

## Appendix 2 PART A - Initial Equality Screening Assessment

As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality and diversity.

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provide a record of both the process and decision. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services and functions.

Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

- the relevance of proposals and decisions to equality and diversity
- whether or not equality and diversity is being/has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an Equality Analysis (Part B).

Further information is available in the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance – see page 9.

1. Title	
<b>Title:</b> Home to School Transport Policy	
<b>Directorate:</b> Regeneration and Environment	<b>Service area:</b> Community Safety and Street Scene
<b>Lead person:</b> Karen Mudford	<b>Contact number:</b> karen.mudford@rotherham.gov.uk
Is this a:	
<input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/> <b>Strategy / Policy</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Service / Function</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other</b>	
<b>If other, please specify</b>	

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening
The report provides details of the Policy review and seeks to revise the existing Policy in accordance with renewed Department for Education (DfE) and legislative requirements.

Home to School travel is an integral part of the school system that ensures that no child of compulsory school age is prevented from accessing education to fulfil their potential, as a result of a lack of transport or cost of transport.

The Council have a statutory responsibility to make suitable travel arrangements to and from school for eligible children of compulsory school age. Statutory guidance is published by the DfE and sets out what local authorities must do to comply with the law. Under statutory duties, each Local Authority is required to annually review and published a revised policy. As the Home to school Transport Policy statement contains includes criteria for Learners aged 16-19 years in further education and training and continuing learners with a learning difficulty and/or disability (LLDD) aged 19 years and over, the requirement is for this to be published by 31<sup>st</sup> May 2025 to be compliant.

The RMBC Home to School Policy is updated with minor changes each year to ensure it reflects the academic dates and is compliant.

A full policy review was undertaken and following formal consultation, a new policy was published in March 2025. A previous equalities screening assessment was completed in February 2024, and the current policy review contains only minor changes.

### 3. Relevance to equality and diversity

All the Council's strategies/policies, services/functions affect service users, employees or the wider community – borough wide or more local. These will also have a greater/lesser relevance to equality and diversity.

The following questions will help you to identify how relevant your proposals are.

When considering these questions think about age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, civil partnerships and marriage, pregnancy and maternity and other socio-economic groups e.g. parents, single parents and guardians, carers, looked after children, unemployed and people on low incomes, ex-offenders, victims of domestic violence, homeless people etc.

Questions	Yes	No
Could the proposal have implications regarding the accessibility of services to the whole or wider community? <i>(Be mindful that this is not just about numbers. A potential to affect a small number of people in a significant way is as important)</i>	X	
Could the proposal affect service users? <i>(Be mindful that this is not just about numbers. A potential to affect a small number of people in a significant way is as important)</i>	X	
Has there been or is there likely to be an impact on an individual or group with protected characteristics? <i>(Consider potential discrimination, harassment or victimisation of individuals with protected characteristics)</i>	X	
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns regarding the proposal?		X

<i>(It is important that the Council is transparent and consultation is carried out with members of the public to help mitigate future challenge)</i>		
Could the proposal affect how the Council's services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom? <i>(If the answer is yes you may wish to seek advice from commissioning or procurement)</i>		X
Could the proposal affect the Council's workforce or employment practices? <i>(If the answer is yes you may wish to seek advice from your HR business partner)</i>		X
If you have answered no to all the questions above, please explain the reason		

If you have answered **no** to all the questions above please complete **sections 5 and 6**.

If you have answered **yes** to any of the above please complete **section 4**.

#### 4. Considering the impact on equality and diversity

If you have not already done so, the impact on equality and diversity should be considered within your proposals before decisions are made.

Considering equality and diversity will help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and take active steps to create a discrimination free society by meeting a group or individual's needs and encouraging participation.

Please provide specific details for all three areas below using the prompts for guidance and complete an Equality Analysis (Part B).

- How have you considered equality and diversity?**

Equality and diversity have been considered, with a specific focus on the protected characteristics related to the Equality Act 2010 as well as additional factors related to Home to School Policy specifically.

The different stakeholders involved, including children/ young people, parents/carers, transport operators and RMBC, carry implications for equalities. All protected characteristics will be evaluated. The most pertinent ones for children/young people are age, disability, sex, race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, but marriage/civil partnership and religion or belief are considered with respect to the parent/carer and their choice of school. EAL and socio-economic factors also need to be considered.

- Key findings**

Of the protected characteristics detailed in the Equality Act 2010, age and disability are predicted to carry the most implications for equalities. There are also broader

socioeconomic and EAL implications to be considered. Finally, there may be implications for religion/belief, especially with respect to parents of pupils eligible for Home to School support, who opt to send their child to a school with a religious character.

### **Age & Disability**

The Home to School Policy aims to assist children aged 5-16 years old (i.e. statutory school age) as well as learners aged 16-19 years old in further education and training and continuing learners with a learning difficulty and/or disability (LLDD) aged 19 years and over. There is no statutory duty to provide assistance to children and young people who are not compulsory school age, but LA's have discretionary powers to consider each application on its own merit.

Different provisions and eligibility criteria exist depending upon the child's age group. Examples include, but are not limited to, statutory walking distances, extended rights for children/young people from low-income families and financial hardship considerations. Disability.

The Home to School Policy includes specific measures for children with EHCPs and/or SEND. Section 39 of the Children and Families Act 2014 governs the naming of a school in a child/young person's EHCP. RMBC provides a local offer for SEND children, which is available at: <https://www.rotherhamsendlocaloffer.org.uk/>

This Policy includes Learners aged 16-19 years in further education and training and continuing learners with a learning difficulty and/or disability (LLDD) aged 19 years and over.

The 16-19 Student Bursary Fund may provide disabled young people receiving both Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance the maximum bursary of £1,200.

The implications for Home to School Policy also need to be considered in respect of parents/carers with disabilities. Where a child/young person is required to be accompanied to school, and their parent/carer have disabilities or mobility problems (as defined & verified by a medical professional), which would make it difficult for them to accompany their child, RMBC may provide transport assistance when appropriate medical evidence has been provided from a healthcare professional.

Independent Travel Training contains specific advice on how best to support SEND children, in referencing The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25.

### **Religion/belief**

Some parents opt to send their child to a school with a religious character; there are provisions which balance the parents' wishes in line with the Policy.

### **Marriage/civil partnership**

Some children may spend time between addresses, such as in cases where their parents have separated and/or are divorced.

The policy stipulates that Home to School is only provided from one address, but measures must be made to ensure that the provision is practical and meets the individual child's/young person's transport needs. Other Socio-economic factors are considered throughout the policy and eligibility criteria are designed to enable parent's appropriate access and provision to Home to School transport. Those with EAL may struggle to understand the document; the front of the draft policy includes a statement that: "If you or someone you know needs help to understand or read this document, please contact us": [education.transport@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:education.transport@rotherham.gov.uk) , with translations of this statement available in Slovak, Kurdish Sorani, Arabic, Urdu and Farsi."

- **Actions**

Overall, the draft Policy provides adequate provision to ensure full compliance with Education Act 1996 and the Equality Act 2010.

The main areas for reducing negative impact are centred around equalities impacts not directly associated with a given protected characteristic, such as socio-economic factors or those with EAL. As part of the Equality Analysis, further consideration is made regarding how to improve accessibility for EAL, of for those who have no internet access.

Additional data may need to be ascertained with respect to protected characteristics when considering reducing negative impact. Examples include, but are not limited to, when RMBC needs to know how best to address and mitigate circumstances where a child lives at two separate addresses and/or is SEND.

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	22/04/2025
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	22/04/2025
Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	Elise Saxton Transport Business & Projects Manager

## 5. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening:

Name	Job title	Date
Elise Saxton	Transport Business and Projects Management	22/04/2025
Paul Topham	Transport Services Manager	25/04/2025

## 6. Publishing

This screening document will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.

If this screening relates to a **Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision** a copy of the completed document should be attached as an appendix and published alongside the relevant report.

A copy of **all** screenings should also be sent to [equality@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:equality@rotherham.gov.uk) For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.

<b>Date screening completed</b>	22/04/2025
<b>Report title and date</b>	Home to school transport policy – April 2025
<b>If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication</b>	May 2025
<b>Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement</b> <a href="mailto:equality@rotherham.gov.uk">equality@rotherham.gov.uk</a>	25/04/2025