



## Equality Impact Assessment

### What is an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and why does the County Council do them?

The [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) (PSED) is an obligation within the [Equality Act 2010](#) ("the Act"), which asks public authorities, like Hampshire County Council, to give 'due regard' to equality considerations, in particular to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and 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.

This includes assessing the impact of policies and practices on individuals and communities with a protected characteristic, as defined in the Act and some other specific groups. The County Council uses EIAs to ensure it has paid 'due regard' to equalities considerations when there are changes to a service or policy, a new project or certain decisions.

EIA author	Position & Department	Contact
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Title:	Permission to consult on proposed changes to the School Transport Policy (Oct 2023)
Related EIAs:	None

EIA for Savings Programme:	No
Service affected	The School Transport Service
Description of the service/policy/project/project phase	<p>Hampshire County Council (the Council) has a statutory duty to provide free of charge School Transport for eligible children (eligibility as set out in the Council's School Transport Policy). The School Transport Service currently arranges daily transport to school for approximately 13,500 children and young people. Of these, 9,600 attended mainstream schools and 3,750 attended schools and colleges that provide for their Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or other needs. A rise in complexity of transport needs, along with pressures affecting the external market, have meant that it is becoming more challenging for operators to provide transport that adequately meets the passengers' needs. The County Council needs to consider approaches that would allow them to be better able to respond to these pressures and provide adequate, safe, and efficient transport to children.</p>
New/changed service/policy/project	<p>Permission is being sought to undertake a full public consultation on five proposed changes within school transport. The proposed changes would enable the County Council to be better able to provide flexible transport arrangements for children that respond to their changing needs, demand and external market pressures. The proposed changes would also bring the School Transport Policy in line with the updated Department for Education statutory guidance on Travel to School for Children of Compulsory School Age. Feedback would be gathered on the following proposed changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposal One: For Personal Transport Budgets (PTB) to be available to families where a child's needs or circumstances mean that suitable transport is difficult to find, or not available at all, in the local operator market.</li> <li>• Proposal Two: The development and delivery of an Independent Travel Training service for children with SEND as they prepare for adulthood.</li> <li>• Proposal Three: The regular review of the provision of Passenger Assistants.</li> <li>• Proposal Four: Where parents are required to make a financial contribution to discretionary school transport arrangements, to increase this contribution in line with inflation (Consumer Price Index (CPI)) from September 2024, with inflation-linked increases also being applied in future years.</li> <li>• Proposal Five: The rewording and updating of the Policy to ensure it reflects the latest Department for Education statutory guidance (Travel to School for children of compulsory</li> </ul>

school age, issued June 2023 ), is relevant to the Service and is easy to understand. The impact of the changes on young people with different protected characteristics will be captured as part of this consultation.

## Engagement

This EIA accompanies an Executive Lead Member for Children's Services decision report on the 19 October 2023.

This EIA principally focusses on considering the potential impact of the proposed changes on the Public rather than Staff as there are no proposed changes to staff terms and conditions. Therefore the impact has been assessed as neutral for Staff throughout.

A further EIA will be undertaken following the public consultation.

## Equalities considerations - Impact Assessment

### Age

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p><b>Consultation</b> – It is acknowledged that older people may be less likely to have access to the internet and may not be able to respond online to a consultation. The Council would ensure that paper copies of the consultation are available by request for postal submission</p> <p>As the the school transport service is provided for eligible children and young people of school age (eligibility as set out in the Council's School Transport Policy), it is recognised that they and their families/carers would be disproportionality affected by the proposed change in regard to age as a protected characteristic.</p> <p><b>Proposal one – Positive</b> - Personal Transport Budgets (PTB). This service would be something that gives more flexibility to children and families although it is anticipated that it will only be an option for some families.</p>

**Proposal two – Positive** – Independent Travel Training (ITT) would be a service offered to students as they prepare for approaching adulthood and would only be suitable for a small number of students. For the students that it is suitable for and who choose to take part in the training, ITT would be a strengths-based service that, for some, would result in greater independence. The Council would work closely with families and school to implement ITT.

**Proposal three – Negative low** - The review of the allocation of Passenger Assistants (PA) would see that some students who no longer require a PA would have their PA phased out and students whose needs have changed and require one, would be identified for allocation of a PA in a more timely way.

**Proposal four – Negative low** – The increase in contribution rates for children receiving discretionary transport arrangements will disproportionately affect children and young people of school age and their families. The number of families affected is approximately 100 of the approximate 13,500 students receiving school transport arranged by the council.

**Proposal five – Positive** – Changes to the school transport policy is anticipated to be positive as the changes would ensure it is up to date, relevant to the service and easy to understand.

Mitigation	
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## Disability

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p><b>Consultation</b> – The Council acknowledge that people with disabilities may find it harder to engage with the consultation and will put in place measures to enable those with disabilities to take part. These include the consultation response form and information pack being available in an easy read format, a copy in another language or format (such as audio, large print, or Braille), or if they have any queries about the consultation, they would be able to request this by either please emailing or calling the School Transport team.</p> <p><b>Proposal one – Positive</b> – PTBs will disproportionately affect Children and Young people with disabilities and their families. The change will mean that children, young people and their families with disabilities who are suitable for a PTB will have more flexible options for their transport arrangements.</p>

	<p><b>Proposal two – Positive</b> – ITT would disproportionately affect Children and Young people with disabilities and their families. Most people offered ITT would have SEND. For the students that it is suitable for and who choose to take part in the training, ITT would be a strengths- based service that, for some, would result in greater independence. The Council would work closely with families and school to implement ITT.</p> <p><b>Proposal three – Negative low</b> – The review of PAs would disproportionately affect children and young people and their families with disabilities as PAs are mostly used to support students with SEND. The proposal would see that some students who no longer require a PA would have their PA phased out and students whose needs have changed and require one, would be identified for allocation of a PA in a timelier way.</p> <p><b>Proposal four – Neutral</b> - The increase in contribution rates for students in receipt of discretionary travel arrangements would have no identified impact based on disability and therefore the impact has been assessed as neutral.</p> <p><b>Proposal Five - Neutral</b> - There is no identified impact based on disability and therefore the impact has been assessed as neutral.</p>
Mitigation	

### Gender Reassignment

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	There is no identified impact based on gender reassignment and therefore the impact has been assessed as neutral.
Mitigation	

### Pregnancy and Maternity

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	There is no identified impact based on pregnancy and maternity and therefore the impact has been assessed as neutral.
Mitigation	

## Race

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	There is no identified impact based on race and therefore the impact has been assessed as neutral.
Mitigation	

## Religion or Belief

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	There is no identified impact based on religion or belief and therefore the impact has been assessed as neutral.

Mitigation	
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## Sex

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	There is no identified impact based on sex and therefore the impact has been assessed as neutral.
Mitigation	

## Sexual Orientation

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	There is no identified impact based on sexual orientation and therefore the impact has been assessed as neutral.
Mitigation	

## Marriage and Civil Partnership

Impact on public	Neutral

Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	There is no identified impact based on marriage and civil partnership and therefore the impact has been assessed as neutral.
Mitigation	

## Poverty

Impact on public	Negative - Low
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p><b>Proposals one, two, three and five</b> have no identified impact based on poverty and therefore the impact has been assessed as neutral.</p> <p><b>Proposal four – Negative low</b> – The increase in contribution rate would disproportionately affect families on a lower income.</p>
Mitigation	This has been considered by the Council and the contribution rate would continue to be waived for families in receipt of certain benefits. Families with exceptional circumstances would also be able to apply for a discretionary waiver or reduction in parental contributions.

## Rurality

Impact on public	Negative - Medium
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	



	<p><b>Proposals one, two, three and five</b> have no identified impact based on rurality and therefore the impact has been assessed as neutral.</p> <p><b>Proposal four – Negative Medium</b> – Families living in rural areas often face a longer journey in terms of distance and journey times to access discretionary school transport provision. Public transport may be a more restricted offer. The longer journey and restricted public transport may limit families’ capacity to support their child's travel. As journeys from rural areas will tend to be longer, the cost of providing transport for children from rural areas are greater on average. Therefore the charges are grouped into four bands based on distance. Due to the longer distances, rural families will be more likely to be in a higher band with a higher charge.</p>
Mitigation	<p>Where transport is necessary to facilitate attendance, the Council will provide transport assistance. Each child will be considered on a case-by-case basis, including the proposed journey and any limitations on infrastructure, to ensure provision reflects actual need. The School Transport Policy will continue to allow for parental contribution charges to be waived when parents/carers are on a low income, in receipt of certain benefits or if the child is in receipt of free school meals. Families with exceptional circumstances can also apply for a discretionary waiver or reduction in parental contributions.</p>

Geographical Impact:All Hampshire

## Equality Statement

### Additional information:

This EIA accompanies an Executive Lead Member for Children's Services decision report on the 19 October 2023.

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### Overview Statement:

A summary assessment to show that due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty has been paid, which is undertaken when a full EIA is not needed:

