’t, there will be the option to continue to avail of transport. There is an option to review mileage rates with the potential introduction of banding</p>

¹ [Resource 1 Careers Landscape Factsheet-Final - v1.pdf](#)

				arrangements for personal travel budgets to ensure that they are an attractive option to parents, including those with low incomes.
Other impacted groups i.e., neurodiversity				The full impact on vulnerable groups is not yet known and will be an ongoing process throughout decision making and in line with further stakeholder consultation. The SEND code of practice makes specific provision for children from families in the armed forces as well as other vulnerable groups including children in care and children in the youth justice system. Future decisions and action plans will need to consider and mitigate against impacts on these groups.

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General Duty

<p>1b. Now consider and detail below how the policy impacts on elimination of discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advances the equality of opportunity and promotes good relations between groups. Where there is evidence, address each protected characteristic (Disability, Sexual Orientation, Sex, Gender Reassignment, Race, Marriage/Civil Partnership, Maternity/Pregnancy, age, Religion and Belief)</p>	
<p>Eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation</p>	<p>No evidence</p>
<p>Advance equality of opportunity</p>	<p>No evidence</p>
<p>Promote good relations between groups</p>	<p>Any change to a home to school transport policy will possibly to be viewed negatively, particularly as we engage around options that may include discharge of non-statutory duties or an increased contribution from parents around post 16 SEND transport.</p> <p>The potential changes to the policy are likely to lead to concern from parents and carers with children in early years and post 16 settings, particularly those with more than one child availing of transport. This highlights the need for robust engagement with families and stakeholders through future public consultation. Alongside this it will be important to engage with the Halton Parent Carer Forum on an ongoing basis.</p>

2. Engagement and Involvement

<p>How have you engaged stakeholders in gathering evidence?</p>	<p>Consultation has been requested from Halton Borough's Council's D&N group and feedback will be incorporated into assessment.</p> <p>Future steps will require a public consultation and engagement with Halton Parent Carer Forum.</p>
<p>Have you engaged stakeholders in consulting on the policy proposals?</p>	<p>This is a draft document and the full and final document will include feedback from stakeholders</p>
<p>For each engagement activity, please state who was involved, how and when they were engaged, and the key concerns/issues identified.</p>	<p>As above.</p>

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4. Making a decision

An EIA has been undertaken on this policy and meets the requirements of the General Equality Duty. The following decision has been taken: (please tick one box)

	Approve – No major change	Your analysis demonstrates that the policy is robust, and the evidence shows no potential for discrimination and that you have taken all appropriate opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations between groups.
	Adjust the policy	This involves taking steps to remove barriers or to better advance equality. It can mean introducing measures to mitigate the potential effect. This should be done before the policy is implemented. Where this cannot happen the action plan must outline
	Continue with the policy	This means adopting your proposals, despite any adverse effect or missed opportunities to advance equality, provided you have satisfied yourself that it does not unlawfully discriminate. In cases where you believe discrimination is not unlawful because it is objectively justified, it is particularly important that you record what the objective justification is for continuing the policy, and how you reached this
		decision.

<p>Stop and remove the policy</p>	<p>If there are adverse effects that are not justified and cannot be mitigated, you will want to consider stopping the policy altogether.</p> <p>If a policy shows unlawful discrimination it must be removed or changed.</p>
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5. Sign off and review:

When the actions listed above have been completed a copy of this form should be sent to Equality and Diversity Coordinator.

<p>Full EIA Carried out by:</p>	
<p>Date:</p>	
<p>Equality and Diversity Coordinator: (QA)</p>	
<p>Date:</p>	
<p>Manager:</p>	
<p>Date:</p>	

Date Passed to Governors/Directors:

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Review Date

Unless the policy is reviewed before the date below, the next EIA will be carried out in

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(A maximum of 3 years from date of completion as shown on this template)

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