

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:	Determination of the Post-16 Transport Policy 2026/27
Related EIAs:	EIA Number: 962
EIA for Savings Programme:	No
Service affected	The School Transport service (Post-16 Transport).
Description of the service/policy/project/project phase	The provision of transport to an education setting for young people who are older than school age is not a statutory requirement. Hampshire County Council have exercised discretion beyond the statutory requirement to offer transport assistance to young people between 16 and 18 years old who have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) or disability. The Post-16 Transport Policy details when and how the Council will support attendance in Post 16 education where travel/transport is perceived as a barrier. It allows parents/carers and users to understand how young people aged over 16 with an EHCP or a disability aged over 16 and in education may be eligible for a local authority funded transport service. This EIA supports a report to the Executive Member (scheduled for 24 February 2026 Decision Day) which seeks approval of the proposed changes to be made to the Post-16 Transport Policy, with the Policy due to be published by 31 May 2026 as per statutory requirements.

New/changed service/policy/project	The County Council have consulted on the following changes, which are now being recommended: 1) It is recommended that the Policy includes revised wording in relation to transport appeals to make it clearer. This wording matches the recommended changes to appeals within the School Transport Policy that has been consulted on separately. 2) A brief ‘quick guide’ section is also recommended to be added to the Policy which summarises eligibility criteria and how to apply for Post-16 Transport. Minor changes are also recommended, including fixing formatting or broken links, and updating the parental contributions table to show only the annual contribution rate to match what is published in other media (including the website). These proposals do not change the way the service is currently delivered or administered, and are designed to make the Policy clearer.
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Engagement
<p>This EIA accompanies an Executive Lead Member for Children's Services decision report scheduled for 24 February 2026.</p> <p>The proposed changes will not impact staff/staff terms and conditions, so impact has been assessed as neutral for staff throughout.</p> <p>A public consultation seeking feedback on the proposed changes to the Post-16 Transport Policy took place between 3 November – 7 December 2025.</p> <p>Awareness of the consultation was raised in a number of ways including press releases prior and during the time the consultation was live, sending an email to the parents/carers of all current users of the Service, direct emails to operators and passenger assistants, posts on the County Council’s social media platforms, newsletter articles, communicating with schools, and emailing community groups.</p> <p>Respondents were asked four questions about the Policy: To what extent they agreed or disagreed with the proposal to add a ‘quick guide’ to the Policy, to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the proposed changes to appeals wording, whether they had any comments on the Policy changes (or their impact), and whether any of the impacts they had mentioned related to specific characteristics or issues.</p> <p>The consultation received 87 responses in total, with 85 of these received from individuals.</p> <p>65% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal to add a ‘Quick Guide’ to the Policy. 17% disagreed or strongly disagreed.</p> <p>64% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the proposal to update the wording in the Appeals section of the Policy. 13% disagreed or strongly disagreed.</p>

Equalities considerations - Impact Assessment

Age

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	

	<p>The Post-16 Service is delivered to service users aged 16 - 19 year olds (who have started a course before their 19th birthday) and young people with EHCPs up to the age of 25.</p> <p>The County Council proposes to update the information in the policy to provide improved clarity of how the Policy is already applied and how the service is currently delivered. Whilst these specific changes would not have an impact on how the service is delivered to this group, they could help all groups to gain a better understanding of what to expect from the service.</p> <p>26% of the 87 respondents to the consultation selected 'Age' as an impacted group. However, the comments provided in the consultation related to the Policy in general and NOT the changes proposed within the consultation: those who selected age mentioned that if students had to be in mandatory education, then they should receive free transport.</p>
Mitigation	Where transport is necessary to facilitate attendance, the Council will provide transport assistance. Each young person will be considered on a case by case basis to ensure provision reflects actual need with the contribution waived for learners from families in receipt of income based benefits or who are on a low income.

Disability

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>The vast majority of young people over the age of 16 in education will attend placements which are accessible from their home address. However, where a young person or a family member (with responsibility for the young person) has Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND), a health issue/concern, or disability this may make accessing an education placement difficult or impossible without HCC providing support with travel/transport arrangements.</p> <p>The County Council proposes to update the information in the policy to provide improved clarity of how the policy is already applied and how the service is currently delivered. Whilst these specific changes would not have an impact on how the service is delivered to this group, they could help all groups to gain a better understanding of what to expect from the service.</p> <p>40% of the 87 respondents to the consultation selected 'Disability' as an impacted group. Those who selected disability mentioned that the Policy could reduce a student's independence, highlighted the issue of Post-16 transport affordability due to a link between disability and low-income, and commented that the application process could be difficult for people with some disabilities. However, the comments provided in the consultation related to the Policy in general and NOT the changes proposed within the consultation. For example, a comment was received stating that the Policy "targeted working parents of children who have complex needs" and that they may not</p>

	be able to transport their child to school. This was a comment on the Policy as a whole (which reflects DfE guidance) rather than the proposed changes, which only improve wording and do not change eligibility or evidence requirements.
Mitigation	Hampshire County Council recognises that families may need a transport service to ensure that 16+ special needs or disabled students can access a place that is suitable for their needs and so do offer a transport service, under discretionary powers. The transport arrangements require a parental contribution. This can be paid in instalments on a termly or monthly basis if required. The Post 16 2023 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 student is in receipt of free school meals. Families with exceptional circumstances can also apply for a discretionary waiver or reduction in parental contributions.

Gender Reassignment

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

Sex

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	There is no identified impact based on sex and therefore this 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 this 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, as no changes are being made to the service, and therefore this has been assessed as neutral.
Mitigation	

Poverty

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	<p>There is no identified impact based on Poverty, as no changes are being made to the service, and therefore this has been assessed as neutral.</p> <p>24% of respondents to the consultation selected 'Poverty' as an impacted group. Those who selected poverty mentioned that any additional costs would be unaffordable for many families, particularly due to increased financial burdens for families of students with SEND, which could result in difficult decisions such as a student not being able to get to school/college. However, these comments related</p>

	to the Policy in general - specifically the transition from fully funded statutory school transport for eligible children to part-funded discretionary transport for eligible Post-16 students - and not the changes to wording proposed within this consultation.
Mitigation	This has been considered by the County 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. For context, during 2022/23, the parental contribution was waived for 76.7% of Post-16 eligible students.

Rurality

Impact on public	Neutral
Impact on staff	Neutral
Rationale	There is no identified impact based on rurality, as no changes are being made to the service, and therefore this has been assessed as neutral. 21% of respondents to the consultation selected 'Rurality' as an impacted group. Respondents who selected rurality commented on the lack of available public transport locally for non-eligible students. However, these comments related to the Policy in general and not the changes to wording proposed within this consultation.
Mitigation	Where transport is necessary to facilitate attendance, the Council will provide transport assistance. Each young person 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 Post 16 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 student is in receipt of free school meals. Families with exceptional circumstances can also apply for a discretionary waiver or reduction in parental contributions.

Geographical Impact: All Hampshire

Equality Statement

Additional information:

The updates to wording aim to improve the clarity of the Policy and would not change how the service is delivered.

This EIA accompanies an Executive Lead Member for Children's Services decision report on the 24 February 2026 and supports the statutory requirement to publish an updated policy statement annually by 31 May.

This EIA principally focusses on considering the potential impact of the recommended 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.

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:

EIA reference number: 01043

Date of production of EIA for publication: 12/01/2026