

BCP Equality Impact Assessment Template

Executive Summary and Conclusions

Once the Equality Impact Assessment Template has been completed, please summarise the key findings here. Please send a copy of your final document to the Policy and Performance Team.

As a response to the Covid 19 pandemic, the Council has changed the way it works and engages with customers and the community. The proposal to maintain the momentum of flexible modern ways of working across the BCP Council estate and repurpose council buildings overall appears to offer more positive than negative outcomes for protected characteristics.

Customer access points will still be available for face to face contact for those that choose to access council services this way but in more central and accessible sites in Poole and Christchurch.

Most Council staff are already working differently and have adapted to flexible and remote ways of working.

Modern and more accessible ways of working will make BCP Council a more accessible and open employer. Most staff will have seen a reduction in travel to work time and costs and there is likely to have been a positive impact for people with limited access to public transport. Generally staff have had more options about how they fulfil their duties which promotes BCP Council as an employer of choice.

However, there are some potential negative impacts for staff that the Council should commit to addressing through its Workforce Strategy as the impact on individuals is better understood. Learning from the staff survey and Accommodation Occupancy Diagnostic tool will help inform this. This equality impact assessment should continue to be reviewed and updated in light of further feedback.

In summary:

- Online working and learning does not suit all ages and over a third of BCP Employees in the three main offices are over the age 55.
- Some staff may not have access to a suitable, safe workspace outside of an office environment and no access to space to have confidential discussions.
- The pace of change and working with new technology may have impact on people's health and wellbeing as there is an increased risk of loneliness and poor mental health
- It may present some staff with safeguarding issues, for example domestic violence, and greater frequencies in home working may increase risks to affected employees, particularly women

The working practices survey identified negative impacts for protected characteristic groups, however it should be noted **that it will not be a requirement for staff to work from home, it will be an option** under the smarter working arrangements and we will be creating office service zones to suit everyone's needs.

BCP Equality Impact Assessment Template

Part 1 - The Project	
Policy/Service under development/review:	Estates and Accommodation Strategy
Service Unit:	Organisational Development
Service Lead:	Julian Osgathorpe
Equality Impact Assessment Team:	Sarah Ray- Dene Julian Osgathorpe Matti Raudsepp Joelle Price Bridget West Sam Johnson Vicky Edmonds Graeme Smith
Date assessment started:	19/05/20: Updated 18/08/2020
Date assessment completed:	Ongoing
What are the aims/objectives of the policy/service?	<p>To maintain the momentum of flexible modern ways of working across the BCP Council estate and repurpose council buildings.</p> <p>To consolidate the Council's office footprint and reduce the impact of climate change through the ways people use and access council buildings and services.</p> <p>The report to Cabinet in Feb '20 set out the current Estates context, the options for achieving a single council hub and the evaluation criteria to be applied to the options, and the recommended way forward for the delivery of a single BCP Council Civic and administrative hub.</p>

BCP Equality Impact Assessment Template

Part 1 - The Project

What outcomes will be achieved with the new or changed policy/service?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible ways of working which will benefit all staff • Protection of vulnerable members of staff and customers with more effective adoption of social distancing guidance • Reduction in the council's carbon footprint • Financial savings which will enable the more efficient delivery of public services • Safe and accessible buildings, kit and equipment • Relocation of customer access points in Poole and Christchurch to local libraries which are more accessible than existing sites.
Are there any associated services, policies or procedures?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Access Strategy – being developed • Digital Strategy – being developed • Medium Term Financial Strategy • Asset Management Plan • Employee Pay & Reward (terms & Conditions) – being developed • BCP Council Travel Plan – being developed • Corporate Strategy • Climate strategy • People Strategy • Health and Safety Policy • Lone working procedures • Corporate Safeguarding policy • Organisational Design Programme
Please list the main people, or groups, that this policy/service is designed to benefit, and any other stakeholders involved:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BCP Staff, agency workers, Councillors and Contractors • Customers, residents, visitors with improved and more central customer contact centres. • Community groups

BCP Equality Impact Assessment Template

Part 1 - The Project

With consideration for their clients, please list any other organisations, statutory, voluntary or community that the policy/service/process will affect:

- Trade unions
- Citizens Advice Bureau and their customers
- Public Health
- Community and voluntary sector groups and third parties who use the Town Hall for their meetings and events

Part 2 – Supporting Evidence

Please list and/or link to below any recent & relevant consultation & engagement that can be used to demonstrate a clear understanding of those with a legitimate interest in the policy/service/process and the relevant findings:

Employee First Data:

Payroll data from Employee First shows that across the authority almost 7% of the workforce on the payroll are 65 or over, rising to 9% in the main offices. This increases to 30% and 33% respectively when including those 55 and over. Those under 25 make up 5.5% of the total workforce falling to under 3% in the main offices.

68% of the workforce identifies as female with that figure falling to 66% in the main offices.

3% of the workforce is identified as having some form of disability with similar figures for the main offices.

Note: A third of officers have chosen not to fill in this part of the monitoring form.

Updated workforce profile data for the 30 June 2020 is available on the [website](#). Some of the numbers differ slightly to those above.

We undertook a staff survey of working arrangements implemented during Covid 19 to help understand the impacts on staff and inform the strategy. The survey was undertaken during May and June 2020. 1869 responses were received. In general, the headline results support the initial assessment set out later in this document.

The headline results are:

BCP Equality Impact Assessment Template

Part 2 – Supporting Evidence

- Most respondents able to work at home
- More than half enjoy working at home, one in ten do not enjoy it.
- No commuting is the biggest benefit
- Isolation and difficulty keeping in touch are the greatest difficulties
- Around a quarter do not have a suitable workspace and a third do not have the equipment they need
- A third of employees have had childcare responsibilities – a quarter of these have had sole responsibility for childcare

The survey asked about seven personal characteristics that are protected under the Equalities Act: Age, Disability, Ethnicity, Gender, Religion, Sexual orientation and Transgender. There were insufficient numbers to be able to provide analysis for transgender so this is not reported. The survey also asked about childcare responsibility, since school closures and home schooling will have created added stress for parents during the lockdown period.

Each of the survey questions has been broken down by each set of characteristics. The appended results have been tested for statistical significance and some of the extracts are pulled out below. For the [full survey results](#) and [comment analysis](#) is available on the intranet.

Age:

16 - 44 year olds

- less likely to have a suitable and comfortable workspace and some office equipment at home
- more likely having more personal/family time

45 - 54

- more likely to find it easier to focus
- more likely to say that plenty of information is being fed through to them

55 +

- more likely to say that one of the most difficult things about working from home is IT problems
- more likely to agree that they're able to maintain a healthy work/life balance compared to all other age groups

Disability:

With a disability

BCP Equality Impact Assessment Template

Part 2 – Supporting Evidence

- less likely to agree that their manager keeps in regular contact with them and checks up on their wellbeing compared
- less likely to agree that they are involved in regular team meetings and are able to contribute in team meetings
- less likely to agree that they feel like they are trusted to work from home

Ethnicity: Due to the small numbers of respondents in individual ethnicity categories, results have been grouped into white British, other white and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME)

BAME

- least likely to have a desk and office chair
- least likely to agree that they had created a suitable workspace
- most likely to disagree that they are trusted to work at home
- most likely to have a work phone and

Gender

- Females were more likely to agree that they have established a good work routine, that they are able to maintain a healthy work/life balance, that they are more productive and are still able to have social interactions with colleagues.
- Males and females were equally likely to have had childcare responsibilities while working at home during lockdown. Of these a third of females had sole responsibility for childcare compared to only 3% of males.

Religion: The two largest groups identified are Christian and no religion. All other religions have been grouped together to provide a suitably large group for analysis.

Other religions:

- more likely to have mentioned social isolation and too many distractions as difficulties.
- more likely to say they have data security concerns.
- less likely to have mentioned IT problems as a difficulty when working at home

Sexual Orientation: Due to relatively small numbers of respondents of some sexual orientations, results have been grouped into Heterosexual / straight and Lesbian / Gay / Bisexual / Other (LGB).

LGB Employees:

- more likely to say they really do not like working at home
- more likely to say that they can't separate living and work space and that they lack private space for confidential work.

BCP Equality Impact Assessment Template

Part 2 – Supporting Evidence

- more likely to say that they are not able to contribute in team meetings.

Childcare:

Those with childcare responsibilities

- more likely to find the best things about working from home are more flexible hours and more personal/family time
- more likely to find the most difficult things about working from home are that it's hard to separate work and home life and there are interruptions from family
- likely to agree they're able to maintain a healthy work/life balance and that they've created a suitable work space

Accommodation Occupancy Diagnostic tool is being completed by service managers to understand office accommodation needs
Staff parking permit data from the existing Bournemouth Town Hall site will be used to help understand mobility issues and parking demand.

Customer Data:

Limited data available on footfall at the main offices so further work needs to be undertaken to establish if there are wider access issues if customer access points are changed. However, 11,500 customers visited the Poole Civic offices between April 19 and March 2020. Of those, approximately 270 people attended to discuss disability related issues.

A better understanding of channel shift will also help determine if there are wider negative impacts. An example is improving the digital offer combined with moving to an appointment based operation Revenues & Benefits service reduced customer drop in footfall by approximately 70% on Poole site from 13,656 customers in 2016/17 to 4,021 customers in 2019/2020 (not included March 2020 due to office closure).

[Wider population data](#), [ward profile data](#) and the [State of BCP report](#) are here:

More detailed community and economic impact assessments are currently being prepared. This will help us better understand the full impact of Covid 19 on people's health and financial wellbeing, on the business community and in the workplace.

BCP Equality Impact Assessment Template

Part 2 – Supporting Evidence

If there is insufficient consultation or engagement information please explain in the Action plan what further consultation will be undertaken, who with and how.

Please list or link to any relevant research, census and other evidence or information that is available and relevant to this EIA:

- [Tableau dashboard workforce profile](#)
- [BCP Diversity Data](#)
- Refuge have reported a 66% increase in calls and enquiries to the national domestic abuse helplines since lockdown began. <https://www.refuge.org.uk/refuge-reports-further-increase-in-demand-for-its-national-domestic-abuse-helpline-services-during-lockdown/>

Please list below any service user/employee monitoring data available and relevant to this policy/service/process and what it shows in relation to any Protected Characteristic:

If there is insufficient research and monitoring data, please explain in the Action plan what information will be gathered:

BCP Equality Impact Assessment Template

Part 3 – Assessing the Impact by Equality Characteristic

Use the evidence to determine the impacts, positive or negative for each Equality Characteristic listed below. Listing negative impacts will help protect the organisation from potential litigation in the future, it does not mean the policy cannot continue. [Click here](#) for more guidance on how to understand the impact of the service/policy/procedure against each characteristic. If the impact is not known please explain in the Action plan what steps will be taken to find out.

	Actual or potential positive outcome	Actual or potential negative outcome
Common to every characteristic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer access points in more accessible central locations • Modern and more accessible ways of working will make BCP Council a more accessible and open employer • BCP council becomes an employer of choice • Reduction in travel to work time and costs • Positive impact on people with limited access to public transport • Flexible working hours allows good work life balance • More options about how you fulfil duties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online working and learning may not suit officers • Increased loneliness and poor mental health • Lack of space to have confidential discussions
1. Age ¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older people may be able to manage health conditions and health appointments by being able to work flexibly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people may not have access to suitable workspace outside of an office environment. • Older people may be affected more severely by the pace of change and working with new technology and this may impact on people's health and wellbeing

¹ Under this characteristic, The Equality Act only applies to those over 18.

BCP Equality Impact Assessment Template

Part 3 – Assessing the Impact by Equality Characteristic

Use the evidence to determine the impacts, positive or negative for each Equality Characteristic listed below. Listing negative impacts will help protect the organisation from potential litigation in the future, it does not mean the policy cannot continue. [Click here](#) for more guidance on how to understand the impact of the service/policy/procedure against each characteristic. If the impact is not known please explain in the Action plan what steps will be taken to find out.

	Actual or potential positive outcome	Actual or potential negative outcome
2. Disability ²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive impact on those with a mobility impairment More likely to keep disabled people in employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated workstation set up at work may not be the same at home or in new shared spaces Some people may be more at risk if lone working/working from home Bournemouth Town Hall is compliant with the Equality Act but access is not always easy for those with limited mobility
3. Sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For women - opportunities for flexible working hours could help reduce costs of childcare because predominantly childcare responsibilities fall to women and single parent families are headed up by women For women – could allow more options to increase their working hours or take up employment which suits their family commitments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding issues (domestic violence) - women are more likely to be victims of domestic violence, and greater frequencies in home working may increase risks to affected employees
4. Gender reassignment ³		
5. Pregnancy and Maternity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities for flexible working hours could help reduce costs of childcare because predominantly childcare 	

² Consider any reasonable adjustments that may need to be made to ensure fair access.

³ Transgender refers people have a gender identity or gender expression that differs to the sex assigned at birth.

BCP Equality Impact Assessment Template

Part 3 – Assessing the Impact by Equality Characteristic

Use the evidence to determine the impacts, positive or negative for each Equality Characteristic listed below. Listing negative impacts will help protect the organisation from potential litigation in the future, it does not mean the policy cannot continue. [Click here](#) for more guidance on how to understand the impact of the service/policy/procedure against each characteristic. If the impact is not known please explain in the Action plan what steps will be taken to find out.

	Actual or potential positive outcome	Actual or potential negative outcome
	responsibilities fall to women and predominantly single parent families are headed up by women <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May support with mobility concerns in the later stages of pregnancy • May support with tiredness and fatigue during pregnancy 	
6. Marriage and Civil Partnership		
7. Race		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online working/learning doesn't suit everyone – English not first language • Difficult to find suitable space as members of BAME communities more likely to have larger families, live in smaller accommodation, more people per household, and be proportionately on lower incomes etc.
8. Religion or Belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People can balance commitments to work and particular beliefs, such as prayer times, with a flexible approach to managing their time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to maintain contemplation room as an option for staff on site
9. Sexual Orientation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty in finding suitable space may be because LGBT people are more likely to live in smaller households and occupy smaller accommodation

BCP Equality Impact Assessment Template

Part 3 – Assessing the Impact by Equality Characteristic

Use the evidence to determine the impacts, positive or negative for each Equality Characteristic listed below. Listing negative impacts will help protect the organisation from potential litigation in the future, it does not mean the policy cannot continue. **Click here** for more guidance on how to understand the impact of the service/policy/procedure against each characteristic. If the impact is not known please explain in the Action plan what steps will be taken to find out.

	Actual or potential positive outcome	Actual or potential negative outcome
10. Armed Forces Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People can commit more easily to reservist commitments with flexible working arrangements 	
11. Any other factors/groups e.g. socio-economic status/carers etc ⁴		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some people may have limited access to ICT and limited internet/broadband packages Maybe an increase personal cost, electricity, heating etc if working from home Poor broadband connectivity may be an issue for some
12. Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We may have a greater opportunity to share skills in a collaborative and online environment. Technology encourages a more equal contribution from all in an online setting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We may have less opportunity to share skills from working in a collective environment.

Any policy which shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination must be stopped, removed or changed.

⁴ People on low incomes or no income, unemployed, carers, part-time, seasonal workers and shift workers

BCP Equality Impact Assessment Template

Part 4 – Equality Impact Action Plan

Please complete this Action Plan for any negative or unknown impacts identified in the assessment table above.

Issue identified	Action required to reduce impact	Timescale	Responsible officer
For those staff who cannot work from home.	It will not be a requirement for staff to work from home, it will be an option under the smarter working arrangements and we will be creating office service zones to suit everyone's needs.	Present	HR / Project Team
Safeguarding issues (domestic violence) - women are more likely to be victims of domestic violence, and greater frequencies in home working may increase risks to affected employees	To provide information to staff on support available. This has already been undertaken and information is available here. https://bcpcouncil.sharepoint.com/sites/covid19	Ongoing	HR
Online working and learning doesn't suit all ages or where English is not the first language	This needs to be reflected in the workforce strategy, specifically around training. Consider tailored training.	Ongoing	HR
Young people may not have access to suitable workspace outside of an office environment.	No action - It will not be a requirement for staff to work from home, it will be an option under the smarter working arrangements and we will be creating office service zones to suit everyone's needs.	N/A	

BCP Equality Impact Assessment Template

Part 4 – Equality Impact Action Plan

Please complete this Action Plan for any negative or unknown impacts identified in the assessment table above.

Issue identified	Action required to reduce impact	Timescale	Responsible officer
Pace of change and working with new technology may have impact on people's health and wellbeing.	Consider in Health and Wellbeing and Health and Safety guidance and training. Change management training and online support will be available for managers.	Ongoing	HR / Project team
Increased loneliness and poor mental health	Consider in Health and Wellbeing and Health and Safety guidance and training.	Ongoing	HR
Lack of space to have confidential discussions	The project team are engaging with services to understand the requirement for confidential space and this will be build into the proposed layout for the BCP Civic Centre	Jan 2021	Project Team
Dedicated workstation set up at work may not be the same at home or in new shared spaces	Considered in DSE assessments and Health and safety guidance.	Ongoing	
Some people may be more at risk if lone working/working from home	It will not be a requirement for staff to work from home, it will be an option under the smarter working arrangements and we will be creating office service zones to suit everyone's needs. Managers will need to be aware of staff who are at risk if lone working and ensure appropriate arrangements are in place	Ongoing	HR / Managers
Bournemouth Town Hall is compliant with the Equality Act but access is not always easy for those with limited mobility	Pragmatically the project team are considering access implications to the site and understanding through service engagement which individuals have limited mobility so that this is taken account of in design and layout.	Jan 2021	Project Team

BCP Equality Impact Assessment Template

Part 4 – Equality Impact Action Plan

Please complete this Action Plan for any negative or unknown impacts identified in the assessment table above.

Issue identified	Action required to reduce impact	Timescale	Responsible officer
Need to consider contemplation room as an option for staff on site	No action - The intention is to maintain the existing contemplation room in BCP civic centre.	N/A	
Some people may have limited access to ICT and limited internet/broadband packages	No action - If people have poor or limited broadband at home then they consider working from the office or an alternative site.	N/A	
Maybe an increase personal cost, electricity, heating etc if working from home	No action – People will have the choice whether to work from the office or home. They will need to consider the cost of commuting to the office and parking versus the cost of electricity, heating etc from working at home.	N/A	
Poor broadband connectivity may be an issue for some	No action - If people have poor connectivity at home then they consider working from the office or an alternative site.	N/A	
We may lose the opportunity to share skills from working in a collective environment.	Smarter working is about using the appropriate balance of face to face and technology collaboration time. Managers should ensure that their teams have suitable opportunity to interact and engage during the working week.	Ongoing	Managers

Key contacts for further advice and guidance:

Equality & Diversity:
performance@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

BCP Equality Impact Assessment Template

Consultation & Research:
insight@bcpcouncil.gov.uk