



Oxfordshire County Council Equalities Impact Assessment

TITLE

DATE COMPLETED

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Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	Children, Education and Families (DCS)
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	Home to School Travel and Transport Policy and the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	Existing Policy – Update & Refresh
Summary of assessment Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).	Following consultation and review of feedback there are no proposed service changes. Changes to the existing policies are cosmetic to improve the ease of use and ensure alignment with the latest DfE Guidance and best practice. Both policies continue to deliver the Council's statutory duties which continue to support compulsory school age pupils and those in post 16 education, specifically those with additional needs (Special Educational Needs) to ensure access is available to the nearest appropriate school that can meet their needs. In addition to support available for individuals/families with disability, support is also available to enable access for those identified as low income, and/or those living in rural communities. Both policies continue to allow individuals to present their personal/individual circumstances for consideration through the application process, if they are unable to meet the described eligibility criteria but have difficulty accessing their child's education setting, these continue to be considered on a case-by-case basis. The proposed changes therefore do not bias, discriminate, or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community.
Completed By	Stephen Good – HtST Programme Manager
Authorised By	

Date of Assessment	
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Section 2: Detail of proposal

Context / Background Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.	Oxfordshire County Council as a local authority, has a statutory duty to provide free travel for children and young people of compulsory school age (5-16 years of age) who meet those thresholds detailed in legislation. These thresholds are set out in sections 508A, 508B, 508C and 509D and Schedule 25B of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by Part 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006). Compulsory School age is set out in section 8 of the Education Act 1996 and the Education (Start of Compulsory School Age) Order 1998 as follows: a child reaches compulsory school age on the prescribed day following their fifth birthday, or on the fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day. The prescribed days are 31 December, 31 March and 31 August. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June in the academic year in which they reach age 16. The Education Act 1996 duty applies to all local authorities in England in respect of arrangements for young people (over compulsory school age) aged 16-18 and those continuing learners up to age 25 with EHC plans who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday. There are also duties that apply to local authorities in England in respect of arrangements for adults aged 19 and over, who started their programme of learning after their 19th birthday. The legislation therefore gives local authorities the discretion to determine what transport and financial support are necessary to facilitate young people's attendance at their setting. The existing Home to School Transport Policies were last consulted upon in 2014 (Compulsory School Age) and 2018 (Post 16). DfE Guidance was last updated in 2019 for Post 16 Travel and in 2023 and 2024 for Compulsory School Age. A review of the policies was undertaken, the primary focus of the update to the policies was to improve the accessibility of the Policy documents by improving its structure, flow, and language. The purpose was to improve effectiveness and usefulness of the documents for both officers, families, schools, and other key stakeholders. Updated policies were drafted and published for consultation, a public consultation ran between 23 January 2025 and 9 March 2025 (11:59pm) It included the proposed refreshed policies, the proposal to introduce contribution charges to Post 16 travel, and explored early engagement/feedback about existing discretionary provision.
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	Included in the consultation was a proposal to introduce a contribution charge for young people accessing support with travel to their Post 16 education setting. All other updates to the policy are an update of the existing policy to improve wording and use, no other changes to eligibility or service were included.
Proposals Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.	The current policies were last consulted on in 2014 and 2019, since then the DfE have reissued guidance for Home to School Travel. The proposed changes to policy reflect the latest updated guidance without changing existing service provision or entitlement. This course of action have been decided to ensure that the policy reflects DfE phrasing and guidance, providing the necessary clarity and consistency requested by families, schools and council officers. It also continues to provide valuable support across protected characteristic groups and wider community. Despite an original proposal to implement a contribution charge it is now proposed that this charge for post 16 travel support is not implemented. As a result there is no change to service under the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement, maintaining existing support across all protected characteristics.
Evidence / Intelligence List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities	The proposed policies were consulted upon between 23 January 2025 and 9 March 2025 (11:59pm) It included the proposed refreshed policies, the proposal to introduce contribution charges to Post 16 travel, and explored early engagement/feedback about existing discretionary provision. The consultation focused on seeking views on the following areas: Review area 1: Updates to the format and language used in our home to school transport policy and our post 16 transport policy statement to improve customer understanding, awareness and overall experience. Review area 2: Specific updates to the use and application of direct travel payments in our home to school transport policy to ensure the language is more user friendly and consistent with current government guidelines.

or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.	Review area 3: Specific updates to our home to school transport policy for travel arrangements to Alternative Education Provision settings to meet current government guidelines and to reflect Oxfordshire’s current alternative provision arrangements. Review area 4: Proposals to ask for a financial contribution for post 16 pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) for travel to post 16 settings. As well as consulting on the proposed changes the consultation also explored views on the following discretionary elements of both policies where proposals for change had not yet been developed: Review area 5: Discretionary travel at split village locations Review area 6: Spare seat scheme Feedback from the public regarding the proposals was received through an online survey. 649 surveys were submitted during the consultation period. Updates to the format and language (Review Area 1) of the policies to improve understanding, awareness and general experience receive significant support with 66% of respondents either significantly or somewhat approving of the proposed changes. Significant support was also received for Review Area’s 2 and 3, which related to specific updates to wording within the policy in relation to Direct Travel Payments (DTP’s) and travel support for those in Alternative Education Provision. 63% were in support of the updated wording for Review Area 2, and 39% for Review Area 3, 42% neither agreed or disagreed with Review Area 3 proposals. Review Area 4 was the final proposed change, relating to the introduction of a contribution charge for young learners with an EHCP in Post 16 education where the Council provides support with travel. 60% of respondents disagreed with the proposals. The primary reason for disagreeing with the proposal is the affordability and financial impact of the proposal. Those individuals and families affected are often associated with additional costs which other families may not experience. Feedback also indicated that the financial impact would also have significant impact on a young person’s ability to continue their education with respondents indicating the proposal would create a barrier to education.
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	In the consultation it was explored whether the Council should review the support provided to families living in 'split villages', which is discretionary support currently being offered, and if the Council was to make changes to this support what would the impact be. Feedback from the consultation indicated that 43% believed there would be a negative impact on the community if this support was reduced. If this support was withdrawn completely then 55% of responses indicated this would have a negative impact. The consultation also explored the existing discretionary support available through the selling of spare seats. Feedback indicated that if the Council considered to reduce the service in the future, then 65% felt this would have a negative impact. If the Council was to explore increasing the contribution paid to access a spare seat, then 53% indicated this would have a negative impact. The Consultation feedback supports the proposed changes to both policies.
Alternatives considered / rejected Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.	Consideration was given to implement the proposal included in the public consultation in relation to the introduction of a contribution charge for Post 16 pupils accessing support with travel to their place of education. After review of the feedback, the potential mitigations, and benefits available to the Council it was decided introduction of a contribution charge at this time was not necessary and should be delayed pending a further review and development of key mitigation to ensure access to education is maintained for those it is necessary to support. Implementing this proposal would have been a significant change to the Council existing policy, by not implementing the proposal there is no change to existing service/support available.

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA
Disability	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA
Gender Reassignment	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA
Marriage & Civil Partnership	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA
Pregnancy & Maternity	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA
Race	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA
Sex	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA
Sexual Orientation	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA
Religion or Belief	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Rural communities	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA
Armed Forces	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA
Carers	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA
Areas of deprivation	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Wider Impacts

Additional Wider Impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Staff	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA
Other Council Services	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA
Providers	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA
Social Value ¹	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA

¹ If the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies to this proposal, please summarise here how you have considered how the contract might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area

Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Review Date	30 April 2025
Person Responsible for Review	Stephen Good
Authorised By	