

Huntingdonshire District Council Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)



Service area	HR
Date of assessment	June 2015
Name of Policy to be assessed	Flexible Working Policy
Is this a new or existing Policy?	Existing policy
Name of manager responsible for Policy	Kiran Hans
Names of people conducting the assessment	Kiran Hans & Louise Sboui
Step 1 – Description of policy	
Describe the aims; objectives and purpose of the policy (include how it fits in to wider aims or strategic objectives).	<p>HDC believes that flexible working can increase employees' motivation, promote work-life balance, reduce employee stress and improve performance and productivity.</p> <p>By adopting flexible working practices, HDC aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ensure flexibility in service delivery; - proactively respond to 'family friendly' legislation; - support employees that request time off to train; - enhance its reputation as an 'employer of choice' <p>The following basic principles apply to the Council's approach to flexible working:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - there is an expectation that all employees will be prepared to work



	<p>flexibly;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Council will agree to requests that are in the interests of the service as well as the employee; - flexible working can apply to many employees and services within the Council, though the exact arrangements agreed will depend on the job role, service requirements and the individual employee; - the Council reserves the right to decline requests that do not assist the effective delivery of services; - all flexible working arrangements will be subject to regular review, at least annually to ensure they continue to meet the needs of the service. - your manager may ask you to work flexibly <p>A flexible working arrangement may be explored as a possible reasonable adjustment for an employee.</p>
<p>The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, the Council also needs to demonstrate its compliance with the Equality Duty. The Council therefore needs to understand how its decisions and activities impact on different people, specifically employees and how they are affected by policies and practices. An Equality Impact Assessment is the current method by which the Council can assess and keep a record of the impact of new or amended strategies, policies, functions or services. The council retains these duties even when outsourcing services or providing shared services.</p> <p><i>Definition of Adverse Impact - occurs when a decision, practice, or policy has a disproportionately negative effect on a protected group. Adverse Impact may be unintentional</i></p> <p>Adverse impact can be measured statistically:</p>	
<p>Does the policy have any (existing) equality objectives?</p>	<p>The overarching principle of the Flexible working Policy is the belief</p>



	that flexible working can increase employees' motivation, promote work-life balance, reduce employee stress and improve performance and productivity
Who is intended to benefit from the policy and in what way?	All Staff below Senior Manager Pay Grade
What are the intended outcomes of this policy?	Work Life Balance, Flexibility, Retention, Motivation
Step 2 – Data	
What baseline quantitative data (statistics) do you have about the service relating to equalities groups (e.g. monitoring data on proportions of service users compared to proportions in the population), relevant to this policy? Census 2011 district profile	<p>Part-time, Jobshare, Term-Time, Variable Hours, Annualised Hours, Full-time, Homeworkers, Compressed Hours.</p> <p>All employees below Senior Manager Pay Grade i.e. Head of Service, are eligible for flexitime except where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - fixed shift patterns/rota systems operate, - fixed working hours are agreed with an employee/group of employees, e.g. operations division; - an employee performs time-dependent duties, - it is stated in the contract of employment, - Compressed hours agreement <p>Out of a total of 691 employees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 179 work part-time o two employees have a term time contract



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ two employees work annualised hours. ○ 157 of the 179 employees working part-time are female ○ 203 of the 512 employee working full-time are female <p>However the council has a flexi-time system in place which, many people could be working hours that enables them to manage Work/Life commitments.</p> <p>Where flexitime is not possible there is the TOIL option, however employees can still request flexible working.</p>
<p>What qualitative data (opinions etc) do you have on different groups (e.g. comments from previous consumer satisfaction surveys/consultation, feedback exercises, or evidence from other authorities undertaking similar work), relevant to this policy?</p>	<p>The policy has had input through focus groups, from Staff Council, Joint Liasion Group and Senior Management Team to get the correct balance to meet the needs of the differing services.</p>
<p>The Consultation and Engagement Strategy Accessibility Guidance may be helpful when thinking about the potential impact of a policy/strategy/function on people with different protected characteristics.</p>	
<p>Step 3 – impact on protected characteristics</p>	
<p>3 a) Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on disabled people? What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	<p>Ineffective implementation of this policy could adversely impact people with disabilities requiring flexible working as a reasonable adjustment, including staff with mental health challenges. Managers and staff will need to understand the principles of the policy.</p>
<p>3 b) Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on younger or older people? What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	<p>N/A</p>

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<p>For some services this should include consideration of impact in terms of safeguarding young people.</p>	
<p>3 c) Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on different racial groups; this refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins. Gypsy/Travellers are distinct group within this category. What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>3d) Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on part time/full time employees? What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	<p>The policy promotes flexible working for both full and part-time employees</p>
<p>3e) Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on gender, including transgender people? What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	<p>Ineffective implementation of this policy could adversely impact staff with either caring responsibilities or childcare responsibilities. Women tend to take on the majority of caring responsibilities and men are much less likely to request part-time working (a flexible working option). Managers and staff will need to understand the principles of the policy.</p>
<p>3f) Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact in terms of marriage and civil partnership? What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>3g) Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact in terms of pregnancy and maternity (e.g. pregnant or breast feeding women) What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	<p>Use of flexi time is often used to enable women to attend anti-natal appointments. A proportion of women do request reduced hours following maternity leave.</p>



<p>3h) Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on lesbian, gay man, bisexual or heterosexual (straight) people? What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>3i) Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact on the grounds of religion or belief? What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	<p>Flexible working can be used to accommodate requests for different working hours to fit around issues relating to religious belief.</p>
<p>3j) Are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact in terms of specific characteristics of Huntingdonshire e.g. Rural isolation</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Findings

- The data shows that males are less likely to request part time working – there should be better promotion of flexible working options to ensure that all staff are informed and feel comfortable in making the choice to work flexibly.
- Managers have a responsibility to ensure that they manage and support all staff fairly. If not, the policy could be implemented unfairly and this could have a detrimental effect on - staff who have caring or childcare responsibilities or individuals with disabilities requiring flexible working as a reasonable adjustment, including staff with mental health challenges . It may also impact staff who request different working hours to fit around religious belief.
- The Policy needs to be communicated well to all staff – particularly those who do not have access to the intranet (Operations and One Leisure)
- Without monitoring and evaluation of the policy the council will not be able to identify staff groups not being not being treated fairly in the approval process.

Recommendations

- Ensure flexible working requests will be consistently considered by all managers across the council

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- Ensure staff understand the policy and how to request flexible working the policy was communicated via the Intranet and through Key Issues. It was also an agenda item on the June session of 'Meet SMT' at Pathfinder House, Eastfield House and One Leisure. FAQs were produced. Focus groups were also put into place along with consultation with Staff Council.
- HR will record all flexible working requests thus enabling the monitoring of which applications have been approved and declined.