



## Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Form

### A. GENERAL INFORMATION

<b>Name of proposal</b>	Flexible Working Policy
<b>Responsible department</b>	Human Resources

### B. AIMS OF THE PROPOSAL

<b>What do you hope to achieve?</b>	This policy outlines what is expected of all permanent and temporary employees in relation to flexible working and how the SSSC will support and act when issues occur.
<b>Why is the proposal needed?</b>	<p>This is an update to an existing policy on the right to request flexible working and flexi-time guidance which is part of the SSSC's commitment to the health, safety and welfare of employees as well as meeting legal obligations to them and others.</p> <p>The changes to the policy make sure that this is in the current SSSC style, in line with current opinion and practices with up to date supports. We have combined the policy and guidance into one document so that our flexible working practices are captured in one place.</p>

<p><b>How will the proposal contribute to the SSSC's strategic objectives and/or priorities?</b></p>	<p>This review links to strategic priority 3 - Our workforce planning activities support employers, commissioners and proposal makers to deliver a sustainable, integrated and innovative workforce.</p> <p>This policy supports our Organisational Characteristics in the Strategic Plan 2020-2023 and specifically "People want to work at the SSSC".</p> <p>The Strategic Plan states "we are committed to investing in our own workforce the same way we are invested in the external workforce".</p> <p>This policy supports strategic themes 1, 2, 3, and 6 of our People Strategy 2021-2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective leaders and managers.</li> <li>• Recruit and develop excellent people.</li> <li>• A healthy and inclusive organisation.</li> <li>• An agile and innovative workforce.</li> </ul> <p>This policy supports these priorities by expressing our position and how we support and respond to flexible working requests incidences and dependencies in a fair and consistent manner.</p> <p>By adopting this updated policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We set a consistent standard for managers and employees</li> <li>• We meet our health and safety obligations</li> <li>• We are clear to managers and employees what supports are available and the procedure that may be followed.</li> </ul>
<p><b>How will the proposal address the SSSC's Equality duties?</b></p>	<p>The policy addresses all 3 of the equality duties in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, <u>Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)</u> ie eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010, advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.</p>

	This policy makes clear our commitment to equal treatment for employees and sets out how we treat them fairly and consistently.
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## C. DATA AND EVIDENCE GATHERING

<b>What evidence has been used to come to the decisions contained in this EQIA?</b>	<p>The policy has been updated in terms of layout, language and expression. We have merged the policy and guidance. We have increased the number of days flexitime.</p> <p>Benchmarking has been conducted with ACAS, CIPD, Disclosure Scotland, Scottish Government as well as considering published material from other public sector organisations.</p>
<b>Has the proposal been the subject of relevant engagement and/or consultation?</b>	Consultation has been undertaken with the Operational Management Team, Executive Management Team and with Unison our recognised trade union regarding this policy. A consultation log has been maintained of their comments and proposals.
<b>Has best judgement been used in place of data/research/evidence?</b>	Yes
<b>Have any gaps been found in the data?</b>	N/A

## D. ASSESSING IMPACT AND IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES TO PROMOTE EQUALITY

**Gender** – does the proposal take account of different roles and responsibilities? Does it assume, perhaps wrongly that men have no caring responsibilities? Is the proposal flexible enough to provide a service that everyone can access?

The policy applies equally to all employees and others as outlined above and is accessible regardless of this specific characteristic. The policy does not take a specific approach regarding this protected characteristic but it does create a common approach for us to follow.

The positive approach to working in a flexible manner where operationally feasible that we have adopted contributes to a more inclusive environment. Our approach gives more flexibility to all employees and makes it easier in particular for those who have dependents on them (often women and parents) to meet their obligations with less stress.

**Ethnicity** – have you covered all minority ethnic groups? Consider the impact your proposal has on someone from a minority ethnic group and remember this impact may differ depending on the gender, disability, faith, sexual orientation or ethnicity of the person as different cultures have different views on what is acceptable. Consider language and format.

The policy applies equally to all employees and others as outlined above and is accessible regardless of this specific characteristic. The policy does not take a specific approach regarding this protected characteristic but it does create a common approach for us to follow.

This policy contributes towards creating an inclusive culture and making us more appealing as an employer as those with different requirements or preferences which may be due to their cultural heritage, disability, or faith. Our flexible approach means we are more likely to be able to meet their preferences as it is part of our operating model.

**Disability** – a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out day-to-day activities. How does this proposal affect disabled people? Are there any impairment groups who are unfavourably affected by the policy?

The policy applies equally to all employees and others as outlined above and is accessible regardless of this specific characteristic. The policy does not take a specific approach regarding this protected characteristic but it does create a common approach for us to follow. This contributes towards creating an inclusive culture.

This policy provides greater flexibility to take breaks and time off that supports those people with disabilities to take time off that matches their needs and preferences. This improves both their ability to work and to do so in a manner that is comfortable for them.

**Sexual orientation** – what are the issues for this group in terms of your proposal? Does it meet the needs of this group?

The policy applies equally to all employees and others as outlined above and is accessible regardless of this specific characteristic. The policy does not take a specific approach regarding this protected characteristic but it does create a common approach for us to follow. This contributes towards creating an inclusive culture.

**Gender reassignment** – does your proposal include people of different gender identities? Will your proposal impact transgender individuals in any way?

The policy applies equally to all employees and others as outlined above and is accessible regardless of this specific characteristic. The policy does not take a specific approach regarding this protected characteristic but it does create a common approach for us to follow. This contributes towards creating an inclusive culture.

The flexibility this policies offers supports those who are undergoing gender reassignment by offering them the opportunity to work at a time and manner that suits their requirements.

**Age** – remember different age groups have different concerns. When considering age remember that some individuals are more vulnerable or have issues that may need additional consideration.

The policy applies equally to all employees and others as outlined above and is accessible regardless of this specific characteristic. The policy does not take a specific approach regarding this protected characteristic but it does create a common approach for us to follow. This contributes towards creating an inclusive culture.

**Marital and civil partnership** – it is unlawful discrimination for people who are married/civil partnership/same-sex couple to be treated less favourably in employment than those who are not married/civil partnership/mixed-sex couple.

The policy applies equally to all employees and others as outlined above and is accessible regardless of this specific characteristic. The policy does not take a specific approach regarding this protected characteristic but it does create a common approach for us to follow. This contributes towards creating an inclusive culture.

**Pregnancy and maternity** – protection against maternity discrimination covers 26 weeks after giving birth – this includes treating a woman unfavourable because she is breastfeeding.

The policy applies equally to all employees and others as outlined above and is accessible regardless of this specific characteristic. The policy does not take a specific approach regarding this protected characteristic but it does create a common approach for us to follow. This contributes towards creating an inclusive culture.

This policy supports those that need or want time off to attend other appointments (or similar) over and above the statutory requirement. The ability of all employees to take time off work at a time that suits the employee normalises this practice and creates a supportive environment for those who have a need to take time off.

**Religion/Belief/Non-belief** – does your proposal take into account different festivals, holidays, religious days and traditions? Will the different faith beliefs impact on women from that group and exclude or prevent them from using the service?

The policy applies equally to all employees and others as outlined above and is accessible regardless of this specific characteristic. The policy does not take a specific approach regarding this protected characteristic but it does create a common approach for us to follow. This contributes towards creating an inclusive culture.

This policy better supports those that need or want to take time off for religious or belief purposes by creating an environment where they can do so.

## **E. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROUPS LIVING IN AN ISLAND COMMUNITY**

This section considers the impact or effect of the proposal on island communities and whether this could be significantly different from its effect on other communities.

It is recognised that our islands face particular challenges around distance, geography, connectivity and demography, so it is important that we consider these properly and make sure islands receive fair and equitable treatment and that there is no detriment to their unique circumstances.

This policy is not expected to have any impact on islands communities beyond those individual employees who live on an island and are employed by us. The supports that are available are online / remote resources avoiding any detriment due to location.

## **F. CHILD RIGHTS AND WELLBEING**

This section considers the impact of the proposal on children and young people, or specific groups of children and young people, in Scotland.

This policy contributes to the creation of a positive culture and enables parents (and others with similar responsibilities) to take time off to spend with children. This will impact on those people that we employ and make them feel happier and supported while at work and will positively impact on children.

This indirectly contributes to the rights and wellbeing of their children and young people. This policy is not expected to have a direct impact on the rights and wellbeing of children and young people.

## **G. HEALTH AND WELLBEING AND HEALTH INEQUALITIES**

This section considers the impact of the proposal on physical and mental health and wellbeing; this includes for example, participation, creativity and developing potential.

This policy is expected to contribute to the health and wellbeing of our employees by contributing to creating a positive environment for them. Employees who are healthier are more likely to perform to a higher standard. Employees who are healthier and happier are more likely to contribute to the wider sector and community.

## **H. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY**

This section is concerned with the impact of the proposal on pay and employment opportunities as well as valuing and supporting voluntary work.

The policy is expected to contribute towards improving the health of our employees by creating a positive environment for them. Employees who are healthier and happier are more likely to contribute to the wider sector and community.

## I. CARE EXPERIENCED CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS

This section concerns our duties to put Scotland's care experienced children, young people and adults at the heart of what we do.

This policy is not expected to have a specific impact on care experienced children or young people. We have other provisions in place that support our employees in this regard.

This policy may indirectly positively impact on care experienced children and young people by enabling those who support them to take time off to spend with them at more suitable times.

## J. DECISION MAKING

Which of the following statements best describes the action that should be taken following the EqIA in relation to your proposal?

<b>No major change</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Adjust the policy</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Continue with Policy</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Stop and remove the policy</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Outline the reasons why you've selected this option.

We have not identified any changes following the completion of the Equality Impact Assessment.



**K. MONITORING AND REVIEWING**

How will the implementation of the policy/proposal be monitored? How and when will the impact of the proposal be reviewed? Outline the actions that will be taken, the timescale for these and who will be responsible for carrying out these actions.

Action	Timescale	Person Responsible
The policy will be monitored on a three-yearly cycle to test for effectiveness and continued suitability.	Ongoing.	Lucy Finn, Head of Human Resources.

**L. SIGN OFF**

**Name:** Lucy Finn

**Title:** Head of Human Resources

**Date Approved:** July 2023