

EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

Post 16 Transport Policy Statement including Post 19

Responsible Officer

Craig Chapman - CY EPA

Type of Activity**Service Change**

No

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

No

Commissioning/Procurement

No

Strategy/Policy

Strategy/Policy

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility**Directorate**

Children Young People and Education

Responsible Service

Fair Access

Responsible Head of Service

Craig Chapman - CY EPA

Responsible Director

Christine McInnes - CY EPA

Aims and Objectives

To develop a Post 16 Transport policy for Kent County Council that enables access to education for Kent learners. To assist Kent's young adults in accessing their education in schools, colleges and through apprenticeships or work-based training provision.

Kent County Council (KCC) has provided students with the opportunity to apply for a Kent 16+ Travel Saver Card which is subsidised by the Council and can be purchased through their learning provider. The Kent 16+ Travel Saver Card gives unlimited access to the public bus network and learning providers can choose to further subsidise this charge to their students or trainees if they wish in cases of financial hardship.

With the participation age continuing to 18, the Kent 16+ Travel Saver Card widens the opportunity for Kent's young adults to access the education provision of their choice at a subsidised cost. This may be at schools, academies, colleges or in the workplace through an apprenticeship or other work-based training provision.

Support for accessing education is not prescribed and Kent use the Kent 16+ Travel Saver Card to meet its duty to enable users access to education.

Where learners can demonstrate that the 16+ Travel Saver Card does not enable access to education, learners can appeal to the Local Authority with a view to accessing alternative assistance.

KCC will also aim to improve the independence of learners with Special Educational Needs or

Disabilities (SEND), by providing travel training to students who will then be able to access public transport with the use of the Kent 16+ Travel Saver Card.

Increased demand for Post 16 transport is creating significant budget pressures even with changes to practice and improving utilisation of transport resources. The increase in EHCP population, as well as a lack of dedicated government funding for this area of duty mean demand and cost is expected to continue to increase.

The Council currently provides over and above the statutory transport requirement and therefore the purpose of this project is to review current practice and implement changes in line with the resource available, while also ensuring statutory duties are met.

The objective of the project is to review and update the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement leading to changes in delivery.

The review will have a particular focus on the three areas listed below:

- Removal of discretionary provision of wholly free SEND Post 16 Transport with an introduction of a mandatory contribution consistent with the subsidies applied to the Kent 16+ Travel Saver paid by mainstream learners, with increased subsidises for low income learners
- Removal of discretionary provision of additional collection and drop off times for Post 16 learners throughout the academic day
- Introduction of qualifying criteria for learners seeking support for new education courses initiated after their 19th birthday

The drivers underpinning the work include:

Need - Kent has seen over an 80% increase in the number of children aged 16 and above with an EHCP since 2018. The provision of transport for this group is inevitably more complex. Based on this, we need to ensure that our policy and transport services are both appropriate to meet the specific travel needs of the learners and is sustainable to meet predicted levels of need in the future.

Financial Sustainability - The government does not provide any dedicated funding for this area of the duty. Even with improvements to how we use the transport resources available to us, the cost for transport continues to exceed the planned budget. This is due to increasing demand and pressures against the current policy provision.

KCC remains one of the last Councils to offer a discretionary Post 16 travel policy, over and above what is required by law. While we have fought to continue this position for a number of years, it cannot be maintained at the expense of fulfilling our statutory duties to all learners.

We are proposing changes to ensure that available resources are targeted to those pupils with the highest need and entitlement, while also ensuring statutory duties are met.

Promoting Independence - Young people need to be adequately prepared for adulthood by encouraging and enabling them to access education, as well as developing their independence. The proposed policy ensures that transport remains available to all pupils that require direct support, but in a way that mirrors the growing responsibility that all students will experience with age.

Parity – The proposed changes will look to align the Post 16 offer to ensure it is more similarly applied to both SEND and mainstream learners. Consideration will still be given to each learner's individual need and reasonable adjustments made, including for families or learners from low-income backgrounds.

Section B – Evidence

Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?

Yes

It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?

Yes

Is there national evidence/data that you can use?

Yes

Have you consulted with stakeholders?

Yes

Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

This Equality Impact Assessment is being developed using historic annual consultations, but is intended to be further refined via public consultation planned for January 2023

Stakeholders include:

- Parents and guardians of mainstream and SEND pupils
- Pupils
- Schools and further education providers, including governing bodies
- Bus Operators
- District and Borough Councils
- Parish and Town Councils
- Kent PACT
- Parent carer forums
- Information, Advice and Support Kent (IASK)

Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?

Yes

Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?

Yes

Section C – Impact

Who may be impacted by the activity?

Service Users/clients

Service users/clients

Staff

No

Residents/Communities/Citizens

Residents/communities/citizens

Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?

Yes

Details of Positive Impacts

The policy ensures:

- Provision of support for all Post 16 pupils and offers a range of options to allow continued access to education or training
- Changes would make sure that support can be targeted to those with the highest need
- Independent Travel Training supports young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to engage in activities which support outcomes associated with growing independence.

The Council recognises that Independent Travel Training has the following immediate benefits for the student:

- Enables the students to be more independent and use his or her own initiative
- Improves self-confidence

- Enables students to access positive social, educational and professional development activities
- Reduces the student's reliance on family, friends and professionals and builds resilience.
- Helps to improve social skills and maintain relationships
- Can have physical health benefits where the student walks all or part of the way.

To prepare children for adulthood it is expected that where appropriate, the majority of young people beyond the age of 16 will travel independently to their place of education.

Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions

19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age

Are there negative impacts for age?

Yes

Details of negative impacts for Age

In bringing KCC's Post 16 transport offer in line with statutory duties, pupils would receive less support than they currently enjoy. In particular, pupils aged 19 who started their course after their 19th birthday would no longer be treated in the same way as pupils aged 16-19, with potentially fewer qualifying for support.

This mirrors the current experience of mainstream pupils, who transition from free school transport legislation at 16 and are expected to provide a contribution towards transport to access their place of learning. No support is provided under legislation for mainstream pupils still in education after their 19th birthday.

Mitigating Actions for Age

A phased introduction for the changes, so that current pupils are not impacted until their next transport assessment.

A Communications Plan will ensure parents/carers and learners understand the changes and are therefore able to plan accordingly.

The financial contribution to Post 16 students with SEND is still less than the average cost of transport for these students.

Exceptional circumstances based on extreme financial hardship can still be considered via appeal.

Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age

Craig Chapman

20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability

Are there negative impacts for Disability?

Yes

Details of Negative Impacts for Disability

Proposed policy change would have a negative financial impact on this cohort who have previously been afforded free school transport arrangements where they meet the necessary threshold for support.

As wholly free transport has only been provided to SEND Post 16, this impact would only be felt by this cohort.

Mitigating actions for Disability

KCC is consulting with families a year before changes will come into effect, to ensure they can be considered when education decisions are made.

A phased introduction for the changes, so that current pupils are not impacted until their next transport assessment.

Provision of instalments to allow overall costs to be spread throughout the academic year.

Provision of reduced charges for low income families.

A Communications Plan would ensure parents/carers and learners understand the changes and are therefore able to plan accordingly.

The financial contribution to Post 16 students with SEND is still less than the average cost of transport for these students and when considered against mainstream costs.

Exceptional circumstances based on extreme financial hardship can still be considered via appeal.

Responsible Officer for Disability

Craig Chapman

21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex

Are there negative impacts for Sex

No. Note: If Question 21a is "No", Questions 21b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval

Details of negative impacts for Sex

Not Completed

Mitigating actions for Sex

Not Completed

Responsible Officer for Sex

Not Completed

22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender

Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender

No. Note: If Question 22a is "No", Questions 22b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval

Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender

Not Completed

Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender

Not Completed

Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender

Not Completed

23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race

Are there negative impacts for Race

No. Note: If Question 23a is "No", Questions 23b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval

Negative impacts for Race

Not Completed

Mitigating actions for Race

Not Completed

Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race

Not Completed

24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief

Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief

No. Note: If Question 24a is "No", Questions 24b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval

Negative impacts for Religion and belief

Not Completed

Mitigating actions for Religion and belief

Not Completed

Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief

Not Completed

25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation

Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation

No. Note: If Question 25a is "No", Questions 25b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Completed
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Completed
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Completed
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
No. Note: If Question 26a is "No", Questions 26b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Completed
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Completed
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Not Completed
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
No. Note: If Question 27a is "No", Questions 27b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Completed
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Completed
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Completed
28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
No. Note: If Question 28a is "No", Questions 28b,c,d will state "Not Applicable" when submission goes for approval
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Not Completed
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Not Completed
Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities
Not Completed