

Full Equality Assessment (EA)

**Home to School Transport
Application of Policy to Current Users
July 2013**

Name of policy, strategy or function: Home to School Transport	Ref: CYPF0713HO
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Directorate: Children, Young People & Families	Assessment Date: July 2013

Is this a:	Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Strategy <input type="checkbox"/>	Function <input type="checkbox"/>	Service <input type="checkbox"/>
Is this:	New or Proposed <input type="checkbox"/>	Already exists and is being reviewed <input type="checkbox"/>	Is Changing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

FULL EQUALITY ASSESSMENT– STAGE 2

Step 1– Scoping the Equality Assessment

The Education Act 1996 (Section 508B) placed a duty on Local Authorities to make travel arrangements for eligible children in their area. Section 508A of the Act (inserted by the Education and Inspections Act 2006) placed a general duty on local authorities to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport.

The Department for Education (DfE) SEN Code of Practice (Paragraph 8.87) also recommends that Local Authorities have a clear and transparent policy to address the transport needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities. Revised Guidance on home to school travel and transport was published in March 2013 by the Department for Education – this replaced the previous guidance. Birmingham’s current Home to School Transport Policies were approved by Cabinet on the 7th January 2012 to be applied to children or young people starting school or 16+ provision. At that meeting Cabinet approved a consultation as described below.

(iv) approved a public consultation on, but not limited to, the proposal to apply these policies to current users of the Home to School transport service, to allow for implementation of any decision for the academic year commencing September 2013.

This would introduce the following changes for current users -

1. Adopting the statutory minimum distances for school travel (2 miles up to 8 years of age and 3 miles above 8 years old).
2. Ending travel support for pupils attending faith schools.
3. Requires contributions for pupils aged over 16 receiving specialist transport.

Any change to services resulting from 1 or 3 will be preceded by an assessment of transport needs. The Council considers assistance with public transport costs for children who attend the nearest available school and the distance between home address and school is over the walking distance for their age that is stated in the policy. The impact for current users arises from the difference in the policy before January 1st and that agreed on the 1st of January for new starters from September 2013.

Table 1: Policy Comparison.

Home to School Transport Policy (1989)	Home to School Transport Policy (January 2013)
Walking Distances (Birmingham) Up to 8 years is 1 mile	Statutory Walking Distances Up to 8 years is 2 miles
Between 8-11 1.5 miles	8 years and Over 3miles
Over 11 3miles	

Below these distances the responsibility for the journey to school rests with the parent/s unless the pupil is eligible as a result of other circumstances. The walking distance is measured along a route that a child might reasonably be expected to walk to school accompanied where necessary by their parent/s

Assistance is not considered where a parent/s selects a school which is not the nearest to home with the exception of pupils from low income families who meet the criteria below.

The proposal is to introduce the statutory walking distances when determining the continued eligibility for transport assistance of the pupils receiving the service.

Pupils attending Faith Schools

If a pupil attends a faith school and the school confirms that the pupil is attending to fulfil religious beliefs then the distance taken into account is that to the nearest equivalent faith school.

The pupil is provided with assistance if they are attending a faith school, which is more than the qualifying distance because a place could not be offered at a similar faith school, which was within that distance.

The proposal is to withdraw support from pupils attending faith schools as a result of the qualifying distance criteria – the position regarding pupils from low income families attending faith schools is unaltered.

Low Income Families

Additional support is available to children from families who are entitled to free school meals or are in receipt of the maximum level of working tax credit.

Children aged 8 but under 11 from low income families may be eligible for free travel assistance where they are attending the nearest qualifying school to home provided it is more than 2 miles from their home.

Children aged between 11 and 16 from low income families may be eligible for free travel assistance if they are attending one of the three nearest qualifying schools provided it is more than 2 miles but not more than 6 miles from the home address. This distance is extended to 15 miles if the parent/s have selected the nearest qualifying school based on their religion or belief.

The provision of this support is unchanged – as discussed later it may be that pupils in receipt of transport might qualify as ‘eligible children’ under more than one element of the policy.

Home to School Transport: Population Served.

Around 4,000 pupils receive support travelling between home and school on over 800 routes. The transport element is delivered through contracted vehicles. On those routes that are escorted this is provided by Pupil Guides, 543 permanent employees of the Council. In addition approximately 2,700 pupils receive bus passes administered through the Home to School Transport Team.

Table 2 contains the result of a sampling exercise of those pupils receiving transport – this includes those pupils receiving the service within “traditional” contracts. For those establishments where a traditional service would not meet their needs for example where pupils routinely attend for sessions rather than whole days – other arrangements are in place that prevented inclusion in the sample (arrangements are devolved to schools).

For the purpose of this exercise the profile of the sample which represents 81% of the total was increased proportionately to the total receiving transport.

Table 2: School Transport Population: Need Categories

Need	Sample	Pop
Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulty	428	655
Hearing Impairment	154	236
Moderate Learning Difficulty	696	1065
Multi-Sensory Impairment	1	2
Other	41	63
Physical Disability	663	1015
Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulty	7	11
Severe Learning Difficulty	209	320
Specific Learning Difficulty	40	61
Speech, Language and Communication Needs	267	409
Visual Impairment	104	159
Multiple need / Unknown	638	
Grand Total	3248	3995

The 2,577 bus passes are distributed between pupils that receive support to attend faith schools ((981), pupils from low income families (393) and pupils who qualify as a result from the distance from school (1,183). It is recognised that some pupils might meet more than one of the criteria to qualify for transport support.

1. What data, research and other evidence or information is available which will be relevant to this Equality Assessment? Please tick all that apply			
Service Targets	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Performance Targets	<input type="checkbox"/>
User Satisfaction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Press Coverage	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workforce Monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Intelligence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Complaints & Comments	<input type="checkbox"/>	Information from Trade Unions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Service Take-up	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Census Data	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Previous Equality Impact Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Staff Survey	<input type="checkbox"/>

School Census information 2005-2012
 JSNA disabilities
 Parents Views Count Case Studies
 Consultation meetings with workforce.

Please provide details on how you have used the available evidence/information you have selected as part of your Assessment?

Pupils receiving the Home to School Transport service are not subject of a rigorous assessment of their mobility or need for transport support, this combined with local variation in the application of the policies has contributed to a lack of demographic data in relation to the specific service population. The great majority of those receiving a transport service have an SEN statement as a result the characteristics of the SEN population are used as a proxy for the population receiving the service.

The SEND population is increasing in number and complexity of need, this coupled with diminishing public resources means that current ways of working and utilising assets need to change in order to maintain a service to the most in need. Data from the School Census 2012, informs us that there are 42259 children aged 2-18yrs with some form of additional need or disability – this is around 22% of the school population and 15% of the city’s overall child population. Of these, 86% (36,270) are on School Action and School Action Plus and 14% (5989) had SEN statements.

Of the total number (5989) of children with SEN Statements, 55% (3295) were placed in special schools and 44% (2653) were in mainstream primary and secondary schools. A small number of children (1%) with statements were in nursery provision or in Pupil Referral Units.

2012	S.Action	SA Plus	SEN statement	Total	% of total SEN pop
Mainstream Nursery	188	136	16	340	1%
Mainstream Primary	13220	7626	1303	22149	53%
Mainstream Secondary	8873	5525	1350	15748	37%
PRUs	2	390	25	417	1%
Special Schools		310	3295	3605	8%
Total	22283	13987	5989	42259	100%

91% of all children with SEN are in mainstream provision and 8% in special schools. 1% are educated in Pupil Referral Units.

The pattern of placements has changed significantly since 2005. There has been a decline in the numbers of children with SEN Statements placed in mainstream school -4.5% per annum in children with SEN statements being placed in mainstream primary and -2.3% per annum being placed in mainstream secondary. The number of children placed in special schools has seen an 11% increase since 2005. The figures appear to demonstrate the current pressures experienced by mainstream and special schools. Special schools have self-reported that they are 97% full to capacity while mainstream schools report that the needs of some children are too complex or challenging for mainstream environments.

This has resulted in increased volumes of and demand for the specialised transport provided through this Home to School Transport policy.

SEN statements by placement	primary	secondary	special
2005	1967	1668	2971
2008	1471	1612	2890
2011	1259	1376	3015

2012	1303	1350	3295
% change 2005-2012	-34%	-19%	11%
yearly average	-4.25%	-2.3%	1.3%

This shows that the biggest cohort of children are those with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD), Behavioural Emotional and Social Disorder (BESD), Autism (ASD) and Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN), Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD), Severe Learning Disabilities (SLD).

- MLD - 95% of whom are in mainstream provision and the remainder in special schools
- BESD – 71% of whom are in mainstream, 11% in PRUs and 18% in special schools
- ASD – 58% in mainstream and 42% in special schools
- SLCN – 92% in mainstream and 8% in special schools
- PMLD – 88% of whom are in special schools and 12% in mainstream
- SLD – 83% of whom are in special schools

This has similarities with the outline of the HTS pupil profile illustrated in Table 2 in that MLD represent a significant proportion of the service population.

	ASD	BESD	HI	MLD	MSI	OTH	PD	PMLD	SLCN	SLD	SPLD	VI	Total	School Action Plus	SEN statements
2005	1081	2341	371	6663	16	935	797	115	1790	693	1180	243	16225	9619	6606
2012	2189	3507	480	7487	31	834	716	322	2540	680	895	295	19976	13987	5989
% change	102%	50%	29%	12%	94%	-11%	-10%	180%	42%	-2%	-24%	21%	23%	45%	-9%
yearly average	13%	6%	4%	2%	12%	-1%	-1%	23%	5%	0%	-3%	3%	3%	6%	-1%

Primary needs as identified on SEN statements have changed significantly over the last 8 years (2005-2012 inclusive) as the following graphs show by primary disability and age. The number of children with ASD and PMLD has increased two-fold or three-fold in some cases, while the numbers of children with MLD has gone down. The reasons for the parallel shift from MLD to ASD has been noted nationally and has been attributed to improvements in the identification and diagnosis of Autism and therefore more specific coding rather than the use of MLD.

The data shows that over two thirds of children with PMLD are under the age of 10. Given advances in technology and access to improved healthcare, children with PMLD are living longer and require more intensive support as they get older. There is an urgent need to plan and forecast need for this cohort as they come through the system. This group are likely to have Single Education, Health and Care plans and could opt for a personal budget. Joint working and joint commissioning with health and other partners will need to be in place if we are to exploit opportunities for improving services to this group of vulnerable children.

The Personal Transport Budget pilot is progressing with offers of a personal transport budget being made to interested parents.

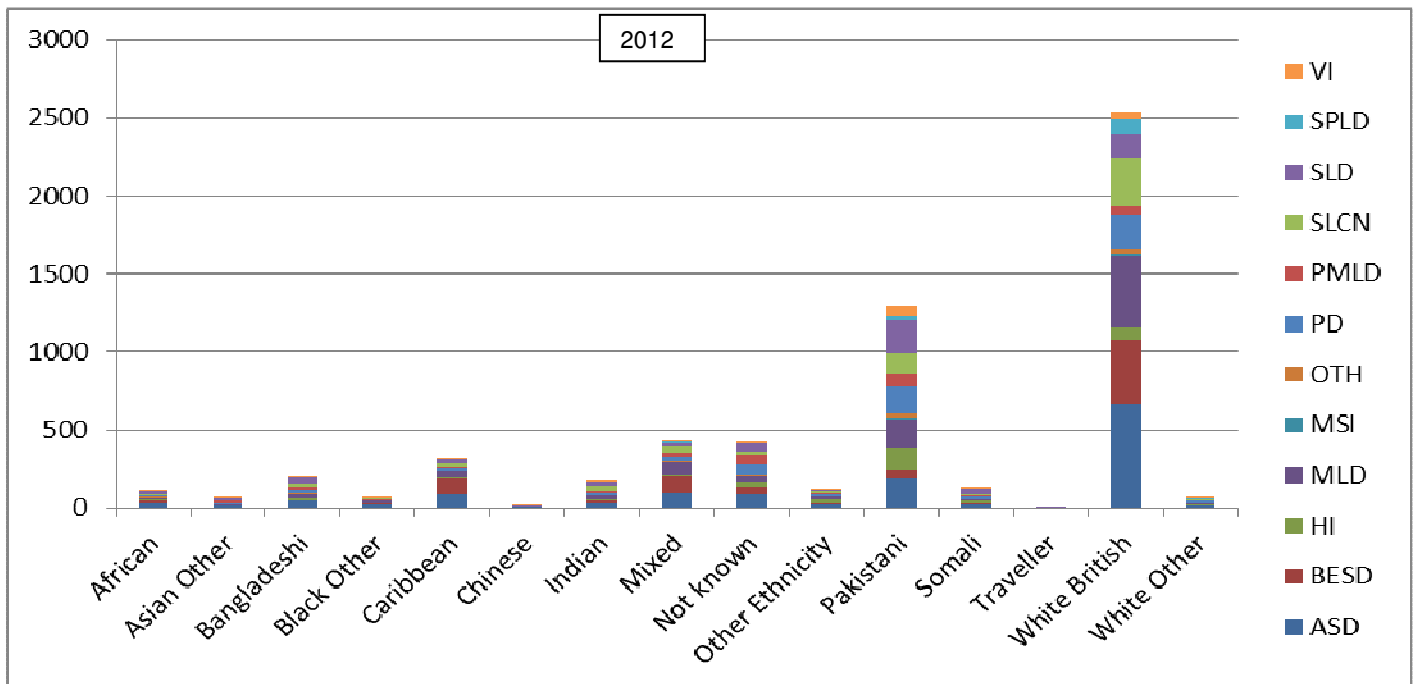
There are twice as many boys than girls with SEND – this is not unique and is a common trend across the country. On average across the last 8 years the split has been around 33% girls and 67% boys. However there is wider variance in relation to specific disabilities such as ASD which affects 82% of boys and 18% of girls and BESD which affects 76% of boys and 24% of girls. There are no gender distinctions for disabilities such a PMLD, PD and sensory impairments such as HI and VI.

Gender and primary disability (School Action Plus and SEN statements)

2012	ASD	BESD	HI	MLD	MSI	OTH	PD	PMLD	SLCN	SLD	SPLD	VI	Total
Female	402	828	229	2658	13	327	314	158	781	251	284	144	6389
Male	1787	2679	251	4829	18	507	402	164	1759	429	611	151	13587
Total	2189	3507	480	7487	31	834	716	322	2540	680	895	295	19976
% Female	18%	24%	48%	36%	42%	39%	44%	49%	31%	37%	32%	49%	32%
% Males	82%	76%	52%	64%	58%	61%	56%	51%	69%	63%	68%	51%	68%

There is a higher proportion of disabled children from the White and Pakistani communities and this is reflective of these groups having a larger presence in the children's population overall. The charts below provide an overview of the spread of disability across different ethnic groups.

Ethnicity and Disability – primary need identified on SEN statements



The major change in distribution of disability in relation to ethnicity between 2005 and 2012 has been the decline in the proportion of pupils that are described as White British (3,698 to 2,537) – a reduction of 31% over the period. This is coincident with a growth in the number of pupils whose ethnicity is unknown or withheld rising from 75 to 423. The second largest ethnicity of pupils with a statement is Pakistani – which has risen minimally from 1296 to 1301. Somali pupils have increased in number from 52 to 123 and African pupils from 52 to 112. The numbers of pupils with a Caribbean or Indian ethnicity have declined.

There are common trends within the ethnic groups of a rise in Autism and BESD being accompanied by a reduction in MLD and the reduction in Physical Disability being accompanied by a rise in PMLD – this is evident in the Bangladeshi, Black Other, Indian, Pakistani and White British populations. The Somali population has a number of pupils with MLD that remains unaltered whilst the population has increased and the number of pupils with Autism has grown.

The distribution of SEN classification within the ethnic groups is relatively consistent – as are the trends over time – the small numbers within some ethnic groups creates large changes in proportion but involve small numbers of pupils.

The children's population is forecast to increase by 10% by 2021 and a proportionate increase is expected with regards to children with SEND. The Green Paper will ensure all young people with SEND have equal opportunities to achieve the outcomes that we want for all Birmingham Young People and that they receive timely and appropriate support regardless of the setting that they are in, their level of need or whether they have an SEN statement or not.

By 2021, initial estimates are that there could be 5,000 more children with SEN than in 2011

- Approx. 2,500 on School Action,
- Approx. 1,500 on School Action Plus
- Approx. 800 – 1,000 with SEN Statements

At current rates of service delivery this could equate to an increase in demand for specialist support of 540 pupils.

Modelling and Impact

Pupils Attending Faith Schools

There were 988 pupils receiving travel passes under the Council policy of supporting transport to faith schools and 53 receive specialised transport. The impact of removing support for transport to faith schools would therefore be on the pupils that receive passes and so affect 988 pupils when fully implemented.

Post 16 Pupils.

There were 180 pupils receiving travel passes and 498 receiving specialist transport. The proposal to introduce charges would affect all 498 pupils receiving post 16 transport in that the pupil or their carer would make a contribution to the cost of the service.

Implementing Statutory Distances

The introduction of the statutory qualifying distances will require the re-assessment of pupils using public and specialised transport services. At present the following pupils live between the current Birmingham distances and the national statutory minima. The figures in brackets are an estimate of the number after those children attending schools where pupils in general have the most significant impaired mobility.

Children receiving transport.

Under 8 years	160 (35)
Between 8 to 11 years	246 (78)
Over 11	645 (423)

The children identified as no longer eligible for a service would have to be subject of an individual assessment in order to determine eligibility for transport.

Children receiving bus passes.

Under 8's	40
Between 8 to 11 years	74
Over 11	336

The children identified as no longer eligible for service above would have to be subject of an individual assessment.

Applying the assumptions outlined above the impact would be on up to 536 pupils on transport and 450 pupils receiving bus passes – but an individual assessment would be required to assess eligibility.

2. Have you identified any gaps in relation to the above question? Yes No
If 'Yes' please detail including what additional research or data is required to fill these gaps? Have you considered commissioning new data or research?

If 'No' proceed to Step 2.

The previous Home to School Transport consultation identified the extent to which the service underpinned parental choice, family life and parental employment. In mitigation of this impact as part of the previous consultation the Council gave an assurance that the new policy would only apply to new starters. This was confirmed in the decision of Cabinet in that it -

(iii) approved the implementation of both policies from 1st January 2013 for children or young people starting school or post 16 education, on or after September 2013;

This assurance was given between phase 1 and phase 2 of the consultation and as a result the impact on current users and of change at short notice explored as much as it might have been.

Step 2 – Involvement and Consultation

Please use the table below to outline any previous involvement or consultation with the **appropriate** target groups of people who are most likely to be affected or interested with this policy, strategy, function or service. (See Appendix 2 - for details on each target group)

Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey

The service conducts an annual customer survey – in 2011 1150 questionnaires were distributed of which 316 were returned. There was a high level of satisfaction with the service – in particular 98% of both drivers and guides were described as helpful and polite, 96% of the vehicles were described as clean or very clean.

Issues identified by the survey included 82% of transport arrived on time at the home address and 83% returned on time. Exploration identified that this variation is to be expected given that most of the transport is provided in multi passenger routes with drop off addresses and that parental expectation is for a specific window for collection and delivery. The service is piloting the use of routing software and different types of routing model with the aim of reducing travel time, increasing efficiency and reliability.

Overall and across all of the questions 49% of responses were excellent, 26.5% were very good, 12% Good, 5% Satisfactory and 0.5% Poor. This response is typical of those in recent years.

Consultation

The first phase of the consultation that began in November 2011 was completed and reported back to parents in March 2012. It informed the development of the policies considered and agreed by Cabinet in January 2013 and preceded the assurance given regarding the application to new starters.

5709 surveys were distributed to parents/ carers (278 responses); 3 public meetings for parents and carers were held (80 participants); 8 sessions were run in schools with pupils (45 young people); the Young Disabled Champions group discussed school travel, and work was done with advocates in children's homes to gather views on home to school transport and elicit ideas for how the service could operate differently to save money whilst retaining its most valued functions. The survey identified a high level of dependence on the service for support to family life. The most common needs met were allowing parents/carers to take other children to different schools, to allow parents/carers to work and to take children the often long distances to a school that could cater for their child's needs, particularly for those without their own transport. Many families described difficulties and pressures of balancing the needs of a disabled or SEN child with the needs of other children, and that knowing their child could get to school safely was very important and one less worry.

The second phase of the consultation repeated key messages in relation to the dependence on the service and identified that as a result parents felt that retrospective application of the policy was unfair. Despite the assurance parents responding on balance felt that the policies (Home to School Transport and that for Young People of Sixth- Form Age) were unfair, that asking for a contribution was unfair and prejudiced a child's life chances and that eligibility criteria did not reflect the pressure on family life.

The attendees at the consultation events and the responses to the survey were largely the parents of disabled children – although not entirely. Parents receiving support to attend faith schools identified that this promoted diversity in the city, supported their family focussing on financial support where there was more than one child attending a faith school within the family. An issue of the European Convention of Human Rights was raised – but this was addressed through specific reference to the guidance.

Budget Consultation.

The Council ran a consultation exercise on savings proposals from the 6th of December to the 6th of January – one of the proposals was a saving of £1M from the Home to School Transport service. The saving would be achieved by a range of measures including the consultation described in the Cabinet Report of the 7th of January. The response to the consultation was reported as follows in the summative report published on the 14th of February 2013. There were 449 respondents with the a balance of opinion of 40% in favour of the proposal (those against the proposal represented 60% of those in favour of it).

A significant majority of on-line respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this proposal, although concern was reflected in written submissions particularly from schools. To quote: "It is imperative that before any proposed changes to a child's transport assistance each child's complexity of needs are comprehensively assessed when making transport assistance assessments."

Consultation Following Cabinet on the 7th January 2013.

In order to explore the potential of the wider consultation referred to in the Cabinet decision a number of stakeholders were consulted. These included -

Service Birmingham - A wide discussion focussed down on the delivery of a more effective routing system. This is being progressed through the gateway process.

Corporate Procurement Services – The Home to School Transport service has taken a key role in the revision of the Corporate Transport Framework to include a unified service for hard to fill routes (transport and guides) and greater in contract flexibility to use auctions.

PWC – A short series of meetings explored an integrated transport hub and the acceleration of the Personal Transport Budgets. The option proposed was the instigation of a major project of parental engagement and procurement review. This is being progressed and aligned with the re-letting of the corporate transport framework.

School Transport Expert / Development - A meeting following submission of a review of current activity with a manager with considerable experience of home to school transport in other local authorities. No additional avenues of development were identified.

Adults and Communities – A short series of meetings re the potential of Adults and Communities fleet offering a part of the Home to School Transport Service. This is progressing but will not impact significantly on the service offer.

Supplier Forum – There have been meetings with suppliers regarding potential alternative approaches. There was interest in the provision of the whole service from one provider but no alternative options put forward.

Core Cities and Specialist Conferences – The service attended meetings with the services of Core Cities, other regional providers and national conferences. No new approaches were identified largely because the first consultation was informed by emerging developments. Some small scale partnership work between neighbouring authorities is being progressed.

Smarter Choice Team (Part of Transportation) – The Team have been engaged on an internal SLA to develop individual travel training using models identified by the service operating in the region.

As there was no fundamental service innovation identified the application of the policy for new starters to extant service users is the option put forward.

Parent Consultation

This has comprised of letters and surveys to all service users, a web based survey instrument on the Be Heard database, flyers to schools, two general meetings to which all parents were invited and two meetings with specific parent groups (at the invite of those groups) – there was also a meeting directly with schools to explore issues re home to school transport.

There have been a total of 553 responses from parents to the consultation this exceeds the number of responses to the previous consultation and to the Councils savings proposal (a report outlines the breadth of the response).

Parents were unhappy about the proposal for a variety of reasons relating to the impact of the proposal on them and their child. However they also made reference to the previous consultation and the logic of another consultation and of altering home to school transport whilst there was a consultation on the SEN strategy. Parents felt that they appreciate better than the officers or members the critical nature of transport for family life – with the links to managing the additional demands on the parent of a disabled child(ren), parental employment and siblings being raised. There was less representation from parents of pupils being supported to attend faith schools but those that attended or responded identified the importance of faith to them, their child and the benefits to wider society of religious diversity.

Parents felt that the Council had not understood the impact of the policy agreed on the 7th of January, in that for the majority of pupils there would be re-assessment at the point of transfer to a new school and into sixth form provision. Parents felt that this was significant disruption for those not attending all age schools – at transfer to secondary and to sixth form provision the new policy applied.

Parents wondered if the Council had fully appreciated the cost / benefits of the proposal – and point to an increase in the demand for short breaks and children in care. These were small numbers of parents but there was agreement within the meetings once this was expressed. In relation to sixth form age pupils the cost to the pupil and the wider community of not pursuing education and training would result in increased reliance on the state and therefore increased costs.

Parents considered themselves subject of multiple pressures as the result of the reducing budget and felt that the consultation exercises were largely tick box. The budget consultation in December 2012 was described as being too short and ill defined. Parents of disabled children felt that the approval of the proposal was more likely support for the removal of support to faith schools.

Parents of disabled children already felt that their choice of schools was limited – and that this proposal limited it in that it limited parental choice (there was a feeling that the policy would make decision making more sensitive to travelling costs) and the if transport was removed the options available would be limited by the parents ability to respond.

63% felt the proposal would have a major negative impact on their life.

71% disagreed with the removal of support to faith schools- reasons given were diverse including that the measure was discriminatory and the costs should not be a barrier to attendance at a faith school. Those that agreed felt it was personal choice and parents should pay.

Parents and schools shared a set of common issues that includes –

- The impact on attendance
- The physical capacity of schools to cope with additional demands of pupils travelling independently
- The location of faith schools are such that there is a reliance on the support provided especially where the school arranged its own bus service.

Methodological Issues

There was concern that the questionnaire gave parents the view that pupils with a statement of SEN would not be affected. As the response has exceeded both previous consultations and builds upon a previous consultation for the same policies this has been disregarded.

Target groups	3. Describe what you did, with a brief summary of the responses gained and links to relevant documents, as well as any actions
Age	<p>Age is a feature of the proposed policy change as the Council is required to produce a policy statement in relation to transport for 16 to 18 year olds (including those that start a course before their 19th birthday to the completion of that course). All service users were invited to respond in the current consultation – in contrast to the previous consultation the parents were concerned about costs and did not express a willingness to pay for a transport service. Parents expressed a concern where there was more than one child in a family for whom the family had to make a contribution.</p> <p>The policy includes a two tier charge for parents / families with a low income. A benchmarking exercise included as Appendix 1 was completed to assess the level of charge – it is within the range of other Local authorities in the region.</p> <p>There is an appeals process and this can be used by</p>

families where there is a concern about the level of contribution.

Disability

There was no specific consultation on the different disability groups as the changes in policy affect the service user group and other interested parties. However themes were drawn from the public meetings and the individual responses that related specifically to the 3,995 pupils across the spectrum of special needs. Parents and carers made specific reference to the pressures on the parents of disabled children as outlined above. There were responses suggesting that the resources be focussed on the most disabled pupils and that the concept of a minimum walking distance was inappropriate – given the inability of some mobile pupils to navigate a journey to school. The Policy does focus on the most disabled children and proposes routes to independence for the other included within the policy is the capacity to take exceptional circumstances into account. The comments regarding Public Transport were similar to those expressed previously that had been communicated to Birmingham Safer Travel Partnership.

Gender reassignment

There was no specific consultation on the issue of gender reassignment as the policy includes all pupils in receipt of a service.

Marriage and Civil partnership

There was no specific consultation on the issue of marriage and civil partnership as the policy includes all pupils in receipt of a service.

Pregnancy and maternity

There was no specific consultation on the issue of pregnancy and maternity as the policy includes all pupils in receipt of a service.

Race

There was no specific consultation on the issue of race as the policy covers all disabled children. However section 1 gives detail of the distribution of children across the BME populations. The increased incidence of SEN within specific populations is multi – factorial and the consultation did not raise issues that were specific to particular populations.

Religion and belief

Letters were written to all service users, to all schools including the faith schools and to the relevant diocesan boards. An issue was raised in relation to the ECHR – whether

the removal of the service that supports faith schools is in contravention of it. Concerns were raised regarding the continued viability of school places in the absence of the transport.

Further the removal of support to faith schools was included in the benchmarking exercise. It was noted that for low income families with pupils of secondary age the local authority is under a duty to make arrangements to attend the nearest school preferred on grounds of religion or belief.

Sex

There was no specific consultation on the issue of sex as the policy includes all pupils in receipt of a service. However, service data shows that the majority of service users for specialist transport are boys rather than girls. This is in line with national trends. There is a clear predominance of boys with some disabilities (autism, challenging behaviour) which impacts on their needs. The issue of sex was not raised within the consultation.

Sexual orientation

There was no specific consultation on the issue of sexual orientation as the policy includes all pupils in receipt of a service.

4. Who are the main stakeholders and what are their requirements?

The main stakeholders are

- Children and young people with SEND
- parent/ carers of disabled children
- schools in receipt of the service – special and mainstream

5. Amongst the identified groups in the previous question, what does your information tell you about the potential take-up of resulting services?

The service is well regarded and for some families has become an essential part of their functioning. The policy as outlined introduces the statutory minimum walking distances as part of the decision making process – whilst maintaining the focus on eligible children and young people. It begins the removal of support to faith schools and introduces charges to 16 pluses.

Pupils Attending Faith Schools

There were 988 pupils receiving travel passes under the Council policy of supporting transport to faith schools and 53 receive specialised transport. The impact of removing support for transport to faith schools would therefore be on the pupils that receive passes and so affect 988 pupils when fully implemented.

Post 16 Pupils.

There were 180 pupils receiving travel passes and 498 receiving specialist transport. The proposal to introduce charges would affect all 498 pupils receiving post 16 transport in that the pupil or their carer would make a contribution to the cost of the service.

Implementing Statutory Distances

The introduction of the statutory qualifying distances will require the re-assessment of pupils using public and specialised transport services. At present the following pupils live between the current Birmingham distances and the national statutory minima. The figures in brackets are an estimate of the number after those children attending schools where pupils in general have the most significant impaired mobility.

The impact has been modelled as affecting up to 536 pupils on transport and 450 pupils receiving bus passes – but an individual assessment would be required to assess eligibility.

Step 3 – Assessing Impact and Strengthening the Policy

6. What will be done to improve access to, and take-up of, or understanding of the policy, strategy, function or service?

NB: These are the measures you will take to mitigate against adverse impact.

The impact on service users will be mitigated by –

- The introduction of independent travel training and the encouragement of sustainable methods of transport through the school travel plan training process. This will reduce the need to some degree of specialist transport and so of the number of families impacted by the contributions.

Access will be improved by offering a wider range of options – drawn from best practice and the better understanding of parents and pupils needs. A number of parents used the consultation to express an interest in Personal Transport Budgets and direct payments.

The withdrawal of a specialist transport service will be preceded by a review of the transport needs of the pupil concerned.

The Council is committed to an annual review of the impact of the policies – and this will include the views of parents and young people – to measure performance and identify areas for improvement.

A guidance document for parents explaining the policy and the process for application has been prepared.

An appeals process culminating in consideration by Members is in place.

The strategy included within the SEN Green Paper will have a positive impact on the lives of children and young people with disabilities, helping to promote positive attitudes, inclusive services, fairness and access to support appropriate to needs and localised support, close to home. The priorities in the Green Paper reflect the forthcoming SEN reforms and the Children and Families Bill. As a more localised offer is developed, children with SEN will be at the heart of their communities. The introduction of Personalisation will assist in changing the conversation we have with families and the development of bespoke and tailored packages of support. A focus on early intervention and prevention will assist in providing timely and appropriate support to families to reduce risk and the escalation of need.

Step 4 – Procurement and Partnerships

7. Is this project due to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors?

Yes

No

If 'yes', have you done any work to include equality considerations into the contract already? Specifically you should set out how you will make sure that any partner you work with complies with equality legislation (employment practice/service provision)

This affects the policies applied and leaves the contractual arrangements unchanged.

Step 5 – Making a Decision

8. Summarise your findings and give an overview of whether the policy, strategy, function or service will meet the authority's responsibilities in relation to equality and support the council's strategic outcomes?

The policies applied in relation to Home to School Transport were agreed for new starters on the 7th of January – the policies applied to current users exceed the statutory requirements and the regional average for such provision. As outlined in Section 1 the demand for service is likely to increase within that population of pupils who are eligible. The measures proposed allow the available resources to be focussed on those most in need. Similar changes to transport policy have been made by a number of Authorities – see Home to School Transport Benchmarking.

This has to be balanced by wider considerations re the impact (expressed locally through consultation) and identified in national research. Previously the schedule for implementation i.e. focussing on new users was the most significant mitigation of the impact on family life. As the withdrawal of service to disabled children requires an individual assessment of eligibility the implementation of these measures will necessarily be delayed.

The provision of support to faith schools is limited to bus passes and the provision of support is not a statutory requirement. There is no requirement to provide an alternative school place to parents or pupils – and therefore this aspect of the policy could be introduced from September 2013. It is not possible to identify the impact on wider society although parents using this support are clear the following their faith (largely Roman Catholicism) is important to them and to their children – and that for some families there will be a cumulative impact on siblings.

The policy in relation to pupils from low income family remains unaltered and 98 pupils attending faith schools qualify for the support under low income criteria.

The benefits of the policy are –

- Increased focus on those pupils least able to travel to school.
- A transparent policy and decision making framework.
- A wider range of service options to reflect individual circumstances.
- Increase focus on promoting the independence of young people.

Legal opinion has been sought and confirms that the policies are consistent with the statutory requirements. Cabinet has already accepted that the policies are consistent with the strategic outcomes. Individual assessment of the transport needs of the pupils with statements will ensure that the most vulnerable pupils receive the transport support they require.

Some of the parents concerns regarding the wider impact of these measures would be addressed in part by phasing the introduction of policies – and this is reflected in the proposal as submitted.

Step 6 – Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing

Before finalising your action plan you must identify how you will go about monitoring the policy/function or the proposals, following the assessment, and include any changes or proposals you are making.

9. What structures are in place to monitor and review the impact and effectiveness of the new policy, strategy, function or service?

The annual customer satisfaction survey will continue.
A review of the impact and performance of the policy will take place 12 months after implementation.

Step 7 – Action Plan

Any actions identified as an outcome of going through the Steps 1 – 6, should be mapped against the headings within the Action Plan.

NB: summarise/evidence actions taken to mitigate against adverse impact.

10. Taking into consideration the responses outlined in the Initial Screening Stage and Steps 1-6 of the Full Assessment, complete the action plan below.

	Ref (if appropriate)	Actions	Target date	Responsible post holder and directorates	Monitoring post holder and directorates (if appropriate)
Involvement and Consultation		Consultation with external partners. Consultation with parents	Completed	Chris Glynn CYPFD Kathy McDonough / Karmah Boothe CYPFD	Chris Glynn CYPFD
Data Collection		Business as usual	On going	Kathy McDonough / Marie Healy	Head of SENAD CYPFD
Assessing Impact		Review of implementation	October 2013 March 2014	Kathy McDonough / Marie Healy	Head of SENAD
Procurement and Partnership					
Monitoring, Evaluation and Reviewing		As above			

Step 8 – Sign-Off

The final stage of the Equality Assessment process is to formally sign off the document as being a complete, rigorous and robust assessment

The policy, strategy or function has been fully assessed in relation to its potential effects on equality and all relevant concerns have been addressed.

Chairperson of Equality Assessment Task Group

Name: Chris Glynn	Job Title: Head of Commissioning and Performance	Directorate CYPFD	Sign-off Date: 4/7/13
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Concluding statement:
The consultation reflected concerns of parents facing changes that were in train and proposed – and actions to mitigate have been identified in the document.

It is clear from the demographics and policy analysis that demand will increase – consultation has identified that those most disabled and for whom the Directorate has a responsibility should be the focus and that investment in this part of the service is required. In the current economic climate this can only be achieved by focussing the service on statutory requirements.

The use of assessments allows parent time to make provision for the impact. Pupils from low income families will continue to have support to attend schools preferred on the basis of faith. The most vulnerable pupils with limited mobility will be prioritised and unaffected by changes in the walking distances.

The proposal gives options to Cabinet recognising that the implementation of the policy for new starters will affect current users at the point of transfer to secondary school and into sixth form provision.

Quality Check and Review by the Directorate Contact Officer:

Name: Veronika Quintyne	Directorate Team: CYPF Directorate	Review Date: 11.7.2013
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Summary of strengths and area(s) for improvement:

Consultation has taken place with a diverse range of stakeholders to gauge the potential impact of the policy.

A number of mitigations have been identified within the equality assessment to lessen the potential impact of the change of policy on children, young people, parent/carers and faith schools.

Future consultation to gauge customer satisfaction has been planned in to the action plan for any future review in order to measure the impact of policy change.

The most vulnerable pupils including those with limited mobility will be minimally affected by the change in policy.

This Equality Assessment has synergy with that of the initial equality screening for Pupil Guides Terms and Conditions which may see potential adverse impact sustained by pupils due to potential decrease in the number of Pupil Guides retained in the service within a reducing budget.

Service Director or Senior Officer (sign-off)

Name:

Job Title:

Date
:

Appendix 1

Distribution of Pupils with Statement by Ethnicity 2005/12

Year 05/12	ASD	BESD	HI	MLD	MSI	OTH	PD	PML D	SLCN	SLD	SPLD	VI	Grand Total
									1				1
African	11	8	1	12	0	0	1	2	8	7	1	1	52
African	39	4	10	13	0	0	8	3	10	16	2	5	112
2012 as %2005	255%	-50%	900%	8%			700%	50%	25%	129%	100%	400%	115%
Asian Other	9	0	5	10		0	2	2	5	5	1	4	43
Asian Other	18	3	1	6		1	8	5	4	17	0	2	65
2012 as %2005	100%	300%	-80%	-40%	0%	100%	300%	150%	-20%	240%	-100%	-50%	51%
Bangladeshi	14	3	21	49		7	23	9	27	39	6	7	205
Bangladeshi	44	4	18	26	1	6	16	16	25	44	3	9	212
2012 as %2005	214%	33%	-14%	-47%		-14%	-30%	78%	-7%	13%	-50%	29%	3%
Black Other	12	15	1	18			3	1	13	8	2	1	74
Black Other	28	9		10			3	1	8	8		2	69
2012 as %2005	133%	-40%	-100%	-44%			0%	0%	-38%	0%	-100%	100%	-7%
Caribbean	66	86	10	104		6	22	7	47	29	12	2	391
Caribbean	88	100	11	32	1	6	14	8	27	21	4	9	321
2012 as %2005	33%	16%	10%	-69%		0%	-36%	14%	-43%	-28%	-67%	350%	-18%
Chinese	9		1	1					2	2		1	16
Chinese	12					1		1	1	1		1	17
2012 as %2005	33%								-50%	-50%		0%	6%
Indian	27	5	10	73		2	32	7	38	25	7	9	235
Indian	38	7	11	24	1	2	15	11	32	22	4	12	179
2012 as %2005	41%	40%	10%	-67%		0%	-53%	57%	-16%	-12%	-43%	33%	-24%
Mixed	57	95	12	88	1	8	41	9	39	17	15	8	390

Mixed	99	113	7	77	1	4	32	21	42	21	7	12	436
2012 as %2005	74%	19%	-42%	-13%	0%	-50%	-22%	133%	8%	24%	-53%	50%	12%
Not known	7	14	1	32		1	9		6	3		2	75
Not known	89	46	32	45	1	7	56	64	25	46	8	4	423
2012 as %2005	1171%	229%	3100%	41%		600%	522%		317%	1433%		100%	464%
Other Ethnicity	14	1	6	17		3	13	1	3	10	2	8	78
Other Ethnicity	32	5	16	17		4	15	8	6	12	1	9	125
2012 as %2005	129%	400%	167%	0%		33%	15%	700%	100%	20%	-50%	13%	60%
Pakistani	97	50	116	365	5	25	167	37	134	201	37	62	1296
Pakistani	196	49	141	188	6	21	174	88	131	210	27	70	1301
2012 as %2005	102%	-2%	22%	-48%	20%	-16%	4%	138%	-2%	4%	-27%	13%	0%
Somali	7	1	6	5			4	2	5	20		2	52
Somali	28	9	6	12		1	15	10	9	30	2	1	123
2012 as %2005	300%	800%	0%	140%			275%	400%	80%	50%		-50%	137%
White British	577	512	101	1116	1	87	331	34	424	260	185	70	3698
White British	667	413	78	457	8	40	211	65	297	168	91	42	2537
2012 as %2005	16%	-19%	-23%	-59%	700%	-54%	-36%	91%	-30%	-35%	-51%	-40%	-31%