

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