

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

Education Services Proposed Change to Home to School Transport Policy

Before completing this document please refer to our Guide to Equality Impact Assessments.

Service / policy / strategy / practice / plan being assessed	Home to School Transport Policy
Business Unit / Service Area	Education Services/Communities
Is this a new or existing service / policy / strategy / practice / plan? <i>If an existing service / policy / strategy / practice / plan please state date of last assessment</i>	Existing policy Last review January 2018
EIA Review team – list of members	
Do any other Business Units / Service Areas need to be included?	
Date of assessment	19/05/2020
Are any of the outcomes from this assessment likely to result in complaints from existing services users, members of the public and / or employees? <i>If yes please let your Assistant Director and the Customer Relations Team know as soon as possible</i>	No

Details of service / policy / strategy / practice / plan

Scoping and Defining	
<p>(1) What are the aims, objectives and outcomes of the service / policy / strategy / practice / plan?</p>	<p>Local Authorities have a legal duty to provide free transport to school to children considered 'eligible' under the Education Act 1996 (as amended). Children are considered 'eligible' if they fall under one of a number of broad categories. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children attending the nearest qualifying school to home where the distance from home to school is over the relevant statutory walking distance; • children unable to walk to school in safety due to the nature of the route; • children unable to walk to school by reason of their SEN, disability, or mobility problem (including temporary medical conditions). <p>A child's 'nearest qualifying school' is the school closest to the child's main home address with spaces available at the time of application for school transport and which provides an education which is suitable for the child's age, ability and aptitude.</p> <p>Warwickshire meets and exceeds all of the statutory requirements regarding eligible children and none of the proposals will interfere with statutory rights to home-to-school transport.</p> <p>The following change is proposed to the Home to School Transport Policy: Definition of Nearest Qualifying School: Currently, pupils attending just their nearest school receive free transport to school provided they are resident in Warwickshire and are travelling over the statutory walking distance.</p> <p>The Council proposes that students receive free transport to either their closest qualifying school with places available, or their priority area school.</p>
<p>(2) Who are the customers?</p>	<p>This would affect all students starting a new school, or moving house/school, on or after the publication of the new policy, who live more than statutory walking distance from their home.</p>

<p>(3) How has equality been considered in the development or review so far?</p>	<p>Decision to progress to consult on the proposed change as a result of considering transport application appeals, and representations from local communities</p>
<p>(4) What is the reason for the change/development?</p>	<p>A number of changes were endorsed by Cabinet in January 2018 including a revision of the definition of ‘the nearest qualifying school’. From 1st September 2019 the definition of “nearest qualifying school” was altered to include only the school closest to the pupil’s home by the shortest route with a pupil place available, in line with statutory requirements. However, it may not be the school in whose priority area the pupil resides (their ‘catchment school’) if there is another school closer to home by the nearest available walking route. Previous criteria encompassed the priority school or the nearest school with places available.</p> <p>Following a review of this change in the definition of nearest qualifying school, it is proposed to change the definition to reintroduce the priority area school. A number of factors contributed to the decision to review and propose a change to the definition of a pupil’s qualifying school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The revision to the definition in January 2018 was part of addressing non-statutory duties, wide priority areas and the removal in some instances of priority areas altogether. Following the review, the County Council recognise that the number of schools removing priority areas remains small and that within the wide, largely rural, priority areas the revision created a divide in transport assistance eligibility within certain localities and villages where the nearest school can differ by marginal distances. • The unalignment from priority areas has created confusion and can prove complex to understand for parents when making a school place application with one priority area school and multiple nearer schools.

<p>(5) How does it fit with Warwickshire County Council's wider objectives?</p>	<p>The authority is committed to ensuring that any changes made to services are undertaken in a way that is cost effective and prioritises need and enables the LA to continue to meet its statutory duty.</p>
<p>(6) Why might it be important to consider equality and the protected characteristics?</p>	<p>The change proposed is designed to ensure that the local authority continues to be in a position to meet its statutory duties in relation to free transport in relation to relevant children and young people, including those with disabilities.</p>
<p>Information Gathering</p>	
<p>(7) What sources of data have you used?</p> <p><i>You must keep a record of any data you have currently used as supporting evidence</i></p>	<p>Information and representations relating to those families affected by the January 2018 decision to change the definition of the nearest qualifying school.</p>
<p>(8) What does the data you have tell you about your customers and about protected equality groups?</p>	<p>Information has limited details relating to protected equality groups</p>
<p>(9) What do you need to know more about?</p>	<p>Further information relating to views from stakeholders with respect to the change to be collected through consultation</p>

(10) How could you find this out and who could help you?	Consultation period
Engagement and Consultation	
(11) Who have you consulted with from protected equality groups?	Public Consultation on proposed change to be carried out over 28 working day period
(12) Who else could you consult with?	Parents, young people schools, Members, and any other interested stakeholders and parties will be able to comment.
(13) Who can help you to do this?	Warwickshire consultation platform, partners, and social media presence
Monitor and Evaluate	
(14) How will you monitor and evaluate the service / policy / strategy / practice / plan?	Consideration would then be given to the consultation responses before the authority considers whether the proposals should be amended and then what, if any, proposals should be implemented.

Please note: Further information and advice about the corporate consultation process can be found [here](#).

(15) Analysis of impact and potential actions:				
Protected characteristics from the Equality Act 2010	What do you know? Summary of data about/feedback from your service-users and/or staff	What does this mean?		What can you do? All potential actions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Eliminate discrimination/mitigate negative impact ● Advance equality of opportunity ● Foster good relations
		Positive impacts identified (actual and potential)	Negative impacts identified (actual and potential)	
Age	None identified – subject to public consultation			
Disability	None identified – subject to public consultation			
Sex	None identified – subject to public consultation			
Race	None identified – subject to public consultation			

Religion or belief	None identified – subject to public consultation			
Gender Reassignment	None identified – subject to public consultation			
Pregnancy and Maternity	None identified – subject to public consultation			
Sexual orientation	None identified – subject to public consultation			
Marriage and Civil Partnership (Note: only in relation to due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination)	None identified – subject to public consultation			

(16) Outcomes of Equality Impact Assessment

Action	Timescale	Responsibility
Public consultation – assess feedback before progression to Cabinet approval	June/July	

Date of Next Review	August/September - If proposed change progressed to Cabinet September 2020
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Name and signature of Officer completing the EIA	Emma Basden-Smith
Name and signature of Assistant Director	Ian Budd
Name and signature of Directorate EDI Representative	Barnaby Briggs

If you would like any support or advice on completing this document, please contact the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team on 01926 412370 or equalities@warwickshire.gov.uk

NEXT STEP ONCE COMPLETED:

Once signed off, ensure the completed EIA is saved in a secure place alongside all supporting documentation.