

Equality analysis is a valuable tool to help embed equality into everything we do

Evidence based equality analysis – can include documents, quotes, and web links for photos and videos

**Policy decision:**

**Home to School Transport Review – Proposal 7 – Under 16 school transport – proposed increase to under 16s spare seat charge**

The Council is responsible for spare seat places that are offered to non eligible pupils on education contract buses. Spare seat places are available on a first come first served basis, providing there are no other local bus services that serve the same route. Parents can pay for a spare seat on a half termly; termly or annual basis. Spare seat places are generally offered for one academic year. The current charges for under 16 spare seats is £385 (in zone) and £525 (out of zone). It is proposed to have one set yearly charge of £660 for September 2014. The Council has the discretionary power to make home to school transport arrangements for children who are not eligible for free school transport. There is no requirement for these discretionary arrangements to be provided free of charge, and therefore the Council can charge for such provision.

**Main aims, purpose and outcomes and how does it fit in with the wider aims of the organisation:**

The purpose of the review of the current Children and Young People's transport policies is to determine if services can be provided in a more efficient and cost effective way, open up accessibility, making the best use of the resources available to ensure high quality service may be delivered in a more personalised and flexible way.

We want to use the review as an opportunity to work closer with service users and our wider communities in order to help build sustainable transport solutions that enable each child and young person, irrespective of need, have the opportunity to achieve their full potential and gain independence in travelling where possible.

**Lead officer:** Claire Gregory, Senior Manager School Planning

**Stakeholders:** See consultee list accompanying Executive papers

While process is important, equality analysis is essentially about outcomes.

Lack of evidence of discrimination is not evidence of a lack of discrimination.

It is not acceptable to say that a policy is applied uniformly to all groups and is therefore fair and equal. Applying a policy or procedure consistently may result in differential outcomes for different groups.

For each of the areas overleaf, an assessment needs to be made on whether the policy has a **positive, negative or neutral impact**, and brief details of why this decision was made and notes of any mitigation should be included. Where the impact is negative, this needs to be given a **high, medium or low assessment**. It is important to rate the impact of the policy based on the current situation (i.e. disregarding any actions planned to be carried out in future).

**High impact** – a significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place etc.

**Medium impact** –some potential impact exists, some mitigating measures are in place, poor evidence

**Low impact** – almost no relevancy to the process, e.g. an area that is very much legislation led and where the Council has very little discretion

	Neutral	Positive	Negative
Target group / area			
<b>Race and ethnicity</b> (including Gypsies and Travellers; migrant workers, asylum seekers etc.)	The proposal should have no immediate impact on the basis of race and ethnicity.		
<b>Disability</b> (as defined by the Equality Act - a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry	The proposal should have no immediate impact on the basis of disability. For those pupils with additional needs attending educational establishments, as	Free transport to the nearest suitable school would be provided under the distance limit in exceptional circumstances in line with current policy, for example pupils with severe mobility	Access to suitable alternative transport may be more limited for disabled young people depending on their individual needs.

<p>out normal day-to-day activities)</p>	<p>deemed necessary by the authority, arrangements for transport would continue to be made.</p>	<p>difficulties or for whom no viable public transport is available.</p>	<p>Pupils who may not be eligible under SEN but could have difficulties walking or accessing transport.</p> <p>Potential impact on disabled parents/carers who may be unable to accompany/transport non-disabled pupils who would not be eligible for free transport under the new proposal.</p> <p><b>Medium impact</b> - The Council would continue to be able to apply its powers of discretion for those cases which may be considered exceptional.</p>
<p><b>Gender/gender reassignment</b></p>	<p>The proposal should have no immediate impact on the basis of gender/gender reassignment.</p>		<p>Young women are more likely to be concerned about personal safety when travelling alone, including walking to and from travel points (e.g. bus stops, train stations)</p> <p>Young men are more likely to be involved in incidents, including personal attack, both as victims and perpetrators. This would also apply to travelling on public transport.</p> <p>Specific personal safety issues for transgender young people. – may be targeted bullying.</p>

<b>Religion and belief</b>	The proposal should have no immediate impact on the basis of religion and belief.	Pupils from low income families aged between 11 and 16 would continue to receive transport to the nearest school preferred by reason of a parent/carers religion or belief if it is more than two miles by the shortest available walking route and not more than 15 miles away.	May restrict accessibility to school of choice  <b>Medium impact</b> – spare seats offers transport to ineligible pupils where there is no legal requirement to do so and therefore opens options of choice to families.
<b>Sexual orientation</b> (including heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual)	The proposal should have no immediate impact on the basis of sexual orientation.		There is no evidence a particular impact on young people or parents/carers in relation to sexual orientation. There may be potential risks for lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) young people choosing cheaper alternatives such as walking or cycling which could make them more vulnerable to bullying or harassment.
<b>Age</b> (children and young people aged 0 – 24, adults aged 25 – 50, younger older people aged 51 – 75/80; older older people 81+. The age categories are for illustration only as overriding consideration should be given to needs).	The authority would continue to provide travel assistance to those legally entitled to it. This will enable continued equality and opportunity to access educational provision for those families.  <b>Medium impact</b> - Although there is an increase in charge for spare seats (£660) it would still be significantly lower than the		Could raise issues regarding safety and vulnerability of pupils Choice of school restricted Children may be unable to attend sibling's school  In addition, younger parents who, on average, have lower incomes may also be impacted by affordability issues.  <b>Medium impact</b> – legislation

	average cost (£822) per seat to the local authority of education contract buses.		assumes all children and young people up to the age of 18 will be accompanied as necessary when considering the statutory walking distances (two miles for pupils aged under eight and three miles for pupils aged eight and above).
<b>Rural communities</b>			<p>May restrict accessibility to school of choice</p> <p>Pupils/students living in rural communities are more likely to be reliant on transport assistance provided by the local authority as commercial transport services are not generally available in these areas</p> <p><b>Medium impact</b> – Some rural schools arrange transport of their own pupils/students to manage the impact of car use around the school gates and promote sustainable travel solutions.</p>
<b>Areas of deprivation</b>	<p>The proposal would allow fairer transport access to a school, regardless of living within its catchment area.</p> <p>There will continue to be assistance to those who qualify under the current hardship criteria</p>		<p>Removal of this provision could limit choice of school placement for those who could not afford to make their own transport arrangements.</p> <p>Increase in spare seat charges may result in increased travel costs for some families of</p>

	<p>in relation to the policy options. This will enable continued equality and opportunity to access educational provision for those families.</p>		<p>pupils/students which may disproportionately affect those who are just above the income threshold to receive assistance</p> <p><b>Medium impact</b> – There will continue to be assistance to those who qualify under the current hardship criteria. This will enable continued equality and opportunity to access educational provision for those families</p>
<p><b>Human rights</b></p>	<p><b>Medium impact</b> - Parents would continue to be able to express their preference for a particular school. Parents and carers are responsible in law for making arrangements for their children's attendance at school. They should consider transport requirements when deciding which school to apply a place for.</p> <p>The authority would continue to provide travel assistance to those pupils who are legally entitled to it.</p>		
<p><b>Health and wellbeing</b> (consider both the wider determinants of health such as education, housing, employment, environment, crime and transport, as well as the possible</p>	<p>The proposal should have no immediate impact on health and wellbeing.</p>		

impacts on lifestyles and the effect there may be on health and care services)			
<b>Procurement/partnership</b> (if project due to be carried out by contractors/partners etc, identify steps taken to ensure equality compliance)	The proposal should have no immediate impact on procurement/partnership.		

**Evidence** (see guidance note for details of what to include here):

The authority would continue to provide travel assistance to those pupils who are legally entitled to it. Spare seats is a discretionary service offered to ineligible pupils, the proposed annual charge of £660 is still significantly lower than the average spare seat charge (£822) the authority incurs for educational contract buses.

A thorough 12 week consultation process, as outlined in a separate Equality Assessment, will take place between 30 October 2013 to 24 January 2014 in order to capture responses that will assist in the decision making process in March 2014.

**Action plan:**

<b>Actions required</b>	<b>Key activity</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Outcomes required</b>	<b>Officer responsible</b>	<b>Review date</b>

<b>Sign off</b>	
Lead Officer:	Claire Gregory, Senior Manager School Planning
Approved by Head of Service:	Mark Parkinson Achievement and Wellbeing

<b>Moderation and/or scrutiny</b>	
Date: 27.02.14	
<b>Date analysis to be reviewed based on rating</b> (high impact – review in one year, medium impact - review in two years, low impact in three years)	

Please forward the completed Equality Analysis to the Equality and Diversity Managers for publishing on the Council's website

Please go to the Executive webpage to see the documentation

<http://cmttpublic.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=443&MId=3916&Ver=4>