

# Integrated Impact Assessment – Summary Report

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Each of the numbered sections below must be completed  
Please state if the IIA is interim or final

**1. Title of proposal**

Flexible Working Policy

**2. What will change as a result of this proposal?**

The Flexible Working Policy will be updated to reflect legislative changes in 2024.

**3. Briefly describe public involvement in this proposal to date and planned**

This policy is used to support Council employees only, and therefore there has been no public involvement in the proposal. External benchmarking has been undertaken, and colleagues have been engaged in the development.

**4. Is the proposal considered strategic under the Fairer Scotland Duty?**

While this proposal does not directly tackle socioeconomic disadvantage at a strategic level, it does look to support our colleagues who may find themselves in this position and aims to reduce or prevent financial detriment as a result.

**5. Date of IIA**

24 April 2024

**6. Who was present at the IIA? Identify facilitator, lead officer, report writer and any employee representative present and main stakeholder (e.g. Council, NHS)**

Name	Job Title	Date of IIA training
Alana Baillie	Senior HR Consultant ER & Policy	22/05/2019
Olivia Reed	HR Consultant ER & Policy	24/10/2023

<b>Name</b>	<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Date of IIA training</b>
<b>Vanessa Anderson</b>	<b>HR Consultant ER &amp; Policy</b>	<b>22/05/2022</b>
<b>Andrew Burgess</b>	<b>Senior HR Consultant OD</b>	<b>15/11/2018</b>
<b>Angus Murdoch</b>	<b>Technical Coordinator</b>	<b>03/05/2018</b>
<b>Jennifer Dunlop</b>	<b>Solicitor</b>	
<b>Richard Thrall</b>	<b>Governance Officer</b>	<b>07/11/2019</b>

## 7. Evidence available at the time of the IIA

Evidence	Available – detail source	Comments: what does the evidence tell you with regard to different groups who may be affected and to the environmental impacts of your proposal
Data on populations in need	Information on populations was consolidated into a supporting document and provided to attendees in advance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The internal data tells us that 82% of females have had flexible working approved in the last 2 years compared to 18% of men.</li> <li>• Right to request flexible working now a day one right - available to all colleagues or potential colleagues, regardless of how they identify.</li> <li>• Will benefit all colleagues – more time to spend with families or other hobbies.</li> <li>• Parents/carers – flexible working can mean that parents and carers are able to spend more time with their young people or children rather than being at work.</li> <li>• Reinforces compliance with the Equality Act (2010) particularly evident in relation to age, disability, sex, and intersectionality.</li> <li>• Disability – we are an equal opportunities employer who offer flexibility to support those with underlying health conditions and disabilities. Acknowledges that the ability to work from home may form a reasonable adjustment to enable the individual to remain in employment.</li> <li>• Minority ethnic people – Our internal data suggests a high uptake for this group, so no negative impact identified with regard to changes.</li> <li>• A poll of 5,444 UK employees found that one in three (32 per cent) ethnic minority workers have left or considered leaving a job due to lack of flexibility, compared with just 21 per cent of white workers (People Management 2022).</li> <li>• People with different religions - As CEC only recognise Christian holidays requests for flexible working may increase due time off for religious observance.</li> </ul>

Evidence	Available – detail source	<b>Comments: what does the evidence tell you with regard to different groups who may be affected and to the environmental impacts of your proposal</b>
		Further analysis is available in the supporting document.
Data on service uptake/access	HR system – Flexible work options recording	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the last 2 years, 1,389 employees of the Council have had flexible work options approved.</li> <li>• 1,138 are female.</li> <li>• 251 are males.</li> <li>• The majority of colleagues are aged between 31-64 – within these demographic individuals are more likely to be pregnant, have caring responsibilities, other outside work commitments or transitioning into retirement.</li> </ul> <p>We currently have no data to tell us how many flexible work options requests have been requested and refused as this is not held centrally. On launch of the new policy, we will implement a process where all requests whether approved or rejected come via askHR so we will be able to report on this information going forward.</p> <p>Further analysis can be found in the supporting document.</p>
Data on socio-economic disadvantage e.g. low income, low wealth, material deprivation, area deprivation.		<p>Positive impact as where requests are informal, no change to T&amp;C's therefore salary remains the same.</p> <p>Negative impact as where requests are formal, most arrangements have impacts on salary.</p> <p>The council is an equal opportunities employer and all roles within the council are open to individuals from all groups of society and the community.</p> <p>Have flexibility to attend to their dependants needs and avoid associated care support costs.</p> <p>Flexible working options provide opportunities for paid work while accommodating carer and personal responsibilities.</p> <p>Flexible working can enable people to enter work, stay in work and progress at work, which has a direct financial benefit for workers and</p>

<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Available – detail source</b>	<b>Comments: what does the evidence tell you with regard to different groups who may be affected and to the environmental impacts of your proposal</b>
		<p>their families, and can provide a route out of poverty.</p> <p>Offering flexible working may open up vacancies to a wider pool of applicants from a wider community groups and geographical area.</p> <p>The policy outlines procedures to ensure fair application for all who participate.</p>
Data on equality outcomes	Information on the various themes of the Policy was consolidated into a supporting document and provided to attendees in advance.	Further information was collected from several recognisable sources and collated - this provided commentary on a number of factors including age, gender and ethnicity. This provided participants with further information when thinking about the potential impacts on different groups.
Research/literature evidence	Information on the themes of the Policy was consolidated into a supporting document and provided to attendees in advance– these included sources such as CIPD.	<p>This information showed the benefits of flexible working to support work life balance.</p> <p>It also provided good practice examples and wording which can be incorporated into the new Policy.</p>
Public/patient/client experience information	Not applicable	Not applicable
Evidence of inclusive engagement of people who use the service and involvement findings	Not applicable	Not applicable
Evidence of unmet need	Not applicable	Not applicable
Good practice guidelines	Not applicable	Not applicable
Carbon emissions generated/reduced data	Not applicable	Not applicable
Environmental data	Not applicable	Not applicable
Risk from cumulative impacts	Not applicable	Not applicable
Other (please specify)	Not applicable	Not applicable

Evidence	Available – detail source	Comments: what does the evidence tell you with regard to different groups who may be affected and to the environmental impacts of your proposal
Additional evidence required		

**8. In summary, what impacts were identified and which groups will they affect?**

Equality, Health and Wellbeing and Human Rights	Affected populations
<p><b>Positive</b></p> <p>The policy encourages a work life balance by providing all colleagues a right to request informal and formal flexible working arrangements. This could, in turn, positively affect colleagues by promoting greater workplace engagement as they may not need to reduce their hours or leave work entirely to balance their personal lives.</p> <p>Sickness absence rates should decrease, and colleagues should have fewer instances of needing to use annual leave or unpaid leave to cover time away from work.</p> <p>Flexible working is likely to enhance an employee’s experience at work; particularly upon returning from long term leave i.e. maternity leave. This can lead to a greater sense of value, commitment to the organisation, and potentially increased productivity, compared to what would have been experienced otherwise.</p> <p>Currently we would expect managers to allow flexibility where they can, however, this may not be applied consistently, so this policy will bring parity.</p> <p>All requests for formal flexible working will be recorded, and explicit business reasons required for refusing a request.</p> <p>The right to request flexible working is a day one right and available to all colleagues which enables colleagues to have more control over their social/work environment.</p> <p>This policy supports all colleagues irrespective of their background or circumstances, thereby diminishing disparities in status among various groups.</p> <p>This policy aids in levelling the status among diverse groups by attracting and retaining individuals who may otherwise face challenges in maintaining employment.</p>	<p><b>All colleagues</b></p> <p><b>All colleagues.</b></p> <p><b>All colleagues</b></p> <p><b>All colleagues</b></p> <p><b>All colleagues</b></p> <p><b>All colleagues</b></p> <p><b>All colleagues</b></p> <p><b>Colleagues with a disability/health condition.</b></p>

Equality, Health and Wellbeing and Human Rights	Affected populations
<p>Access to flexible working can help build a stronger family support network, fostering closer bonds, improving caregiving skills, and cultivating a more supportive family environment.</p>	<p><b>All colleagues</b></p>
<p>Offering flexible working can contribute to establishing a stable and nurturing environment, thereby enhancing overall protection and care for vulnerable family members.</p>	<p><b>All colleagues</b></p>
<p>This policy will particularly aid wellbeing and mental health as colleagues will have more control over their work life balance.</p>	<p><b>All colleagues</b></p>
<p>Taking a default yes approach to flexible working, the policy will support women to work at all levels of the council, and this will improve gender equality in the workplace. Flexible working promotes gender equality by supporting women to manage work and family commitments.</p>	<p><b>Woman</b></p>
<p>Migrant BME women facing challenges in balancing work and childcare due to a lack of informal networks, such as friends or family will find value in being able to utilise the Flexible Working Policy.</p>	<p><b>Minority ethnic people</b></p>
<p>Young workers who are carers will be able to ask from day one so will be beneficial.</p>	<p><b>Young carers</b></p>
<p>Managers must give a reason for refusal; this might mitigate against discrimination in the workplace.</p>	<p><b>All colleagues</b></p>
<p>Those in flexible working arrangements might yield higher productivity.</p>	<p><b>All colleagues</b></p>
<p>More effective use of women's skills. A lack of quality part-time work, particularly in senior roles, means that many women are working below their skill level in the only part-time work that is available. This is a significant loss of female talent to employers. By enabling women to work flexibly, you can harness women's under-utilised skills, and improve productivity.</p>	<p><b>Woman</b></p>
<p>Older, young/children, minority ethnic, disabled, people with different religions or beliefs, will be expected to particularly benefit from a consistent, transparent, and equitable policy.</p>	<p><b>All colleagues</b></p>
<p>The existing restriction on one application in current policy within a twelve-month period is not consistent with new legislation and may not be able to fully accommodate changing circumstances such as a changing medical situation. The new policy will address this inequality.</p>	<p><b>All colleagues</b></p>
<p>Might have a positive impact on people who are unmarried, married or in a civil partnership and or care experienced</p>	<p><b>All colleagues</b></p>

<b>Equality, Health and Wellbeing and Human Rights</b>	<b>Affected populations</b>
<p>children and young people but depends on how the agreed flexible working arrangement was framed and how much flexibility is built into it.</p> <p>Flexible working arrangements are likely to be particularly beneficial to, Lone parents, Vulnerable families, Families with a child under 1, or larger families, Carers, People experiencing difficulties with substance use. These Groups are likely to derive significant benefits from a consistent, transparent, and equitable policy.</p> <p>The flexible working policy has potential impacts on all staff. Historically the data suggests a greater use by part-time staff, but this may not necessarily be the case going forward.</p> <p>The policy may also have a greater impact for staff with specific protected characteristics and some staff who are at greater risk of falling into poverty as set out in above sentence.</p> <p>Equality and Human Rights - an understanding that people do have certain rights with regards to flexible working, is anticipated to yield positive outcomes</p> <p>Flexible work arrangements would be expected to support accessibility to the workplace in general, with a particular focus on specific population groups. Additionally, they are expected to improve overall working conditions.</p>	<p><b>All colleagues</b></p> <p><b>All colleagues</b></p> <p><b>Colleagues with protected characteristics.</b></p> <p><b>All colleagues</b></p> <p><b>All colleagues</b></p>
<p><b>Negative</b></p> <p>The policy is open to all employee groups; however, managers might exclude groups from the policy due to requirements of job roles.</p> <p>Could cause discrimination in some roles, flexible working implemented needs to be fair.</p> <p>Those wanting to progress may be at a detriment because they have a flexible working agreement. Managers less likely to have flexible arrangement in place.</p> <p>Shift workers may not be able to make requests in the same way as other employees.</p> <p>When rejecting, will managers consider employees reason for wanting a change, or if they can accommodate the request, it will be an automatic yes. For example, an employee with caring responsibilities gets it, but a colleague wanting flexible working to pursue a social activity will not.</p>	<p><b>All colleagues/shift workers</b></p> <p><b>All colleagues</b></p> <p><b>All colleagues</b></p> <p><b>Shift workers</b></p> <p><b>All colleagues</b></p>

<b>Equality, Health and Wellbeing and Human Rights</b>	<b>Affected populations</b>
Employees may be discriminated against if they are doing jobs that can't be accommodated by flexible working.	<b>All colleagues</b>

<b>Environment and Sustainability including climate change emissions and impacts</b>	<b>Affected populations</b>
<b>Positive</b>  The scope to hybrid and homework will reduce the need to commute to work on those days at home which may have a positive impact on the council's climate change strategy.	<b>All colleagues</b>
<b>Negative</b>	<b>n/a</b>

<b>Economic</b>	<b>Affected populations</b>
<b>Positive</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Negative</b>  Working from home more frequently may lead to increased household fuel expenses.	<b>All colleagues</b>

**9. Is any part of this policy/ service to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors and if so how will equality, human rights including children's rights, environmental and sustainability issues be addressed?**

Not applicable.

**10. Consider how you will communicate information about this policy/ service change to children and young people and those affected by sensory impairment, speech impairment, low level literacy or numeracy, learning difficulties or English as a second language? Please provide a summary of the communications plan.**

We will undertake normal communication activities, including articles in Newsbeat and Managers News; update the HR Orb pages; and provide updates at service management meetings. We will also be providing additional supporting guidance on the policy.

**11. Is the plan, programme, strategy or policy likely to result in significant environmental effects, either positive or negative? If yes, it is likely that a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) will be required and the impacts identified in the IIA should be included in this. See section 2.10 in the Guidance for further information.**

Not applicable.

**12. Additional Information and Evidence Required**

If further evidence is required, please note how it will be gathered. If appropriate, mark this report as interim and submit updated final report once further evidence has been gathered.

**13. Specific to this IIA only, what recommended actions have been, or will be, undertaken and by when? (these should be drawn from 7 – 11 above) Please complete:**

<b>Specific actions (as a result of the IIA which may include financial implications, mitigating actions and risks of cumulative impacts)</b>	<b>Who will take them forward (name and job title)</b>	<b>Deadline for progressing</b>	<b>Review date</b>
Develop guidance for managers and colleagues to sit alongside the policy.	ER Team	June 2024	
Review language to ensure inclusive and applicable to wider group of colleagues	ER Team	June 2024	
Ensure draft policy, user guides and other guidance is shared with external equality partners to ensure inclusive and sensitive language.	ER Team	June 2024	
Ensure when launch policy, clarify the suite of entitlements colleagues are offered, including those in other policies to highlight there is something for everyone.	ER Team / Communications	July 2024	

**14. Are there any negative impacts in section 8 for which there are no identified mitigating actions?**

No.

**15. How will you monitor how this proposal affects different groups, including people with protected characteristics?**

All requests for formal flexible working will be submitted via the HR system so we can report on approved and rejected requests. Through this upgrade to the HR system, it is hoped that we will be able to produce better data quality, allow us to monitor flexible working requests

and understand the impacts on the different protected characteristic groups and will be integral in driving data for The Equally Safe Accreditation.

## **16. Sign off by Head of Service**

**Name - Nareen Turnbull, 24/06/2024**

## **17. Publication**

Completed and signed IIAs should be sent to:

[integratedimpactassessments@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:integratedimpactassessments@edinburgh.gov.uk) to be published on the Council website [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/impactassessments](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/impactassessments)

**Edinburgh Integration Joint Board/Health and Social Care**

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