INITIAL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS (EqIAA)

Post-16 Home to School Transport

Please Note: -

This document describes an initial assessment of equalities impacts in relation to the review of "*Post-16 Home to School Transport"*.

The council has a statutory duty to consider the impact of its actions in relation to the following protected characteristic groups: -

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender Reassignment
4. Marriage and Civil Partnership
5. Pregnancy and Maternity
6. Race
7. Religion or Belief
8. Sex
9. Sexual Orientation

Therefore, the council wishes to hear and proactively consider any comments in relation to how any aspect of the proposed options presented may impact on any sections of the community as listed above. Any feedback in relation to equalities and any point raised within this document will inform a full Equality Impact Assessment and Analysis of the Post-16 Home to School Transport proposals.

You can find out more and tell us your views by completing our survey online at **https://schooltransport.commonplace.is/** or sending your comments to:

Email: **consultation@southglos.gov.uk**

Write to: South Gloucestershire Council, Corporate Research & Consultation Team, Council offices, Badminton Road, Yate, BRISTOL, BS37 5AF

Phone: 01454 868154

Copies of the consultation are available from your local library or one-stop shop.

The consultation on these proposals starts on 16 September 2024 for an 11-week period which closes on 1 December 2024.

SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

Background

In 2015, the Government increased the age at which young people must continue in education or training to 19. Although people must now remain in education or training until the age of 18, the age range of free transport available to eligible young people has not increased in line with this.

There are no legal obligations on a council to provide free school or college travel assistance to children who are over the statutory school age (the statutory school age ends on the last Friday in June in the academic year when a young person turns 16 but is under the age of 19). However, the council can offer some support for students on a discretionary basis, depending on their needs, such as young people with an Education, Health or Care Plan (EHCP) or learning difficulty / disability.

Whilst the council is not legally obliged to provide free transport for young people in the 16-18 age group, it must publish a yearly travel policy statement, including the travel arrangements within the local area that are available to support 16–18-year-olds to participate in education or training.

In South Gloucestershire, the total net spend for all Home to School Transport in 2023/24 was £10,859m, and like all local authorities South Gloucestershire Council is facing intense financial pressures, so it is vital we review our current service to consider how savings can be achieved whilst ensuring access to education, educational attainment, safety and the wellbeing of some of our most vulnerable children and young people is upheld.

As the population within South Gloucestershire increases, so does the demand on spaces within schools. This leads to the requirement to transport children to schools outside of the area and increases costs.

Post-16 policy review

The proposed changes set out below only relate to pupils transitioning into post-16 education as of September 2025, or any pupils in years 12 or 13 starting a new course in September 2025.

This report and the policy use the term ‘Post 16’ to include young people of sixth form age and those with learning difficulties / disabilities up to the age of 25.

South Gloucestershire Council has reviewed the existing policies for home to school transport support. As part of the review, there are areas identified for potential change, and we are asking for feedback on these proposals as part of a consultation.

The key changes contained within the proposed South Gloucestershire Council Home to School (16-25) Travel Support Policy are:

Current Policy provision	Proposed Policy provision	Change
Support for young people without special educational needs or disability Young people aged 16-25 who do not have a current EHCP or a disability, who will be attending a school or college to continue their education, will be responsible for all their own travel costs and arrangements. The travel support options available to all students aged 16-19 in learning or training are as follows: i. South Gloucestershire Council's Concessionary Travel Scheme. ii. Students may purchase discounted travel tickets from the First Bus Group or from various colleges. iii. Students may apply for a 16-25 Student Railcard.	**Support for young people without special educational needs or disability** Young people aged 16-25 who do not have a current EHCP or a disability, who will be attending a school or college to continue their education, will be responsible for all their own travel costs and arrangements. The travel support options available to all students aged 16-19 in learning or training are as follows: i. South Gloucestershire Council's Concessionary Travel Scheme. ii. Students may purchase discounted travel tickets from the First Bus Group or from various colleges. iii. Students may apply for a 16-25 Student Railcard.	**No change proposed.**
Assistance with Travel to School South Gloucestershire Council will consider assistance with travel for those students who meet all the following conditions: • the student is subject to an Education, Health and Care Plan and the Plan specifies the need for transport to enable the student to access provision; and • the student is attending the nearest appropriate school for a relevant full-time course and lives more than 3 miles (as measured by the Council's computerised mapping system) from the school; and • the student is resident in South Gloucestershire.	**Assistance with Travel to School** Students who meet the following conditions will receive 45p per mile to support with travel arrangements: • the student is subject to an Education, Health and Care Plan and the Plan specifies the need for transport to enable the student to access provision; and • the student is attending the nearest appropriate school for a relevant full-time course and lives more than 3 miles (as measured by the Council's computerised mapping system) from the school; and • the student is resident in South Gloucestershire.	**Change proposed:** All students who meet the criteria will receive a flat rate of 45p per mile to support with travel arrangements.
Assistance with Travel to an FE College South Gloucestershire Council will consider assistance with travel for students at FE colleges who meet all the following conditions:	**Assistance with Travel to an FE College** Students who meet the following conditions will receive 45p per mile to support with travel arrangements:	**Change proposed:** All students who meet the criteria will receive a flat rate of 45p per mile to support with travel arrangements.

Current Policy provision	Proposed Policy provision	Change
• the student is attending the nearest college/base to the home address for a relevant full-time course. Assistance with travel will be considered to a college or base/course closest to home which is relevant, and not necessarily the college or base/course which is the student's highest preference. • the student lives more than 3 miles (as measured by the Council's computerised mapping system) from the college; and • the student was previously subject to an Education, Health and Care Plan /Statement of Special Educational Needs which specified the need for transport or is now assessed as having SEN/LDD and requiring support with travel due to those needs. • the student is resident in South Gloucestershire.	• the student is subject to an Education, Health and Care Plan and the Plan specifies the need for transport to enable the student to access provision; and • the student is attending the nearest appropriate provision for a relevant full-time course and lives more than 3 miles (as measured by the Council's computerised mapping system) from the school; and • the student is resident in South Gloucestershire.	
Assistance with Travel to Independent Specialist/Residential Colleges A small number of students with SEN/LDD attend specialist further education colleges, including residential provision. In these cases, the college placement will have been individually agreed by the Council. Support for travel in these cases will normally be provided as part of the approval of the college placement.	**Assistance with Travel to Independent Specialist/Residential Colleges** Students with SEN/LDD who attend specialist further education colleges, including residential provision, where the college placement will have been individually agreed by the Council, will receive 45p per mile to support with travel arrangements.	**Change proposed:** Students will receive 45p per mile to support with travel arrangements.
Support for students who reach the age of 19 while continuing a course Travel support, where approved, will continue for the initial course of study until the end of the academic year in which the student becomes 19 years of age. However, support will be reviewed throughout the course and independent travel encouraged.	**Support for students who reach the age of 19 while continuing a course** Travel support, where approved, will continue for the initial course of study until the end of the academic year in which the student becomes 19 years of age. However, support will be reviewed throughout the course and independent travel encouraged.	**No change proposed.**

Current Policy provision	Proposed Policy provision	Change
Support for students aged 19-25 Applications for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities aged between 19 and 24 years for travel assistance will be considered on an individual basis for a first course of study. An assessment will be made of the application taking account of this Travel Policy Statement, the circumstances of the applicant and the case for assistance with travel. Where travel assistance is agreed, it will normally continue during the agreed course of study until the end of the academic year in which the 25th birthday occurs. However, travel support will be reviewed throughout the course and independent travel encouraged.	**Support for students aged 19-25** Applications for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities aged between 19 and 24 years for travel assistance will be considered on an individual basis for a first course of study. An assessment will be made of the application taking account of this Travel Policy Statement, the circumstances of the applicant and the case for assistance with travel. Where travel assistance is agreed, it will normally continue during the agreed course of study until the end of the academic year in which the 25th birthday occurs. However, travel support will be reviewed throughout the course and independent travel encouraged.	**No change proposed.**

The proposed changes in the new policy would start for any pupils transitioning into post-16 education as of September 2025, or any pupils in years 12 or 13 starting a new course in September 2025.

SECTION 2 –RESEARCH AND CONSULTATION

NB. This section will be updated post consultation.

The following section sets out a range of information regarding Home to School Transport and the impact this has on children, families and education. The information is presented here to provide a comprehensive overview of key issues and evidence in relation to Protected Characteristic groups.

Home to School Transport

Home-to-school transport offers multifaceted and long-lasting benefits that extend beyond mere transportation to and from school. It contributes to educational access and achievement, enhances social and emotional development, supports families, promotes community cohesion, and fosters sustainable practices. These are highlighted below and are discussed in more detail throughout this assessment:

- Reliable transport improves attendance which contributes to better academic performance.
- Transport enables students to access a wider range of educational opportunities, including extracurricular activities, field trips, and specialised programmes, enhancing their personal development.
- Supports the inclusion of students with disabilities and special educational needs in mainstream education settings.
- Supports students with disabilities and special educational needs in accessing specialist provision e.g., special schools.
- Traveling with peers encourages social interaction, helping children develop interpersonal skills, teamwork, and empathy.
- By independently navigating their journey to school or with support from trained personnel, children develop confidence and a sense of independence.
- Reliable transport services alleviate the logistical burden on families, particularly those with multiple children or working parents.
- Efficient transport services reduce transportation costs for families, especially in areas where public transport options are limited or expensive.
- Centralised school transport reduces individual car journeys, contributing to lower carbon emissions and promoting sustainable transportation practices.
- Transport services foster a sense of community by connecting students from diverse backgrounds and geographical locations.

Post 16 Home to School Transport Children Participation – Data Table:

The following table sets out the characteristics of children and young people in South Gloucestershire who currently receive Home to School Transport, aged 16 - 25 (data up to 8 February 2024).

The total overall number of children and young people across all ages currently in receipt of Home to School Transport is 2,053.

	Students aged 16-25 who have home to school transport (data up to 08/02/2024)	Number of students (449)	
	Data characteristic	**Number**	**%**
Sex	Female	169	37.64%
	Male	278	61.92%
	Prefer not to say	#	0.45%
Disability	Has SEND	449	100.00%
	Has EHCP	449	100.00%
	Attends special school	173	38.53%
	Has SEN provision in a mainstream school	50	11.14%
	Attends other educational settings (e.g. college)	226	50.33%
Age	16-18	402	89.53%
	19-25	47	10.47%
Ethnicity	Asian - Bangladeshi	#	0.00%
	Asian - Chinese	#	0.00%
	Asian – Hong Kong Chinese	#	0.00%
	Asian - Indian	#	0.45%
	Asian - Pakistani	#	0.89%
	Asian – Other Asian	#	0.00%
	Asian - Any other Asian background	#	0.22%
	Black - Black African	#	0.67%
	Black - Black Caribbean	#	0.22%
	Black – Black Nigerian	#	0.00%
	Black - Any other Black background	#	0.45%
	Mixed - White and Asian	#	0.89%
	Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	#	1.56%
	Mixed - White and Black African	#	0.00%
	Mixed - White and any other ethnic group	#	0.00%
	Mixed - Any other Mixed background	#	2.23%
	White - British	359	79.96%
	White - English	#	0.00%
	White - Eastern European	#	0.00%
	White - European	#	0.00%
	White - Gypsy	#	0.00%
	White - Traveller of Irish Heritage	#	0.67%
	White - Irish	#	0.22%
	White - Any other White background	13	2.90%
	White - Other Gypsy/Roma	#	0.00%
	Any other ethnic group	#	1.34%
	Prefer not to say	#	0.22%
	Unknown	11	2.45%

NB. Where numbers are 10 or less, the # symbol is used in order to ensure confidentiality.

SEN: Special Educational Needs; SEND: Special Educational Needs & Disability; EHCP: Education, Health Care Plan

The data shows:

Overall

449 pupils who receive transport are aged 16+ - this is just under 22% of all pupils who are in receipt of home to school transport.

Sex

There are more males than females currently in receipt of home to school transport. It is noted that 100% of students aged 16-25 who currently have home to school transport have an EHCP and the proportion of males to females in receipt of home to school transport is consistent with the sex of those with an EHCP.

Research indicates that of the pupils with SEND support, boys are more likely to receive such support than girls; this correlates with the South Gloucestershire data. National and international educational statistics often reflect this gender disparity and data from the Department for Education (DfE) consistently shows this trend[i].

Further information to identify reasons for this disparity are highlighted below:

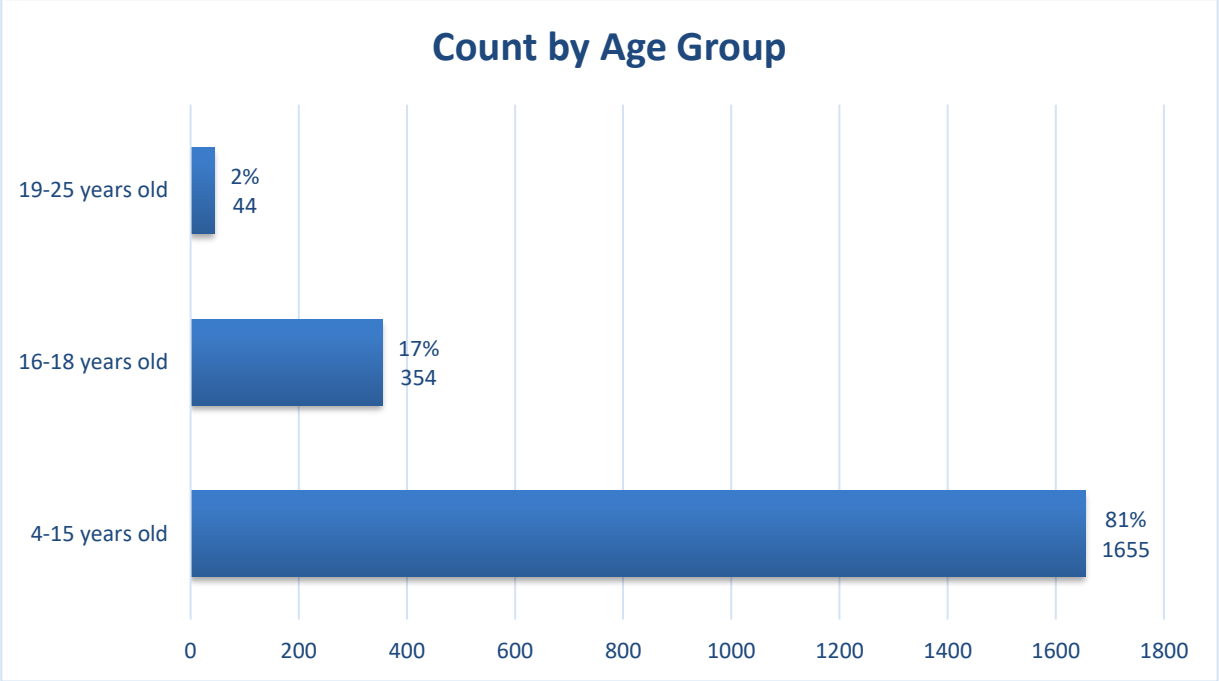
1. Higher Identification Rates: Boys are more frequently identified with conditions that qualify for SEND support, such as autism spectrum disorders (ASD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and specific learning difficulties (e.g., dyslexia)[ii].
2. Behavioural and Developmental Disorders: Many SEND categories, particularly those related to behavioural and developmental disorders, have higher prevalence rates among boys. This contributes to a greater proportion of boys receiving SEND support[iii].
3. Social and Cultural Factors: Societal and cultural factors might also play a role in the identification process. Boys' behaviours that deviate from normative expectations are often more noticeable and may lead to earlier and more frequent identification and support.

**South Gloucestershire Council are currently undertaking work to investigate the disparities listed above.*

While boys are more likely to receive SEND support, it's crucial to ensure that girls with SEND are equally identified and supported, as they might sometimes be underdiagnosed, or their needs overlooked due to different manifestations of certain conditions. The higher likelihood of boys being diagnosed with SEND conditions is well-documented, driven by factors related to the prevalence of specific disorders, behavioural manifestations, diagnostic criteria, and societal influences. Ensuring equitable identification and support for both boys and girls with SEND is essential for providing appropriate educational interventions and support.

Age

The graph below sets out the total number of children in each age bracket receiving Home to School Transport. 1,655 of the pupils (81%) were 4-15 years old, 354 (17%) were 16-18 years old, with the remaining 44 pupils (2%) were aged 19-25 (data up to 08/02/24).



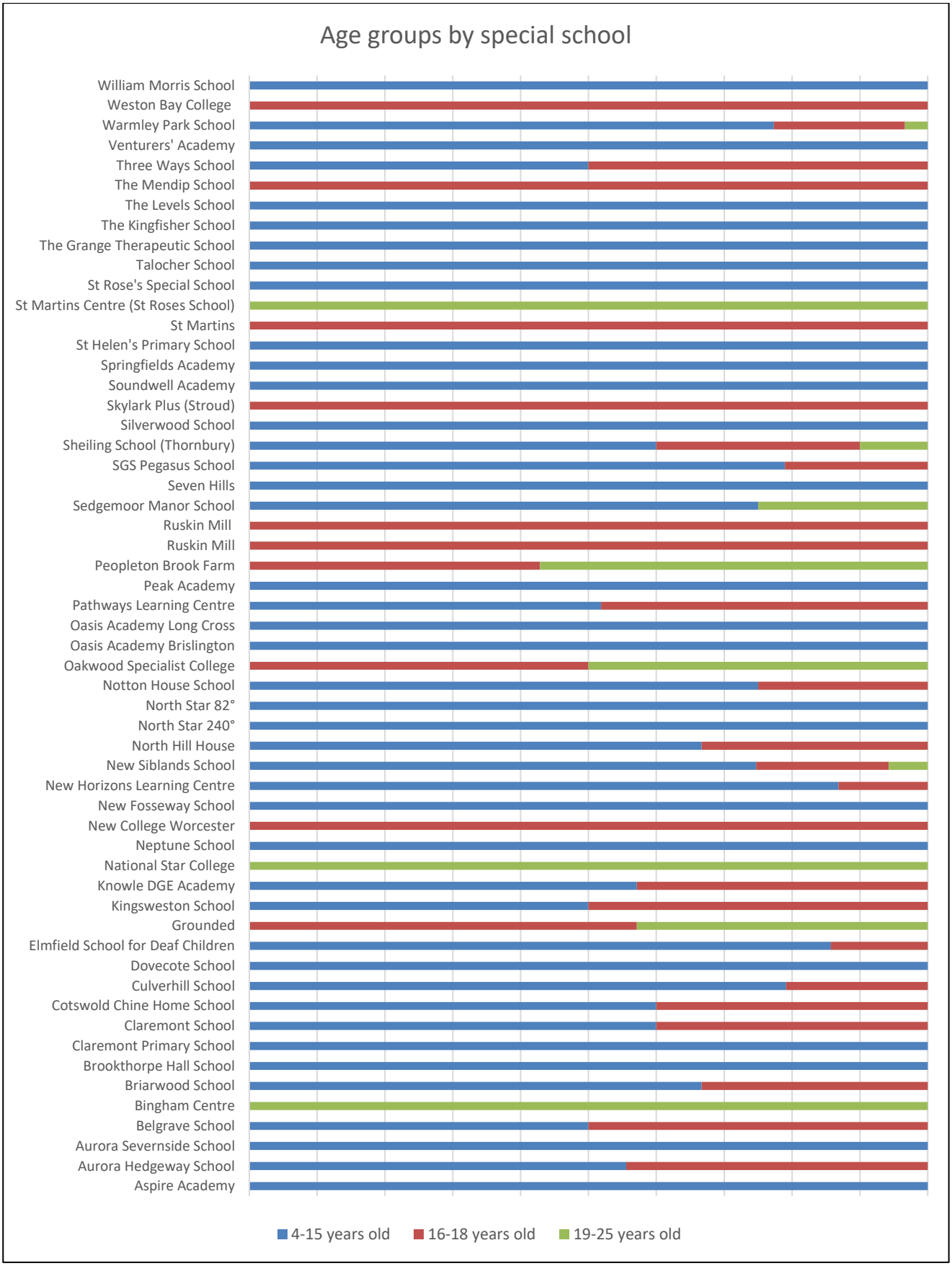
It is clear that the proposed policy would impact on students between the ages of 16 and 25 and their families/carers in particular.

Reliable home-to-school transport is linked to better school attendance and academic performance. Research highlights the importance of addressing transportation barriers to improve educational outcomes [iv].

Disability

The participant data table shows of the 449 students, 100% have identified Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) and have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Of these, 173 students (39%) attend a special school. And 50 students (11%) receive SEN provision in a mainstream school, with 226 (50%) attend other educational establishments (i.e. College).

The graph below sets out the number of pupils in receipt of home to school transport who are in a special provision per age group. Of the 657 pupils in a special school, 498 pupils (75.8%) are aged 4-15 years old, 133 pupils (20.2%) are aged 16-18 years old, and 26 pupils (4%) are aged 19-25 years old.


Age groups by special school
William Morris School
Weston Bay College
Warmley Park School
Venturers' Academy
Three Ways School
The Mendip School
The Levels School
The Kingfisher School
The Grange Therapeutic School
Talocher School
St Rose's Special School
St Martins Centre (St Roses School)
St Martins
St Helen's Primary School
Springfields Academy
Soundwell Academy
Skylark Plus (Stroud)
Silverwood School
Sheiling School (Thornbury)
SGS Pegasus School
Seven Hills
Sedgemoor Manor School
Ruskin Mill
Ruskin Mill
Peopleton Brook Farm
Peak Academy
Pathways Learning Centre
Oasis Academy Long Cross
Oasis Academy Brislington
Oakwood Specialist College
Notton House School
North Star 82°
North Star 240°
North Hill House
New Siblands School
New Horizons Learning Centre
New Fosseway School
New College Worcester
Neptune School
National Star College
Knowle DGE Academy
Kingsweston School
Grounded
Elmfield School for Deaf Children
Dovecote School
Culverhill School
Cotswold Chine Home School
Claremont School
Claremont Primary School
Brookthorpe Hall School
Briarwood School
Bingham Centre
Belgrave School
Aurora Severnside School
Aurora Hedgeway School
Aspire Academy
4-15 years old
16-18 years old
19-25 years old

Research consistently shows that children with disabilities experience more social exclusion than their non-disabled peers[v]. This social exclusion manifests in various areas of their lives, including education, social interactions, and community involvement.

1. Segregated Educational Settings: Children with disabilities are often placed in special education settings or separate classrooms, limiting their interaction with non-disabled peers and fostering a sense of isolation.
2. Limited Participation in School Activities: Even when included in mainstream settings, children with disabilities may face barriers to participating fully in school activities, such as sports, field trips, and social events.
3. Lower Academic Expectations: Teachers and educators may have lower expectations for children with disabilities, leading to reduced opportunities for academic and social engagement.

A UNICEF report highlights that children with disabilities are less likely to attend school, more likely to drop out, and less likely to participate in social activities compared to their non-disabled peers. This report emphasises the need for inclusive education and social policies to address these disparities[vi].

Discontinuing the current policy for travel support for 16+, could make it more difficult for 16- to 18-year-olds to access further education. There may be a high impact for students either with SEND, no access to either public bus services or private transport, or in households with low incomes and unable to afford daily fares.

Ethnicity

The data table shows the ethnicity of pupils who received Home to School Transport. 80% of children and young people have an ethnicity of 'White – English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British' and 18% are from a minority ethnic heritage. This compares to the pupil population of South Gloucestershire of 75.3% having an ethnicity of "White – English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British' and 17.7% being from a minority ethnic heritage.

Other Protected Characteristics

In respect of the Protected Characteristics of Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership and Pregnancy and Maternity, it is not anticipated that any aspects of the proposed policy would result in differential impacts.

Socioeconomics

Reliable home to school transport helps overcome geographical barriers that may prevent children from attending school regularly. Ensuring adequate transport infrastructure and coverage in deprived areas is crucial, and some rural or isolated communities may face challenges in accessing regular transport services, requiring tailored solutions. Where families may have limited access to personal vehicles or face financial constraints, transport services ensure that all children can attend education.

Children and young adults in low-income households are more likely to, for example: have poorer educational outcomes, and have lower paid work as an adult than their peers; have a shorter life expectancy and healthy life expectancy; live in areas more impacted by poor air quality; live in poor quality housing; be an unhealthy weight; develop preventable long term health conditions.

Through the replacement of free home to school transport for post 16 students with a flat rate mileage payment, this may mean some families will need to pay the difference. This would have a

proportionately greater negative impact on low-income families. This therefore means that children in low-income families would be disproportionately impacted.

Financial Security is not something that can be described or measured with a single number as that simplifies the issues and can overlook many of the challenges people face. There are a significant number of elements that impact on the financial situation of individuals and families that can result in them facing poverty (for example, not being able to heat your home, pay rent or buy essentials). This in turn, will have further impacts on them, their wider families and the communities in which they live.

National and local data shows the impact of lower income varies across different demographic groups, and it can affect individuals and families in diverse ways. However, certain demographics tend to be more vulnerable to the challenges associated with lower income:

Disability:

Individuals with disabilities will also often incur significant expense not incurred by non-disabled people, for example, using medical equipment, having heating on and costs of medications.
It is important to also note that the national charity Scope, has reported the extra cost of disability[vii1]:

- *On average, disabled households (with at least one disabled adult or child) need an additional £975 a month to have the same standard of living as non-disabled households.*
- *If this figure is updated to account for inflation over the period 2022/2023, these extra costs rise to £1,122 per month*.

Race:

In South Gloucestershire, the Census 2021 data tells us that, depending upon ethnicity, people from minority ethnic groups are between 1.5 times and 3.5 times more likely than average to be unemployed and that in employment, people from minority ethnic groups in South Gloucestershire are over-represented in lower paid work. Through the removal of free home to school transport, this will disproportionately affect people from minority ethnic groups as programmes that offer free or reduced-cost transport to low-income families have been shown to improve attendance and participation among ethnic minority students.

The Census 2021 data also shows that, depending upon ethnicity, people from minority ethnic groups are more likely than the average to live in a deprived area. Research also shows that students from minority ethnic backgrounds are more likely to live in areas with limited public transport options, making it harder for them to get to school. A study by the Education Policy Institute found that transport issues disproportionately affect attendance rates among ethnic minority students, contributing to the achievement gap[viii].

Safety concerns, including the fear of violence or harassment on public transport, can discourage minority ethnic students from using these services. Parents may also have heightened concerns about their children's safety while commuting. Studies have highlighted that students from minority backgrounds often report feeling unsafe on public transport due to incidents of racial harassment or discrimination[ix].

Home to school transport is critical for minority ethnic students, impacting their access to education, safety, and overall well-being. Addressing these challenges requires targeted policies and programmes that consider the unique needs of minority ethnic communities, including

providing reliable and affordable transport options, ensuring safety, and overcoming language and cultural barriers.

Sex

People in lower-paying jobs or single-parent households, may be disproportionately affected by lower income. Gender pay gaps and limited access to certain opportunities can contribute to financial challenges. In South Gloucestershire we have seen a trend throughout different funds regarding sex, showing significantly more applications for Household Support Fund support from female residents. Within a co-parenting family, women are more likely to stay at home or work part time in order look after their children. This data point corresponds with around 90% of single parent families are headed by women. Statistically, women are more likely to be the primary care givers to children; therefore, the scheme may have a greater overall impact on the lives of women than on the lives of men. This inequality is a result of ingrained societal trends and would be very difficult to avoid in any scheme relating to schools. The situation should be monitored closely alongside any service delivery changes; due consideration will be given to any formal or informal comments regarding imbalances in the effects of the scheme based on sex'

Older Age

Older adults living on fixed incomes, such as pensions or social security, may struggle to cover rising costs of living, including healthcare expenses. Economic challenges can be compounded by health issues and limited earning potential.

Residents of Rural Areas

In some cases, individuals living in rural areas may face limited economic opportunities, with fewer job options and lower wages compared to urban counterparts.

Further Information

The Office for National Statistics found that around a third (35%) of adults reported it was difficult ('very' or 'somewhat') to afford their rent or mortgage payments, and this proportion was higher among groups including; those receiving support from charities (57%), living in a household with one adult and at least one child (47%), receiving some form of benefits or financial support (45%), 'Asian or Asian British' adults (53%), 'Black, African, Caribbean or Black British' adults (47%), renters (43%) and disabled adults (41%)[x].

This is reflected in our local data as we have seen an increase in the number of people experiencing poverty. In the autumn of 2022 research conducted by South Gloucestershire Council found:

- Families with children, younger adults <45, women, those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups, those who are renting privately, those who have been unemployed or experienced long-term sickness have noted greater difficulty or have had to make more changes.
- Minority ethnic respondents are also suffering disproportionately, with 20% having trouble or great difficulty, compared to 13% of the population overall.
- People with disabilities feel much worse off than a year ago, 33% feel this compared to 21% of non-disabled respondents.
- More than 2 in 3 respondents (69%) felt worse off than they were a year ago, and nearly 1 in 4 (23%) respondents reported their situation had deteriorated significantly over the past year.

Some key findings from End Child Poverty in 2021/22[xi] were:

- 71% of children who were in poverty after housing costs, and 67% of those who were in poverty before housing costs, were in a family where at least one adult was working.
- There are persistent ethnic inequalities in child poverty across the UK. 47% of children in Asian or Asian British households and 53% of those in Black households were in poverty after housing costs, compared with just 25% of those where the head of household was White.
- Children living in a family where someone is disabled had a poverty rate of 36% after housing costs, compared with 25% for children living in families where no-one is disabled.

This information is particularly useful for understanding child poverty, which is a major source of inequalities that can persist throughout life. Children who grow up in poverty are four times as likely to become poor adults becoming the parents of the next generation of children living in poverty. A child growing up in poverty has a greater likelihood of reduced educational attainment and employment outcomes as well as of experiencing health problems from birth and of accumulating physical and mental health problems throughout life[xii].

Wellbeing & Independence

Home to school transport can play a significant role in reducing social exclusion for pupils with SEND. Effective transport solutions not only provide these students with access to education but also facilitate their social integration and participation in school life. Studies from the DfE highlight the importance of accessible transport in improving school attendance and participation rates among SEND pupils[xiii]. Access to reliable transport is linked to better educational outcomes and reduced social isolation. Below are several ways in which home to school transport can help mitigate social exclusion for SEND pupils:

Access to Education

1. **Consistent Attendance**: Reliable home-to-school transport ensures that SEND pupils can attend school regularly, which is critical for their educational progress and social inclusion.
2. **Specialised Services**: Transport services designed specifically for SEND pupils, such as wheelchair-accessible buses and vehicles with trained aides, ensure that all students can reach school safely and comfortably.

Social Integration

1. **Interaction Opportunities**: Traveling with peers can provide SEND pupils with opportunities to interact with other students, helping to build friendships and social skills.
2. **Participation in Extracurricular Activities**: Reliable transport services enable SEND pupils to participate in after-school programmes and extracurricular activities, fostering a sense of belonging and enhancing their social experiences.

Safety and Well-being

1. **Trained Personnel**: Drivers and aides who are trained to understand and address the specific needs of SEND pupils can provide a safer and more supportive environment during transport.
2. **Reduced Stress for Families**: Effective transport solutions reduce the logistical burden on families, allowing them to focus on other aspects of their children's development and well-being.

Inclusion in School Life

1. **Equality of Access**: Transport services that cater to the needs of SEND pupils promote equality by ensuring that all students have the same opportunities to attend school and participate fully in school life.
2. **Enhanced Independence**: By providing reliable transport, SEND pupils can develop greater independence, which is crucial for their personal development and self-esteem.

SECTION 3 - IDENTIFICATION & ANALYSIS OF EQUALITIES ISSUES AND IMPACTS

NB. This section will be updated post consultation.

- All post 16 young people who currently receive transport assistance have SEND and an EHCP. Therefore, the proposed policy is likely to result in a disproportionate negative impact in respect of the Protected Characteristic of Disability.
  - Families with a lower income, are likely to be disproportionately negatively impacted by the proposed Policy because the Policy proposes a flat rate mileage payment and this may mean some families will need to pay the difference. Families with lower incomes disproportionately include households with one or more disabled person.
  - In addition, due to having special educational needs and an EHCP, educational establishments are consulted on if they can meet the needs of the young person. This could mean, options for the young person are limited, and they may not be able to attend establishments close to their address. This is an important point to raise as transport journeys can often be far more stressful for young people with SEND, resulting in people being less ready for the school day upon arrival.

- 100% of young people who currently receive transport assistance are aged 16 – 25, in other words, persons who are moving up in the education system. The proposed policy is therefore, likely to result in a disproportionate negative impact in respect of the Protected Characteristic of Age. Due to having special educational needs and an EHCP, educational establishments are consulted on if they can meet the needs of the young person. This could mean, options for the young person are limited, and they may not be able to attend establishments close to their address.

- A higher proportion of boys have identified SEND than girls and this is evident in the post 16 home to school transport data. As such, the proposed policy is likely to result in a disproportionate negative impact in respect of the Protected Characteristic of Sex.

- Families with a lower income, are likely to be disproportionately negatively impacted by the proposed Policy because the Policy proposes a flat rate mileage payment and this may mean some families will need to pay the difference. Families with lower incomes are disproportionately more likely to be:
- Households with one or more disabled person;
  - Families from many Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups;
  - Single parent households - around 90% of single parent families are headed by women;
  - People who have been unemployed or experienced long-term sickness (disproportionately more likely to be people from many Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups and disabled people).

- Families living in rural areas are more likely to be disproportionately negatively impacted should the proposed policy be adopted, especially due to living further away from schools and with more limited transport options.

SECTION 4 - ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN EqIAA OUTCOME

NB. This section will be updated post consultation.

As with every Initial EqIAA, we will review all feedback received post-consultation and we will update this EqIAA document to reflect the points put forward by interested parties.

Should the Policy be implemented, all post-16 pupils in receipt of HtST will receive a 0.45p per mile contribution towards their travel to school costs.

It is acknowledged that some young people will not be able to use alternative transport. As part of the decision-making process, those pupils where it is not appropriate for a personal travel budget could receive discretionary assistance.

Where the 0.45p per mile does not meet the full cost incurred and families will experience financial difficulties in meeting these costs, we will ensure that families are informed of the Welfare, Benefit and Debt Advice Services available in South Gloucestershire.

We know that a significant number of residents do not take-up the benefits to which they are entitled. As such, we will proactively hold sessions in schools for parents to attend which will provide advice and guidance on benefits eligibility. The schools where these sessions take place will be identified during the consultation period.

The Council will work in partnership with education establishments and other individuals to identify young people who could benefit from Independent Travel Training (ITT). Further information on Travel Training, how it is assessed, delivered, and the benefits it provides young people can be found on Travel Training | South Gloucestershire (southglos.gov.uk)

Considering the data showing disproportionate experience of lower incomes by particular groups, we will work with South Gloucestershire Equalities Voice to promote actions that support communities more likely to be impacted through targeted messaging.

Should a new policy be implemented, this will be reviewed, updated and republished on a yearly basis.

SECTION 5 - EqIAA OUTCOME

NB. This is an initial EqIAA, therefore, there is no outcome at this stage until all consultation feedback has been analysed and considered and this EqIAA updated.

Outcome	Response	Reason(s) and Justification
Outcome 1: No major change required.	☐	
Outcome 2: Adjustments to remove barriers or to better promote equality have been identified.	☐	
Outcome 3: Continue despite having identified potential for adverse impact or missed opportunities to promote equality.	☐	
Outcome 4: Stop and rethink.	☐	

SECTION 6 - EVIDENCE INFORMING THIS EqIAA

NB. This section will be updated post consultation.

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