

Chesterfield Borough Council

Equality Impact Assessment - Full Assessment Form

Service Area: **Customer Services and Organisational Development / GPGS**

Section: **Human Resources / GPGS**

Lead Officer: **Tara Eyre**

Title of the policy, project, service, function or strategy the preliminary EIA is being produced for: **Home Working Policy**

Is the policy, project, service, function or strategy:

Existing

Changed

New/Proposed

STEP 1 – MAKE SURE YOU HAVE CLEAR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

What is the aim of the policy, project, service, function or strategy?

This policy is being updated as part of the Great Place: Great Service (GPGS) transformation project. During the current arrangements, around 100 employees are currently working from home on some occasions, either on an ad hoc or more formal arrangement. It is anticipated that under new flexible working arrangements, around 360 of the Council's employees will be engaged in home working or agile working to some degree. A separate EIA has been undertaken for the Agile Working Guidance.

The purpose of the policy is to provide procedural guidelines for employees to work at home. The policy has been developed following best practice and relevant Health and Safety legislation.

Who is the policy, project, service, function or strategy going to benefit and how?

Implementing the Home Working Policy will enable the Council to take a more corporate approach to home working, which is necessary in order to implement the new flexible working arrangements and employee accommodation. All those employees who have been identified through the corporate employee profiling exercise as 'flexi' workers will have the opportunity (and be encouraged) to work from home between 4 and 8 days per month.

This could support those employees with caring responsibilities or help to reduce travelling time and costs. The corporate approach will ensure that opportunities for home working are fairly and consistently applied.

The Council will benefit by retaining skilled and experienced employees to continue to deliver high quality services. Home working can result in employees being more committed and motivated in their work. As the delivery of Council services change, it can be in the Council's interest for employees to work at home at different hours to fit in with changes to the service.

What outcomes do you want to achieve?

To ensure that:

- Flexible workers are working from home between 4 and 8 days per month so that office accommodation is freed up and the workspace planning project can be implemented
- home working opportunities are considered consistently and fairly
- employees have a safe working environment if they work at home
- that the Council retains skilled and experienced employees
- for employees to remain committed and motivated to deliver high quality services
- there are systems in place to monitor work produced whilst at home

What barriers exist for both the Council and the groups/people with protected characteristics to enable these outcomes to be achieved?

Barriers / factors which may impact on the delivery of our desired outcomes include:

- Lack of willingness of 'flexible workers' to work from home
- Lack of suitable space or equipment (eg. broadband) for 'flexible workers' to work from home
- Some employees identified as 'fixed workers' that would like to work from home on an ad hoc basis will need to discuss this possibility with their manager, but will not be automatically eligible for home working because of the nature of their role.
- Not being able to provide or monitor any reasonable adjustments or appropriate work environment
- Cultural change and compatibility issues with existing technology infrastructure could be an issue.

STEP 2 – COLLECTING YOUR INFORMATION

What existing data sources do you have to assess the impact of the policy, project, service, function or strategy?

- Employee profiling information, including requirements of each role and reasonable adjustments currently in place for individuals.
- Best practise information from other local authorities
- Time spent with senior managers to ensure user categories correct
- Review current working practices
- Involve employees in choice of device to enable home working

STEP 3 – FURTHER ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Please list any additional engagement activities undertaken to complete this EIA e.g. met with the Equalities Advisory Group, local BME groups, Employee representatives etc. Could you also please summarise the main findings.

Date	Engagement Activity	Main findings
July – Nov 14	Meetings with Flexible Working User Group	To ensure Home Working Policy changed to reflect new flexible working practice.
July - Nov 14	Meetings with Unions	To ensure the unions are in agreement with the changes made to the Home Working Policy.
Dec 14	Meeting with Services Managers to confirm employee needs	To ensure employees are categorised correctly and to discuss ICT requirements of home workers, including any reasonable adjustments
Jan 15	Individual needs discussions	Each employee will have a discussion with the GPGS team to discuss their individual circumstances and requirements for home working.

External consultation has not taken place, as this is an internal policy covering employees only.

STEP 4 – WHAT’S THE IMPACT?

Is there an impact (positive or negative) on some groups/people with protected characteristics in the community? (think about race, disability, age, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation and other socially excluded communities or groups). You may also need to think about sub groups within each equalities group or protected characteristics e.g. older women, younger men, disabled women etc.

Please describe the potential impacts both positive and negative and any action we are able to take to reduce negative impacts or enhance the positive impacts.

Impact on the Workforce

Group or Protected Characteristic	Positive impacts	Negative impacts	Action
Overall impact on the workforce.	Implementation of the policy will ensure that all employees are aware of and have access to home working opportunities irrespective of protected characteristics, if they have been identified as flexible workers.	<p>The Council will no longer pay the initial set up costs or monthly allowance for employees working from home. This may be a barrier for some employees.</p> <p>It will be necessary for employees to transport equipment between home and work – there are security and manual handling considerations here, as free onsite parking is not available for most employees at the Town Hall.</p>	<p>All employees will undertake a training day appropriate to their profile – for flexible workers this will include a health and safety assessment and DSE assessment. Employees will also undertaken manual handling training to ensure safe transportation of equipment.</p> <p>Each employee will also have a discussion with the GPGS team to discuss their individual circumstances and requirements for home working, including reasonable adjustments.</p> <p>Although flexible workers will be encouraged to work from home, this will not be mandatory.</p>
Age – including older people and younger people.	See overall impact	See overall impact	See overall impact
Disabled people – physical, mental and sensory including learning disabled people and people living with HIV/Aids and	<p>See overall impact</p> <p>Home working could be a reasonable adjustment that will enable employees with disabilities to remain at work. They could complete their work at</p>	<p>Home working could lead to feelings of isolation for some people.</p> <p>It will be necessary for employees to transport equipment between home and work – there are</p>	<p>Each employee will also have a discussion with the GPGS team to discuss their individual circumstances and requirements for home working, including reasonable adjustments. In addition it is important that health and safety assessments are undertaken to</p>

<p>cancer.</p>	<p>times to suit their personal circumstances which may not be possible in the workplace e.g. to take a break in the afternoon and work later into the evening.</p>	<p>security and manual handling considerations here, as free onsite parking is not available for most employees at the Town Hall.</p>	<p>ensure the environment is suitable according to the disability of the employee.</p> <p>Employees will undertake manual handling training to ensure safe transportation of equipment.</p> <p>Flexible workers will be limited to working a maximum of 8 days per month from home, in order to maintain social interaction at work.</p>
<p>Gender – men, women and transgender.</p>	<p>See overall impact</p> <p>At CBC, it is female employees that have previously requested home working, mainly for caring reasons. Changes in working arrangements may help to encourage men to make changes to their working patterns either for caring or other reasons.</p>	<p>See overall impact</p>	<p>See overall impact</p>
<p>Marital status including civil partnership.</p>	<p>See overall impact</p>	<p>See overall impact</p>	<p>See overall impact</p>
<p>Pregnant women and people on maternity/paternity. Also consider breastfeeding mothers.</p>	<p>See overall impact</p> <p>During pregnancy, this group could work at home if they are less able to travel, or could fit work in around ante natal appointments.</p>	<p>See overall impact</p>	<p>See overall impact</p>

	Home working may also be considered to support childcare.		
Sexual Orientation	See overall impact	See overall impact	See overall impact
Ethnic Groups	See overall impact	See overall impact	See overall impact
Religions and Beliefs including those with no religion and/or beliefs.	Home working arrangements will enable Muslim employees to adapt their working day around alterations to their schedule during Ramadan.	See overall impact	See overall impact
Other groups e.g. those experiencing deprivation and/or health inequalities.	Improved home working arrangements and opportunities are anticipated to have a positive impact for carers.	<p>Home working could lead to feelings of isolation for some people.</p> <p>Employees without access to suitable internet connection whether due to rurality or cost will be unable to take home working opportunities.</p> <p>The removal of the allowance and payment for set up costs may make home working unaffordable for some employees.</p>	<p>Flexible workers will be limited to working a maximum of 8 days per month from home, in order to maintain social interaction at work. Line managers will also be able to arrange visits to employees at home.</p> <p>Although flexible workers will be encouraged to work from home, this will not be mandatory.</p>

From the information gathered above does the policy, project, service, function or strategy directly or indirectly discriminate against any particular group or protected characteristic?

Yes
No

If yes what action can be taken to stop the discrimination?

Actions have been identified in the table above to mitigate against negative impacts as far as possible.

STEP 5 – RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISION MAKING

How has the EIA helped to shape the policy, project, service, function or strategy or affected the recommendation or decision?

The EIA has enabled mitigating action to be identified where negative impacts are anticipated.

How are you going to monitor the policy, project, service, function or strategy, how often and who will be responsible?

The GPGS project will be monitoring uptake of home working arrangements. Line managers will also be reviewing arrangements on an ongoing basis.

STEP 6 – KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND PUBLICATION

Please note the draft EIA should be reviewed by the appropriate Head of Service/Service Manager and the Policy Service before WBR, Lead Member, Cabinet, Council reports are produced.

Reviewed by Head of Service/Service Manager

Name: Tara Eyre

Date: 27/11/14

Reviewed by Policy Service

Name: Katy Marshall

Date: 27/11/2014

Final version of the EIA sent to the Policy Service ✓

Decision information sent to the Policy Service