

Equality Impact Assessment

The purpose of an assessment is to understand the impact of the Council's activities* on people from protected groups and to assess whether unlawful discrimination may occur. It also helps to identify key equality issues and highlight opportunities to promote equality across the Council and the community. The assessment should be carried out during the initial stages of the planning process so that any findings can be incorporated into the final proposals and, where appropriate, have a bearing on the outcome.

(*Activity can mean strategy, practice, function, policy, procedure, decision, project or service)

Name of person completing the assessment	Francesca Smith	Date of assessment	25.5.21
Name of the proposed activity being assessed	Agile Working Policy	Is this a new or existing activity?	existing
Who will implement the activity and who will be responsible for it?	Service Leaders and Corporate Management Team		

1. Determining the relevance to equality

What are the aims, objectives and purpose of the activity?	To encourage our employees to adopt a flexible, collaborative working style which supports the delivery of effective customer service whilst also offering staff flexibility in how they work. Agile technology enables us to work remotely and allows staff to access the information and tools that they need to carry out their work at any time from any location. This flexibility means that we can utilise our accommodation more efficiently and provide an environment where teams can expand and contract over time and accommodate working with partners.		
Is this a major activity that significantly affects how services or functions are delivered?	No, service delivery should not be affected	Who will benefit from this activity and how?	Staff benefit from flexibility in their working day and the Council benefits from reduced accommodation costs
Does it relate to a function that has been identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?	Flexible working arrangements are of particular benefit for staff with caring responsibilities which are statistically more likely to be females.	Who are the stakeholders? Does the activity affect employees, service users or the wider community?	Service provision should not be adversely affected by agile working practices. Staff will benefit from increased flexibility.

Based on the above information, is the activity relevant to equality?

Yes – continue to section 2	Yes, agile working practices will be offered to all staff who are working in roles that can be carried out remotely.
No – please record your reasons why the activity is not relevant to equality	

2. Is the proposed activity accessible for all the protected groups listed below?
(Consider in what ways the activity might create difficulties or barriers to parts of the workforce, community or protected groups. How might one or more groups be excluded because of the activity?)

Protected groups	Yes	No	Evidence
Disability	x		An assessment will need to be carried out on any adaptations to the home workstation that are required. The cost of these may mean that the employee can only have one set of adaptations provided, either to the home workstation or the workplace.
Race	x		
Gender	x		Approximately 20% of the workforce are operational and will not be able to work remotely in front line roles. These workers are predominantly male.
Sexual orientation	x		
Age	x		
Religion or belief	x		
Transgender or transsexual	x		
Marriage and civil partnership	x		
Pregnancy or maternity	x		

3. Is it likely the proposed activity will have a negative impact on one or more protected groups?

Protected groups	Yes	No	Evidence
Disability		x	Mental health conditions may be worsened by the social isolation of homeworking and wellbeing concerns may not be picked up by management and colleagues. Staff will be required to work in the office location for half of their working week to ensure team interaction and enable management support.
Race		x	
Gender		x	Domestic violence increases with more time spent in the home and victims are statistically more likely to be female. Home working is optional so those at risk can choose to be office-based.

Sexual orientation		x	
Age		x	Young employees are more likely to have entry level training needs which may benefit from working within a team environment. Statistically younger employees are more likely to be affected by the social isolation created by remote working. Managers will regularly assess the needs of any employees within this strand.
Religion or belief		x	
Transgender or transsexual		x	
Marriage and civil partnership		x	
Pregnancy or maternity		x	

4. What action can be taken to address any negative impact? What measures could be included to promote a positive impact? *(Consider whether it is possible to amend or change the activity due to the likely adverse impact whilst still delivering the objective. Is it possible to consider a different activity which still achieves the aims but avoids an adverse impact? Is an action plan required to reduce any actual or potential adverse impact?)*

The Agile Working Policy has been well received by staff with a general consensus that a mixture of home working and office based work provides the right balance of interaction with colleagues, learning and development opportunities, prevents feelings of isolation, and enables managers to communicate more effectively with teams.

There are concerns regarding the suitability of the home environment where employees do not have an adequate workspace, however the Policy does not enforce homeworking but offers this as a choice where the role is defined as an agile one.

Some roles will be designated as office workers and will not have the opportunity to work remotely. The impact of this will need to be assessed once roles have been designated to see if there is any disproportionate impact on one or more of the protected groups.

5. What are the main sources of evidence that have been used to identify the likely impacts on the different protected groups? *(Use relevant quantitative and qualitative information that is available from sources such as previous EIA's, engagement with staff and service users, equality monitoring, complaints, comments, customer equality profiles, feedback, issues raised at previous consultations and known inequalities).*

- Staff consultation responses.
- Workforce Profile
- HR issues that have arisen during the enforced working from home period

6. Has any consultation been carried out (e.g. with employees, service users or the wider community)? Please provide details

Unison consultation followed by one month of consultation with staff during April.

7. Is further consultation required as a result of any negative impact identified? If so, what groups do you intend to engage with and how?

The Policy will be monitored and reviewed regularly, any significant change to the Policy will require further Unison and staff consultation and Employment Committee approval.

8. Conclusion of Equality Impact Assessment - please summarise your findings

There are no direct equality impacts associated with agreeing the Agile Working Policy however the impact and application of the Policy will require monitoring. There is an unequal gender balance in the non-office based employees who are predominantly males engaged in Operational Services and who will not be eligible for remote working arrangements. This impact is unintentional and arises from the nature of the role rather than a corporate decision or practice. The positive financial, environmental and wellbeing impact on introducing agile working arrangements for the majority of our workforce mitigates the unintended consequence of the equality impact.

Name of person completing assessment:

Date: 23.6.21

Job title: Lead HR Specialist

Signature: Francesca Smith

Senior manager name:

Date:

Signature:

Assessing the impact of your activity* on equality

