




Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EIA please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer or www.somerset.gov.uk/impactassessment

<u>Organisation prepared for (mark as appropriate)</u>	 Somerset Council	<u>YES</u>	 NHS Somerset	 NHS Somerset NHS Foundation Trust		
<u>Version</u>	<u>1</u>		<u>Date Completed</u>	<u>10/03/25</u>		
<u>Description of what is being impact assessed</u>						
<p>Somerset Council provides travel assistance to around 9,000 young people to their education setting each day.</p> <p>While the Council is statutorily obliged to make free of charge home to school travel arrangements for eligible children of compulsory school age, there is no similar statutory obligation on the local authority to provide travel for Post-16 learners.</p> <p>However, the Council currently still provides substantial discretionary assistance for Post-16 learners with SEND at significant financial cost.</p> <p>The proposals are designed to reduce the offer of support available to Post-16 learners with SEND, in line with legislation, while promoting independence and supporting their transition to adulthood.</p> <p>Proposals</p>						

- A new stepped model of assistance for eligible Post-16 and Post-19 learners with SEND that will, wherever appropriate, prioritise an offer of Independent Travel Training (ITT), enabling young people to develop the skills needed to access the public transport network and travel independently.
- Where ITT is assessed to be inappropriate for a young person, a Personal Travel Payment (PTP) will be provided as a contribution towards the cost of the learners' travel arrangements. The payment will take into account individual circumstances and support families, in part to make their own travel arrangements.
- Where there are seats available on a contracted vehicle carrying school-age children to an education provision, these may be offered as an alternative to a PTP.

Travel assistance for Post-16 and Post-19 learners will still require an application and will be assessed to determine eligibility and the appropriate type of assistance offered.

Any changes will be implemented for young people entering Post-16 education in September 2025 and onwards.

All young people already in Post-16 education at that point will continue on the current policy, except in a small number of cases where reassessment is required due to a change in circumstances, such as:

- a change in their medical needs
- a house move
- a change of education setting
- or at certain key transition points in their learning where a new application for travel assistance is required

As with Independent Travel Training it may also be recognised that a Personal Travel Payment may not be appropriate for all young people and the council may continue to consider providing council-organised travel assistance such as a mini-bus in areas where lots of students access their local College and may have profound and significant difficulties, on a discretionary basis in exceptional circumstances. The policy will retain a power of discretion to appropriately and justly award travel assistance of any type.

It is important to stress that all applications are assessed on an individual basis and this will continue for future travel entitlement with the new policy.

Evidence

What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups? Sources such as the [Office of National Statistics](#), [Somerset Intelligence Partnership](#), [Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis \(JSNA\)](#), Staff and/ or [area profiles](#), should be detailed here

Of the 9,000 children/young people that we currently provide travel assistance for in Somerset on a daily basis, there are approximately 300 students that we provide additional assistance as they are attending their nearest school or college for post 16 education, this is broken down in the following way:

84 students travelling on dedicated school buses to their nearest school

90 students attending a sixth form provision at their nearest special school

36 students with SEND using travel provided by the LA to FE Colleges

90 students in receipt of a Personal travel payment

In addition to the figures above an additional 43 students have been signed off by Independent Travel Trainers and are able to travel to school or college independently.

Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups and what have they told you? If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?

A public consultation has been held for 6 weeks from 10/02/25-30/03/25, this has been communicated by Comms with a press release, social media activity, Somerset Parent/Carer forum, Newsletters to all schools and Colleges and internal staff in Entitlements and Transport and the Statutory SEND team.

** consultation is still open at this time.

Analysis of impact on protected groups

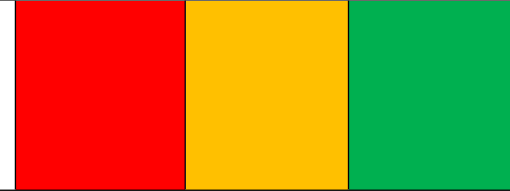
The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact for post-16 students; young people of sixth form age and adult learners (up to age 25 where they are continuing on a course started before their 19th birthday). A change to the travel provision is proposed for Post-16 students towards a more sustainable and/or independent travel offer through a hierarchy of travel support. Students may be required to make their own travel arrangements with the support of Independent Travel Training or by the provision of a Personal Travel Payment. All applications for travel support are assessed on an individual basis. 	☒	☐	☐
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are approximately 1400 children of which 300 of these are over the age of 16 with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) for whom Transporting Somerset provides travel assistance, Travel assistance may be provided for Post-16 students; young people of sixth form age and adult learners (up to age 25 where they are continuing on a course started before their 19th birthday) with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities based on assessed need. A change to the travel provision is proposed for Post-16 students towards a more 	☒	☐	☐

	<p>sustainable and/or independent travel offer through a hierarchy of travel support. Students may be required to make their own travel arrangements with the support of independent travel training or by the provision of a Personal Travel Payment. Students who are trained to travel independently to school or college develop a life long skill and feel more independent. For students who are neuro-diverse we understand that options will be difficult and we can work with students to help their transition and the changes they are going through. For students who have significant disabilities we can advise and provide guidance to source suitable travel. As mentioned above the Policy will still retain an element of discretion when officers are assessing applications on an individual basis.</p>			
<p>Gender reassignment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A change from dedicated home to school transport to public transport will potentially impact these young people as they are transitioning to an un-known environment. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Marriage and civil partnership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No identified impact 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Pregnancy and maternity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No identified impact 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Race and ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No identified impact 	□	⊗	□
Religion or belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No identified impact 	□	⊗	□
Sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No identified impact 	□	⊗	□
Sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No identified impact 	□	⊗	□
Armed Forces (including serving personnel, families and veterans)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No identified impact 	□	⊗	□
Other, e.g. carers, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The offer of travel training will be beneficial to a family on low income as it enables a young person to be independent, the Trainers are able to advise families about concessionary bus pass options for afternoon journeys or journeys at other times of the day and bursaries for which they can claim towards the cost of travel. If travel training is not an option a Personal travel payment will ensure that parents can choose the type of transport suitable for their young person without having to pay a contribution charge. Payments are also made in advance. As 	□	□	⊗

mentioned above the Policy will still retain an element of discretion when officers are assessing applications on an individual basis.



Negative outcomes action plan

Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

Action taken/to be taken	Date	Person responsible	How will it be monitored?	Action complete
A full public consultation for 28 working days is currently being carried out.	10/02/2025	Debbie Reed	Updated weekly	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>

If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.

Completed by:	Debbie Reed
Date	10/03/25
Signed off by:	Phil Curd
Date	10/03/25
Equality Lead sign off name:	Tom Rutland
Equality Lead sign off date:	18/03/25
To be reviewed by: (officer name)	Phil Curd
Review date:	May 2025