

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

DONCASTER METROPLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Due Regard Statement

How to show due regard to the equality duty in how we develop our work and in our decision making.

Due Regard Statement

A **Due Regard Statement** (DRS) is the tool for capturing the evidence to demonstrate that due regard has been shown when the council plans and delivers its functions. A Due Regard Statement must be completed for all programmes, projects and changes to service delivery.

- A DRS should be initiated at the beginning of the programme, project or change to inform project planning
- The DRS runs adjacent to the programme, project or change and is reviewed and completed at the relevant points
- Any reports produced needs to reference “Due Regard” in the main body of the report and the DRS should be attached as an appendix
- The DRS cannot be fully completed until the programme, project or change is delivered.

<p>1 Name of the ‘policy’ and briefly describe the activity being considered including aims and expected outcomes. This will help to determine how relevant the ‘policy’ is to equality.</p>	<p>The policy is a revised Doncaster Council Home to School Transport Policy 2022–2027.</p> <p>The primary responsibility for ensuring pupils and students attend school or college is always that of the parent or carer. In certain circumstances however, in order to ensure attendance, Doncaster Council can help with travel arrangements. The new proposal has been the subject of a thorough consultation.</p> <p>Key changes that affect users are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Request for a contribution towards the future provision of dedicated taxi and/or minibus transport for all Post 16 - 19 SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) pupils and students. <i>Updated 21 Feb 22: This change is no longer being taken forward following feedback from the consultation</i>2. Removal of the clause which currently provides bus passes on the basis of no extra cost in certain situations meaning increased preference for some people3. To no longer provide bus passes to pupils whose families move house during Academic Years 10 or 114. Removal of the current requirement within the ‘Home to School Transport’ policy which provides travel assistance to pupils attending their catchment school. In future this will state their nearest available school only, if they meet the distance criteria for eligibility, regardless of whether or not this is catchment. <i>Updated 10 June 22: This change has been put on hold and will not be taken forward at this time as initial work on the scope of this change indicates that this will impact a greater number of pupils than originally thought and there is a need for more comprehensive scoping to assess impact and solutions before this can be considered further.</i> <p>There are a number of other suggestions for refreshing and changing within the Policy which were proposed and included in the Consultation Document. An opportunity to discuss these was also provided..</p>
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		<p>The new version of the Home to School Travel Assistance Policy will outline the responsibilities of the Council and provide a clear and transparent guide for families to the instances when travel assistance will be provided. It will also detail the types of travel assistance available to eligible pupils and students.</p>						
2	<p>Service area responsible for completing this statement.</p>	<p>Travel Assistance Service Learning & Opportunities: Children & Young People</p>						
3	<p>Summary of the information considered across the protected groups. Service users/residents Doncaster Workforce</p>	<p>In the majority of cases, the policy is applied to children and young people aged between 4 and 25 years of age. We hold information about their age, disability, gender, race and religion and belief. Only age, address, disability and religion and belief are considered in terms of eligibility for support, and this is supported by the current legislation.</p> <p>There are currently approximately 1000 children and young people who receive direct transport assistance with a further 1100 in receipt of a zero fare bus pass. Although the revision of policy applies to all, the following estimated numbers would be affected by the key changes if approved, and the policy has been revised in such a way to limit impact as much as possible.</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>1. Post 16-19 SEND Students</td> <td>Approximately 82 (<i>21.2.22 no longer impacted as removed post consultation</i>)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Pupils received bus passes on the basis of No extra cost</td> <td>Approximately 100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Pupils who move house during years 10 and 11</td> <td>Approximately 14</td> </tr> </table> <p>The majority of the statements within the consultation document were not changes to the Policy but updates and clarification of the Policy already in place</p> <p>The main assessment criteria for help with travel arrangements is the distance between home and nearest suitable school. Where the distance between the two is equal to or more than 2 miles (4-8 year olds) or 3 miles (over 8-16), free travel assistance will be provided. This will normally be facilitated through the provision of a zero fare bus pass for the child.</p> <p>Although distance between home and school remains the central tenet of the policy there are additional exceptions based on low income and, in terms of protected characteristics, disability and religion and belief.</p>	1. Post 16-19 SEND Students	Approximately 82 (<i>21.2.22 no longer impacted as removed post consultation</i>)	2. Pupils received bus passes on the basis of No extra cost	Approximately 100	3. Pupils who move house during years 10 and 11	Approximately 14
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		<p>For Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities the provision of travel assistance takes into account their individual needs and is not dependent upon the mileage above.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Summary of the consultation/engagement activities</p>	<p>There has been a significant amount of consultation undertaken in the development of the revised Home to School Travel Assistance Policy. The review of the existing ‘Home to School Transport’ Policy commenced in August 2021 enabling a full analysis and assessment of current policy provision.</p> <p>Four Pre-Consultation sessions were held on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday 16th November 10:00am – 11:00am • Thursday 18th November 6:00pm – 7:00pm • Monday 22nd November 6:00pm – 7:00pm • Tuesday 23rd November 10:00am – 11:00am <p>These sessions were provided for parents and carers to talk about the future of ‘home-to-school’ transport for children with special educational needs and disabilities, and children accessing other travel provision. Before we started a formal consultation process, we were keen to gather some initial thoughts and feedback on our suggestions. To ensure everyone’s safety with the on-going coronavirus pandemic, the sessions were held virtually via the Microsoft Teams platform with opportunities to write or email any feedback or speak on the telephone on a 1 to 1 basis.</p> <p>A separate consultation session was held on 29th November 2021 with the Doncaster Parents Voice to discuss the policy suggestions, promote collaborative working and understand the views and comments from this group.</p> <p>Doncaster Council entered into a period of formal consultation on 29th November 2021. This ran until 31st January 2022 (9 weeks) offering the opportunity for Doncaster residents to comment upon the proposed changes to the existing ‘Home to School Transport’ policy.</p> <p>Full details are provided in the Consultation document (Appendix 1).</p> <p>To ensure that the widest possible audience was reached copies of the consultation document were issued to parents, carers & professionals who access transport services (including professionals, schools and other services both within the local authority and stakeholders in other authorities). This</p>

was also published on the Council's Website for the duration of the consultation period with regular updates and reminders published through Doncaster Council's social media provision and Communications Team.

To maximise the return rate, a number of different methods of response were made available. These were:

- Online – consultation documents available to complete and return digitally
- E-mail – consultation documents / comments returned electronically.
- Post – opportunity for printed consultation documents return by post or via Doncaster Council's Family Hubs
- Direct contact with the Doncaster Council's Transport Team and Projects & Transformation Team

Seven formal consultation events were offered during the consultation period and were open to all to attend. These events were regularly promoted through the consultation documents and regular posts Doncaster Council's social media. The events were provided on:

- Friday 10th December 10:00am – 11:00am
- Tuesday 14th December 6:00pm – 7:00pm
- Tuesday 11th January 2022 10:00am – 11:00am - cancelled as no requests to attend
- Thursday 13th January 2022 6:00pm – 7:00pm
- Tuesday 18th January 2022 10:00am – 11:00am
- Wednesday 19th January 2022 10:00am – 11:00am
- Thursday 20th January 2022 6:00pm – 7:00pm

To ensure everyone's ongoing safety these sessions were also held virtually via the Microsoft Teams platform with opportunities to write or email any feedback or speak on the telephone on a 1 to 1 basis.

By the close of the formal consultation period (31st January 2022), Thirteen consultation documents were completed and returned.

<p>5</p>	<p>Real Consideration:</p> <p>Summary of what the evidence shows and how has it been used</p>	<p>All <u>16</u> questions within the main consultation document received at least one response. The most responses to any one question was 10 responses to question 2, with <u>13 questions</u> receiving more than one response.</p> <p>An additional 80 responses were received from the short form survey launched to cover the key proposals within the consultation.</p> <p>These responses together with additional comments from the Consultation Events are included in Appendix 2</p> <p>Saving has never been the prime consideration, but value for money considerations provide extra impetus to make the change. The main focus of revising the policy is to ensure that it is clear and transparent about the principles, process and services available, and all changes made have been considered in terms of impact on all users, including those of protected characteristics.</p> <p><i>Following analysis of the feedback from the consultation and listening to the thoughts and views of families, the decision was taken not to proceed with the proposal to charge a contribution to families in receipt of Post 16 -19 transport. It was recognised that this would put some already struggling families into further hardship and we want to support our most vulnerable families.</i></p> <p>It was decided to proceed through the governance process with the remaining proposals.</p> <p><i>Updated 10 June 2022: The proposed removal of provision of bus passes to catchment schools has now been put on hold as initial work on the scope of this change indicates that it will impact a greater number of pupils than originally thought. A more detailed scoping process is required to fully assess the impact and review current public transport availability in some areas is needed before this can be considered further.</i></p>
<p>6</p>	<p>Decision Making</p>	<p>Due Regard Statement will accompany the agenda item at Cabinet meeting on 20th July 2022</p> <p>The cabinet report provides greater detail around the consultation process and how consideration of protected characteristics / due regard has been an ongoing concern throughout the revision process. Regular updates on due regard and the overall process have been provided to the decision maker throughout.</p>

7	Monitoring and Review	Following publication of the Policy, monitoring of Travel Assistance Appeals will be undertaken on an ongoing basis in respect of the key change proposed to assess the impact of this.
8	Sign off and approval for publication	Kim Holdridge, Service Manager, Pupil Support & Passenger Transport