

Equality Impact Assessment Corporate Service Improvement Tool

Details of the assessment

Name of Function/Policy/ Service being assessed:	Sickness Absence Policy & Procedures Smoke Free Workforce and Public Place Policy Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy
Is the activity...?	Existing: <input type="checkbox"/> (please go to step 2)
Date of assessment	February 2012
Directorate & Service	Central Services, Personnel
Policy Owner	Central Services Director
Lead Officer	Personnel & Development Manager – Delia Gordon

Step 1	Initial Screening for:		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new policies/strategies • revised policies/strategies • policy decisions • considering partnership working arrangements • procurement/commissioning activities <p>(For assessments identified within the Equality Impact Assessment Timetable 2010-13 please go straight to Step 2).</p>		
	Key Questions	Answers/Notes	
1	What are you looking to achieve in this activity?		
2	Who in the main will benefit?		
3	Does the activity have the potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Please explain:
		No <input type="checkbox"/>	Please explain:

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Step 1	Initial Screening for:		
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	Key Questions	Answers/Notes	
		Note: if the answer is 'yes' then a full equality impact assessment is required – see step 2.	
4	Does the activity make a positive contribution to equalities?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Please explain:
		No <input type="checkbox"/>	Please explain:
		Note: if the answer is 'yes' then a full equality impact assessment is required – see step 2.	

Where the screening has identified the need for a full impact assessment, this must:

- be commenced during the drafting stages of a new policy/strategy and fully completed following any consultation period before submitting the committee approval
- carried out before any policy decision is taken
- completed in the planning stages of any procurement exercise

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	Key Questions	Answers/Notes		
Step 2	Scoping the assessment			
1.	What is the overall aim, or purpose of the function/ policy/service?	<p>Sickness Absence Policy - To ensure that fair and consistent treatment of individuals in respect of sickness absence is maintained, and that account is taken of the operational realities of the service in which individuals are employed.</p> <p>Smoke Free Workplace etc Policy – To give non-smokers the right to work in an environment that is free of tobacco smoking, whilst acknowledging the needs of people who do smoke.</p> <p>Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy – To set out the Council’s approach to any employee whose proper performance of their duties is impaired as a result of substance misuse.</p>		
2.	What outcomes do you want to achieve with this function/ policy/service and for whom?	<p>Sickness Absence Policy - To help and encourage all employees to achieve minimal sickness absence from work.</p> <p>Smoke Free Workplace et Policy – To protect the current and future health of employees and visitors to Council premises, and to comply with relevant Health and Safety legislation.</p> <p>Alcohol & Substance Misuse Policy – To promote the well being of employees, to ensure a safe working environment and to minimise problems at work.</p>		
3.	Who is intended to benefit from the function/service/ policy?	All employees, managers. Elected Members on the Licensing & Appeals Committee and ultimately residents of the Borough.		
4.	Who defines or defined the function/service/policy?	The General Purposes Committee		
5.	Who implements the function/service/policy?	All employees and managers in consultation with Personnel Services.		
6.	How do the outcomes of the function/service/policy meet or conflict other policies, values or objectives of the public authority (if	<p>Please indicate which Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) priority these outcomes relate to:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Improving health & reducing inequalities</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	Improving health & reducing inequalities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improving health & reducing inequalities	<input type="checkbox"/>			

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	Key Questions	Answers/Notes
	applicable)?	Any other comments:
7.	Are there any factors that could contribute or detract from the outcomes identified earlier?	Significant outbreaks of illness such as a flu pandemic.
Step 3	Consideration of data and information	
8.	What do you already know about who uses this function/service/ policy?	<p>Sickness Absence Policy - The outcomes of recent cases in which the policy and its related procedures have been used.</p> <p>Neither the Smoke Free Workplace Policy or the Alcohol and Substance Misuse Policy have been utilised in the past 2 years. It has not therefore been deemed appropriate to consult further on these policies.</p>
9.	Has any consultation with service users already taken place on the function/service/ policy and if so what were the key findings?	<p>Sickness Absence Policy - Yes. The focus of consultation has been upon ascertaining the perceptions of “gaps “in the policy procedures by those who have recently been involved in formal/informal action. This consultation has included both staff and managers. The following qualitative improvements/ issues were identified:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It would be useful to include information about processes for sickness notification and the Fit Note regime (including the involvement of the Personnel & Development Manager in scrutinising all Fit Notes). 2. It would be reassuring to include to the need to maintain confidentiality about the handling of information pertaining to health issues. 3. It would be helpful to managers to clarify the Council’s position regarding IVF treatment and elective procedures such as laser eye treatment and cosmetic surgery. 4. It would be useful to both managers and those on long term sick leave to specify what the Council’s options are in cases where the Occupational Health Adviser has indicated that there is no likelihood of a return to work in ill health cases. 5. Guidance in the existing procedure on the appeal process in cases of dismissal on ill health grounds is very unclear as it simply refers the reader to the Capability Procedure. It would therefore be helpful to both managers and those on long term sick leave to

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	Key Questions	Answers/Notes	
		<p>specify what the appeal process actually is.</p> <p>6. It would be reassuring to those who have “been referred” to the Council’s Occupational Health Adviser to specify in the procedure the nature of the information that is being sought and what happens once the adviser’s guidance has been received by the Council.</p>	
10.	What, if any, additional information is needed to assess the impact of the function/service/policy?	None.	
11.	How do you propose to gather the additional information?	N/A	
Step 4	Assessing the Impact		
12.	Based on what information you already know, in relation to each of the following groups consider whether a) there is anything in the function/service/policy that could discriminate or put anyone at a disadvantage b) for an existing function/service/policy, how it is actually working in practice for each group		
a.	Equality groups	Age	
b.		Disability	The policy was updated in 2007 to bring it into line with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act . The changes that were introduced at this time are indicated in italics in the former Sickness Absence Policy & Procedure in Annex 1. These duties still exist and have been subsumed within the Equality Act 2010.
c.		Gender	
d.		Race	
e.		Religion/Belief	
f.		Sexual Orientation	
g.		General/other	The qualitative improvements identified in point 9 above will enhance the application of the procedure for all groups.
Step 5	Reviewing and Scrutinising the Impact		
13.	Have you identified any differential	No.	

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	Key Questions	Answers/Notes
	impact and does this adversely or positively affect any groups in the community?	
14.	Can we make any changes or improvements?	Yes, appropriate additions can be made to the policy to address the points raised by consultees (see the amended policy in Annex 2).
15.	If there is nothing you can do, can the reasons be fairly justified?	N/A
16.	Do any of the changes in relation to the adverse impact have a further adverse affect on any other group?	No.

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Step 5 continued...		Actions to be inserted into Equality Action Plans			
Based on your answers in Step 5, please finalise your actions here. These actions will then be incorporated into our equality action plans.					
Equality Strand	Related SCS (or other) Priority	Action	Outcome/monitoring information and targets	Date for Completion	Responsible Officer
If an adverse impact was found or unmet needs identified, which actions will you put in place to address this:					
If the impact is still unclear, list the actions you will put in place to gather the information you need:					
If you did not find any evidence of unmet needs or adverse impact, list the actions you will put in place to maintain good practice:					
All	Improving health & reducing inequalities	Update the Sickness Absence Policy & Procedures as indicated in Annex 2.	Monitor the application of the revised procedure on a case by case basis.	July 2012	Delia Gordon

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Step 6	Decision making and future monitoring	
17.	Which decision making process do these changes need to go through i.e. do they need to be approved by a committee/Council?	Formal consultation of the revised procedure with staff will be via the meeting of the JECC on 6 March, and approval will be sought from Members at the next meeting of the General Purposes Committee (currently scheduled for 25 June 2012).
18.	How will you continue to monitor the impact of the function/service/ policy on diverse groups?	On a case by case basis.
19.	When will you review this equality impact assessment?	2015, or earlier if there is relevant legislative change.
Final steps		
For an existing function/service/policy: Send your assessment to the West Kent Equalities Officer		
For a new function/service/ policy: Summarise your findings in the committee report. Ensure planned consultations address the findings of this impact assessment.		