



Name of policy, strategy or function Home to School Transport	Ref CYPF	HO
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Responsible Officer Sally Taylor

Table 1. Policy Comparison

Home to School Transport Policy ()	Home to School Transport Policy (January)
Walking Distances Bir ingha Up to years is 1 ile	Statutory walking Distances Up to years is iles
Between 11 1 iles	years and Over iles
Over 11 iles	

Below these distances the responsibility for the journey to school rests with the parent/s unless the pupil is eligible as a result of other circumstances. The walking distance is measured along a route that a child might reasonably be expected to walk to school accompanied where necessary by their parent/s

Assistance is not considered where a parent/s selects a school which is not the nearest to home with the exception of pupils from low income families who meet the criteria below

1. If a pupil lives more than 1 mile from their nearest qualifying school and the school confirms that the pupil is attending to fulfil religious beliefs then the distance taken into account is that to the nearest equivalent faith school

Pupils attending Faith Schools

If a pupil attends a faith school and the school confirms that the pupil is attending to fulfil religious beliefs then the distance taken into account is that to the nearest equivalent faith school

The pupil is provided with assistance if they are attending a faith school, which is more than the qualifying distance because a place could not be offered at a similar faith school, which was within that distance

2. If a pupil lives more than 1 mile from their nearest qualifying school and the school confirms that the pupil is attending to fulfil religious beliefs then the distance taken into account is that to the nearest equivalent faith school

Low Income Families

Additional support is available to children from families who are entitled to free school meals or are in receipt of the minimum level of working tax credit

Children aged up to under 11 from low income families may be eligible for free travel assistance where they are attending the nearest qualifying school to home provided it is more than 1 mile from their home

Children aged between 11 and 16 from low income families may be eligible for free travel assistance if they are attending one of the three nearest qualifying schools provided it is more than 1 mile but not more than 1.5 miles from their home

This shows that the biggest cohort of children are those with Moderate Learning Difficulties, MLD, Behavioural Emotional and Social Disorder, BESD, Autism, ASD and Speech, Language and Communication Needs, SLCN, Profound and Multiple L

The distribution of SEN classification within the ethnic groups is relatively consistent. As are the trends over time, the small numbers within some ethnic groups creates large changes in proportion but involve small numbers of pupils.

The children's population is forecast to increase by 1% by 2011 and a proportionate increase is expected.

Under 5s
Between 5 to 11 years
Over 11

4
4

The children identified as no longer eligible for service above would have to be subject of an individual assessment

Applying the assumptions outlined above the impact

Overall and across all of the questions 4 of responses were excellent, were very good, 1 Good, Satisfactory and Poor This response is typical of those in recent years

Consultation

The first phase of the consultation that began in November 11 was completed and reported back to par

Corporate Procurement Services ➤ The Home to School Transport service has taken a key role in the revision of the Corporate Transport Framework to include a unified service for hard to fill routes, transport and guides and greater flexibility to use auctions

Parent Consultation ➤ A short series of meetings explored an integrated transport hub and the acceleration of the Personal Transport Budgets. The option proposed was the instigation of a major project of parental engagement and procurement review. This is being progressed and aligned with the re-letting of the corporate transport framework

School Transport Expert/Development Meeting ➤ A meeting following submission of a review of current activity with a manager with considerable experience of home to school transport in other local authorities. No additional avenues of development were identified

Adults and Communities ➤ A short series of meetings re the potential of Adults and Communities fleet offering a part of the Home to School Transport Service. This is progressing but will not impact significantly on the service offer

Supplier Forum ➤ There have been meetings with suppliers regarding potential alternative approaches. There was interest in the provision of the whole service from one provider but no alternative options put forward

Core Cities and Specialist Conferences ➤ The service attended meetings with the services of Core Cities, other regional providers and national conferences. No new approaches were identified largely because the first consultation was informed by emerging developments. So far all scale partnership work between neighbouring authorities is being progressed

Starter Choice Team/Part of Transportation ➤ The Team have been engaged on an internal SLA to develop individual travel training using models identified by the service operating in the region

As there was no fundamental service innovation identified the application of the policy for new starters to essential service users is the option put forward

Parent Consultation

This has comprised of letters and surveys to all service users, a web-based survey instrument on the Be Heard data base, flyers to schools, two general meetings to which all parents were invited and two meetings with specific parent groups at the invite of those groups ➤ there was also a meeting directly with schools to explore issues re home to school transport

There have been a total of responses from parents to the consultation this exceeds the number of responses to the previous consultation and to the Councils savings proposal a report outlines the breadth of the response

Parents were unhappy about the proposal for a variety of reasons relating to the impact of the proposal on the child and their child. However they also made reference to the previous consultation and the logic of another consultation and of altering home to school transport whilst there was a consultation on the SEN strategy. Parents felt that they appreciate better than the officers or others the critical nature of transport for family life ➤ with the links to managing the additional demands on the parent of a disabled child, parental employment and siblings being raised. There was less

Parents wondered if the Council had fully appreciated the cost / benefits of the proposal and point to an increase in the demand for short breaks and children in care. These were some of the concerns of parents at the meeting.

families where there is a concern about the level of contribution

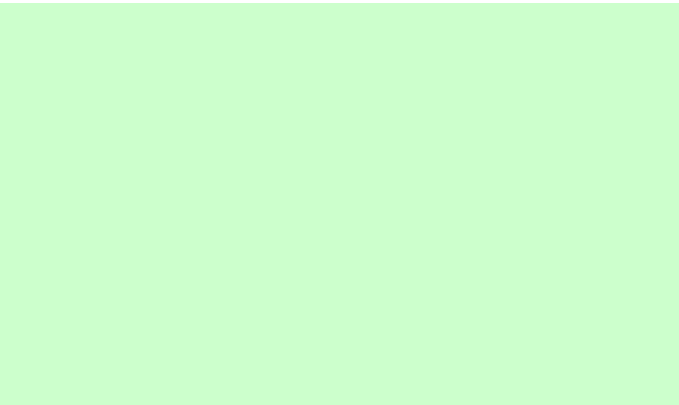
Disability

There was no specific consultation on the different disability groups as the changes in policy affect the service user group and other interested parties. However the issues were drawn from the public meetings and the individual responses that related specifically to the primary pupils across the spectrum of special needs. Parents and carers made specific reference to the pressures on the parents of disabled children as outlined above. There were responses suggesting that the resources are focussed on the most disabled pupils and that the concept of a 100m walking distance was inappropriate given the inability of some of the pupils to navigate a journey to school. The Policy does focus on the most disabled children and proposes routes to independence for the other included within the policy is the capacity to take exceptional circumstances into account. The comments regarding Public Transport were similar to those expressed previously that had been communicated to Birmingham Safer Travel Partnership.

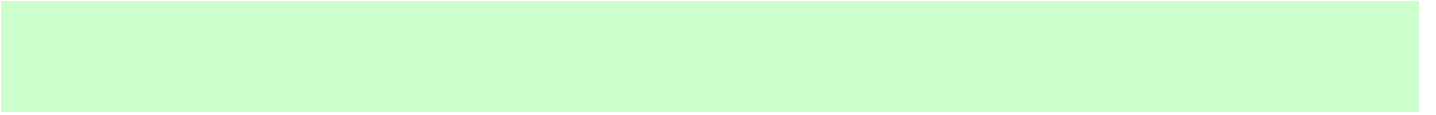
Gender reassignment

There was no specific consultation on the issue of gender reassignment as the policy includes all pupils in receipt of a service.

Marriage and Civil partnership



the removal of the service that supports faith schools



The impact on service users will be mitigated by

- The introduction of independent travel training and the encouragement of sustainable methods of transport through the school travel plan training process. This will reduce the need to some degree of specialist transport and so of the number of families impacted by the contributions.

Access will be improved by offering a wider range of options drawn from best practice and the better understanding of parents and pupils' needs. A number of parents used the consultation to express an interest in Personal Transport Budgets and direct payments.

The withdrawal of a specialist transport service will be preceded by a review of the transport needs of the pupil concerned.

The Council is committed to an annual review of the impact of the policies and this will include the views of parents and young people to measure performance and identify areas for improvement.

A guidance document for parents explaining the policy and the process for application has been prepared.

An appeals process culminating in consideration by Members is in place.

The strategy included within the SEN Green Paper will have a positive impact on the lives of children and young people with disabilities, helping to promote positive attitudes, inclusive services, fairness and access to support appropriate to needs and localised support, close to home. The priorities in the Green Paper reflect the forthcoming SEN reforms and the Children and Families Bill. As a more localised offer is developed, children with no

Step Making a Decision

. Summarise your findings and give an overview of whether the policy, strategy, function or service will meet the authority's responsibilities in relation to equality and support the council's strategic outcomes

The policies applied in relation to Home to School Transport were agreed for new starters on the 1st of January. The policies applied to current users exceed the statutory requirements and the regional average for such provision. As outlined in Section 1 the demand for service is likely to increase within that population of pupils who are eligible. The measures proposed allow the available resources to be focussed on those most in need. Similar changes to transport policy have been made by a number of Authorities. See Home to School Transport Benchmarking

This has to be balanced by wider considerations re the impact expressed locally through consultation and identified in national research. Previously the schedule for implementation is focussing on new users was the most significant mitigation of the impact on family life. As the withdrawal of service to disabled children requires an individual assessment of eligibility the implementation of these measures will necessarily be delayed.

The provision of support to faith schools is limited to bus passes and the provision of support is not a statutory requirement. There is no requirement to provide an alternative school place to

Step Sign-Off

The final stage of the Equality Assessment process is to formally sign off the document as being a complete, rigorous and robust assessment

The policy, strategy or function has been fully assessed in relation to its potential effects on equality and all relevant concerns have been addressed.

Chairperson of Equality Assessment Task Group

Appendix 1

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