

Addressing Inequalities

Equalities Impact Assessment Interim Template – Nov
2010

Surrey County Council Equality Impact Assessment Template

Stage one – initial screening

What is being assessed?	Home to School/College transport policies
Service	Admissions and Transport
Name of assessor/s	Claire Potier
Head of service	Peter-John Wilkinson
Date	20 April 2011
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	Existing policy under review

Write a brief description of your service, policy or function. It is important to focus on the service or policy the project aims to review or improve.

The policy changes being considered under this EIA relate to the processes and criteria for home to school/college transport. Changes are as follows:

- Withdrawal of free denominational transport other than where a pupil is statutorily entitled
- Increase to the fare for a concessionary seat, cessation of discounts for siblings and younger children and requirement to purchase a seat on a half termly basis.
- Amendment to the criteria for Post-16 transport following the withdrawal of the EMA

Indicate for each equality group whether there may be a positive impact, negative impact, or no impact.

Equality Group	Positive	Negative	No impact	Reason
Age		X		Discounts on concessionary seats for younger children will cease
Gender			X	

Reassignment				
Disability			X	
Sex			X	
Religion and belief	X	X		Free Home to School transport will be withdrawn for children attending a faith school if they are not otherwise entitled under statutory provision. However the withdrawal of this provision will remove the inequality for families who are not eligible for, or choose not to send their child to, a faith school
Pregnancy and maternity	X			Post-16 transport policy will provide support to students who are in receipt of a guaranteed bursary, which will include young parents
Race			X	
Sexual orientation			X	
Carers			X	
Other equality issues – please state				
Looked After Children and care leavers	X			Post-16 transport policy will provide support to students who are in receipt of a guaranteed bursary, which will include young people who are in care and care leavers.
Low income families	X	X		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discounts on concessionary seats for siblings and younger children will cease • Post-16 transport policy will provide support to students who are (or whose family are) in receipt of benefits

HR and workforce issues			X	
Human Rights implications if relevant			X	
<p>If you find a negative impact on any equality group you will need to complete stage one and move on to stage two and carry out a full EIA.</p> <p>A full EIA will also need to be carried out if this is a high profile or major policy that will either effect many people or have a severe effect on some people.</p>				

Is a full EIA required?	Yes (go to stage two) X	No
<p>If no briefly summarise reasons why you have reached this conclusion, the evidence for this and the nature of any stakeholder verification of your conclusion.</p>		
<p>Briefly describe any positive impacts identified that have resulted in improved access or services</p>		

For screenings only:

Review date	
Person responsible for review	
Head of Service signed off	
Date completed	

- Signed off electronic version to be kept in your team for review
- Electronic copy to be forwarded to Equality and Diversity Manager for publishing

Stage 2 – Full Equality Impact Assessment - please refer to [equality impact assessment](#) guidance available on Snet

Introduction and background

Using the information from your screening please describe your service or function. This should include:

- **The aims and scope of the EIA**
- **The main beneficiaries or users**
- **The main equality, accessibility, social exclusion issues and barriers, and the equality groups they relate to (not all assessments will encounter issues relating to every strand)**

The policy changes being considered under this EIA relate to the proposed processes and criteria for home to school/college transport. Changes within those policies are as follows:

- Withdrawal of free denominational transport other than where a pupil is statutorily entitled
- Increase to the fare for a concessionary seat, cessation of discounts for siblings and younger children and requirement to purchase a seat on a half termly basis.
- Amendment to the criteria for Post-16 transport following the withdrawal of the EMA

The main users of the policies are parents, children and post-16 students. However schools and colleges also benefit as the home to school/college transport policies help facilitate children and post-16 students to travel to school and FE providers.

The proposal to withdraw free denominational transport will disproportionately impact Catholic families and a lesser extent CofE families. However it should also be noted that the current discretionary transport policy favours these families as it provides families from a faith background with a financial benefit that is not available to other groups. As such this proposal addresses the inequity within the current policy.

The proposal to change the fare for concessionary seats will, as far as possible, create equity between bus and coach transport and thus remove any disadvantage felt by parents who cannot get a concessionary seat for their child.

The proposed Post-16 transport policy attempts to ensure that finance is not a barrier to students who wish to participate in post-16 education at school or college, including students who are in care or are care leavers, are on a low income or are young parents.

Now describe how this fits into ‘the bigger picture’ including other council or local plans and priorities.

- The provision of transport support for post-16 students helps young people stay on in education and to obtain a qualification thus contributing to National Indicators 79 and 117 and Surrey’s Local Area Agreement targets
- The proposal to withdraw free denominational transport will realise savings over a period of time that will contribute to the overall saving that the County Council has to identify during the forthcoming years
- The proposal to withdraw free denominational transport will address the

existing inequality of the current policy whereby pupils who have applied to a school on the basis of their religion or belief will receive transport even if the school is not their nearest school, whilst other pupils will not.

- The proposals to make changes to the fare for concessionary seats will make the cost equitable with the cost of travelling on the public bus which applies no age related or sibling discounts

Evidence gathering and fact-finding

What evidence is available to support your views above? Please include a summary of the available evidence including identifying where there are gaps to be included in the action plan.

Remember to consider accessibility alongside the equality groups

Denominational Transport

- Approximately 2200 pupils currently receive free transport to travel to their nearest denominational school on faith grounds. However, based on a spot check of 926 pupils, approximately only 2% did not have a nearer school. Based on this figure, 98% of pupils who are receiving free transport on denominational grounds are receiving support that is not available to other parents whose children are not eligible for a denominational school.

Concessionary Seats

- 689 pupils currently pay for a concessionary seat on a Surrey vehicle for which they receive no discount in fare
- 38 pupils currently receive a discount on the fare for a concessionary seat on the basis that they are under the age of 8 years old.
- 159 pupils currently receive a discount on the fare for a concessionary seat on the basis that they have an older sibling also travelling on the vehicle.
- 42 pupils currently receive a discount on the fare for a concessionary seat on the basis that they are under the age of 8 years old and have an older sibling travelling on the vehicle.

Sources of evidence may include:

- Service monitoring reports including equality monitoring data
- User feedback
- Population data – census, Mosaic
- Complaints data
- Published research, local or national.
- Feedback from consultations and focus groups
- Feedback from individuals or organisations representing the interests of key target groups

- Evidence from partner organisations, other council departments, district or borough councils and other local authorities

How have stakeholders been involved in this assessment? Who are they, and what is their view?

A consultation on the proposal to withdraw free denominational transport other than for those who are statutorily entitled took place between 14 February 2011 and 8 April 2011. 7% of respondents supported the proposal and 93% did not.

Of the total online and paper responses, 623 (81%) respondents completed the equality monitoring form. Of those completing a monitoring form:

Age

75.4% of respondents were aged 18 – 49

15.9% of respondents were aged 50 – 64

7 % of respondents were aged 65 and over

Race

92.4 % of respondents described themselves as white.

3.8 % of respondents preferred not or did not supply this information

3.7% of respondents came from a range of BME groupings

Disability

1.9 % of respondents indicated that they had a disability in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act.

Gender

66% of respondents were female

33 % of respondents were male

Faith

91.5 % of respondents indicated that they are of Christian Faith

5.6 % of respondents indicated that they had no faith-based affiliation

1 .9 % of respondents preferred not to or did not supply this information

In addition, of the 797 who completed the online response form, 78% (588) described themselves as a parent. Of these, 94% were opposed to the proposal.

As 91.5% of respondents who completed the equalities questionnaire described themselves as being Christian and as the majority of respondents were parents, the majority of responses to the consultation appear to be from the community that would be most affected by the proposed change.

Analysis and assessment

Given the available information, what is the actual or likely impact on minority, disadvantaged, vulnerable and socially excluded groups? Is this impact positive or negative or a mixture of both? (Refer to the EIA guidance for full list of issues to consider when making your analysis)

Withdrawal of free denominational transport

New pupils will no longer qualify for free denominational transport and as such some families on a low income who might have travelled to a faith school might be unable to afford the transport costs. The percentage of Free School Meal eligibility for the schools affected is generally low which might mean that families at these schools might be better placed to afford the transport costs. However the withdrawal of this provision will remove the inequality for families who are not eligible for, or choose not to send their child to, a faith school and as such, this will have an overall positive equality impact as all pupils will be treated equitably regardless of their religion or belief.

Changes to the charges for concessionary seats

Currently, families who are unable to get a concessionary seat for their child must pay the public transport fare for each child. There are no concessions available on public transport routes. The proposed changes to the fare for a concessionary seat will make the fare comparative to those on other bus provision, making charging equitable for all families regardless of the age of the child, the number of children travelling and the mode of travel.

Post-16 transport entitlement

The proposed policy will provide support to children in care, care leavers, young parents and students from families on a low income, thus resulting in a positive impact for these groups.

What can be done to reduce the effects of any negative impacts? Where negative impact cannot be completely diminished, can this be justified, and is it lawful?

- Literature needs to clearly set out the statutory provision for transport support to faith schools for families on a low income to ensure that those families apply
- Parents may still apply and be considered under the arrangements for exceptional consideration
- Schools who wish to facilitate their own transport at full cost recovery will be supported by Surrey's Transport Coordination Centre

Where there are positive impacts, what changes have been or will be made, who are the beneficiaries and how have they benefited?

- The withdrawal of free denominational transport will remove the current inequality for families who are not eligible for, or choose not to send their child to, a faith school and as such, this will have an overall positive equality impact as all pupils will be treated equitably regardless of their religion or belief.
- The proposed Post-16 transport policy will provide transport support to Looked After Children and care leavers, young parents and families on a low income in order to ensure that finance is not a barrier to a young person's participation in further education.

Recommendations

Please summarise the main recommendations arising from the assessment. If it is impossible to diminish negative impacts to an acceptable or even lawful level the recommendation should be that the proposal or the relevant part of it should not proceed.

- That Surrey County Council support schools who wish to facilitate their own transport at full cost recovery

Action Plan – actions needed to implement the EIA recommendations

Issue	Action	Expected outcome	Who	Deadline for action

- Actions should have SMART Targets
- Actions should be reported to the Directorate Equality Group (DEG) and incorporated into the Equality and Diversity Action Plan, Service Plans and/or personal objectives of key staff.

Date taken to Directorate Equality Group for challenge and feedback	
Review date	
Person responsible for review	Claire Potier
Head of Service signed off	Peter-John Wilkinson
Date completed	10 May 2011
Date forwarded to EIA coordinator for publishing	

- **Signed off electronic version to be kept in your team for review**
- **Electronic copy to be forwarded to your service EIA coordinator to forward for publishing on the external website**

EIA publishing checklist

- Plain English – will your EIA make sense to the public?
- Acronyms – check that you have explained any specialist names or terminology
- Evidence – will your evidence stand up to scrutiny; can you justify your conclusions?
- Stakeholders and verification – have you included a range of views and perspectives to back up your analysis?
- Gaps and information – have you identified any gaps in services or information that need to be addressed in the action plan?
- Legal framework – have you identified any potential discrimination and included actions to address it?
- Success stories – have you included any positive impacts that have resulted in change for the better?
- Action plan – is your action plan SMART? Have you informed the relevant people to ensure the action plan is carried out?
- Review – have you included a review date and a named person to carry it out?
- Challenge – has your EIA been taken to your DEG for challenge
- Signing off – has your Head of Service signed off your EIA?
- Basics – have you signed and dated your EIA and named it for publishing?