

# Equality Impact Assessment

For help to complete this form see the How to Undertake an Equality Impact Assessment leaflet. You are also welcome to contact Delyth Gadlys Williams, Policy and Equality Officer on ext. 32708 or [DelythGadlysWilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru](mailto:DelythGadlysWilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru) for further assistance.

The Council's is required (under the Equality Act 2010) to consider the effect any change in policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), has on people with protected equality characteristics. The Council also has a general duty to ensure fairness and foster good relations. A timely Equality Impact Assessment must be undertaken before making any decision on any relevant change (i.e. which has an effect on people with protected characteristics).

## 1) Details

### 1.1 What is the name of the policy / service in question?

Future Working Arrangements

### 1.2 What is the purpose of the policy / service that is being created or amended? What changes are being considered?

The experience of living and working throughout the COVID 19 pandemic has shown that many roles can be fulfilled effectively from home. In order to retain and further build upon the benefits gained by successfully delivering services in different ways during the pandemic, it is proposed that the Council adopt more flexible working practices for staff in future.

Where the nature of posts allows, any flexible working arrangements would be voluntary for staff members. Staff may choose to work from an office, from home, or to 'hybrid' arrangements by combining working from home and from an office.

### 1.3 Who is responsible for this assessment?

Ffion Griffiths, Project Manager

#### **1.4 When did you commence the assessment? Which version is this?**

March 2021. Version 1

## **2) Action**

### **2.1 Who are the partners you need to work with to undertake this assessment?**

Offices Group  
Corporate Management Team  
Human Resources Advisory Service  
Health, Safety and Wellbeing Advisory Service  
Trade Union representatives

### **2.2 What measures have you taken to engage with people with equality characteristics?**

Staff members have had individual discussions with their managers regarding their preferences for future working arrangements, considering their personal circumstances and any protected characteristics.

Discussion have been held with, and feedback received, by trade union representatives.

### **2.3 What was the result of the engagement?**

Approximately 1,800 Council staff fulfil posts that may be undertaken from home going forward.

In September 2021, discussions were held between managers and staff regarding their preferences for future working arrangements. The outcome was as follows;

- 59% of staff would prefer hybrid working
- 25% of staff would prefer home working
- 15% of staff would prefer office working

Any flexible working arrangement would be subject to a trial period before reaching a formal agreement, in order to review the suitability of the arrangements from the perspective of both the member of staff and Council as an employer.

### **2.4 On the basis of what other evidence are you operating?**

The Council has operated in accordance with the Welsh Government's Covid-19 guidelines by directing all staff who could work from home, to do so since March 2020. We currently continue to do so, although this is no

longer a legal requirement (since 28 January 2022). We are giving full consideration to health, safety and wellbeing considerations in our plans to re-open the offices in the longer term.

The flexible working arrangements contribute to the Welsh Government's remote working strategy, which aims to enable 30% of Wales' workforce to work from home or close to their home in order to support work life balance.

## 2.5 Are there any gaps in the evidence that needs to be collected?

We will continue to engage with staff, managers and trade union representatives during the trial period in order to assess the suitability and success of the flexible working arrangements.

## 3) Identifying the Impact

### 3.1 The Council has to give due regard to the effect any changes will have on people with the equality characteristics noted below. What impact will the new policy/service or the proposed changes in the policy or service have on people with these characteristics? You are welcome to any other characteristics if you wish.

Characteristics	What type of impact?*	In what way? What is the evidence?
<b>Race (including nationality)</b>	Positive / negative / none	None identified
<b>The Welsh language</b>	Positive / negative / none	<p>Positive – staff will continue to provide services to the public in Welsh, and by offering flexible working arrangements the Council may be able to expand the geographical area from which it recruits new staff and increase the number of Welsh speaking job applicants.</p> <p>Negative – staff, especially Welsh learners, who work from home may miss out on opportunities to speak Welsh socially in the workplace (office).</p>
<b>Disability</b>	Positive / negative / none	<p>Positive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible working arrangements reduce the requirement to travel (and the ability to drive) to an office, which could benefit some people with physical or learning disabilities.</li> <li>• More flexibility for staff who care for disabled family members or friends.</li> <li>• Working from home offers more privacy should personal care be required.</li> <li>• Mental Health conditions – more flexibility between work and personal life and a better work life balance could lead to lower levels of stress and anxiety.</li> </ul>

		<p>Negative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental Health conditions – Loneliness. Reduced contact and interaction with others whilst working from home could lead to stress and anxiety.</li> <li>• Staff with neurodivergent conditions could find it difficult to establish working relationships if they and/or their fellow team members work from home.</li> </ul>
<b>Sex</b>	Positive / negative / none	Positive – Women with caring responsibilities for children / adults could work more flexibility.
<b>Age</b>	Positive / negative / none	Positive – flexibility for parents to balance work and child caring responsibilities.
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	Positive / negative / none	None identified
<b>Religion or belief (or non-belief)</b>	Positive / negative / none	Positive – by working from home it may be easier to balance work with the requirement for a specific time/place for worship.
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	Positive / negative / none	None identified
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	Positive / negative / none	<p>Positive –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less time spent traveling to work if pregnancy causes fatigue.</li> <li>• Flexible working arrangements may make it easier for women to return to work following maternity leave.</li> </ul>
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	Positive / negative / none	None identified
<b>Socioeconomic</b>	Positive / negative / none	<p>Staff spend may decrease in the towns where there are larger numbers of staff based in the main offices. However, this should be offset by increased spend in more towns and villages across the county, nearer to where staff live.</p> <p>The Council will not be reimbursing / paying staff a homeworking allowance towards household costs (such as electricity or broadband). Working from home would be voluntary for staff, many of whom would likely benefit from other cost savings by reducing daily commuting costs to an office.</p>

\* Delete as appropriate

**3.2 The Council has a duty under the 2010 Equality Act to contribute positively to a fairer society by promoting equality and good relations in its activities regarding the following characteristics – age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, gender reassignment, disability and pregnancy and maternity. The Council must give due attention to the way any change affects these duties.**

<b>General Duties of the Equality Act</b>	<b>Does it have an impact?*</b>	<b>In what way? What is the evidence?</b>
<b>Abolishing illegal discrimination, harassment and victimisation</b>	possible	Working from home could lead to situations where some individuals may be at increased risk of domestic violence.
<b>Promoting equal opportunities</b>	Yes	Flexible working arrangements offer better opportunities for disabled staff and those with caring responsibilities to work for the Council.  Improved opportunities for people who live further away from the Council offices, to work for the Council.
<b>Encouraging good relationships</b>	Yes/no	None identified

\* to be deleted as appropriate

#### **4) Analysing the results**

**4.1 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, positive impact on any of the equality characteristics or the General Duty and what is the reason for this?**

The flexible working arrangements promote a better work life balance and offer better opportunities for disabled staff and those with caring responsibilities.

Improved opportunities for people who live further away from the Council offices, to work for the Council.

Better flexible working arrangements may have a positive effect on pregnant women, women who are breastfeeding, or on people with a physical disability or mental health condition.

**4.2 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, negative impact on any of the equality characteristics or the General Duty and what is the reason for this?**

Some potential negative effects have been outlined in section 3.1, above.

However, the equality impact assessment has not identified impacts that would lead to changing the recommendations.

**4.3 What should be done?**

Choose one of the following:

Continue with the policy / service as it is robust	√
Adapt the policy to delete any barriers	
Suspend and delete the policy as the detrimental impacts are too big	
Continue with the policy as any detrimental impact can be justified	

**4.4 What steps will you take to reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?**

The potential negative effects outlined in section 3.1, will continue to be considered and mitigated as the flexible working arrangements develop and progress.

**4.5 If you are not taking any further action to delete or reduce the negative impacts, explain why here.**

**5) Monitoring**

**5.1 What steps will you take to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the policy or service (action plan)?**

The flexible working arrangements will be subject to a trial period of six months, before final agreement is reached with staff, in order to review the suitability and success of the arrangements from the perspective of staff and the Council as an employer. Staff, managers and trade union representatives will have an input into this monitoring.