



Equality Relevance Assessment

1. Details of proposal	
Policy title	Modernising social care processes
Lead officer	Jennifer Scott – Head of Social Policy
Date relevance considered	18 September 2013
2. Does the council have control over how this policy will be implemented?	
YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Do you have evidence or reason to believe that this policy will, or may potentially:	
General Duties	Impact on equality (Yes or No)
Reduce or increase discrimination, victimisation or harassment against people covered by the equality protected characteristics?	Yes
Reduce or increase equality of opportunity between people who share an equality protected characteristic and those who do not?	Yes
Provide opportunity to improve good relations between those who share an equality protected characteristic and those who do not?	No
4. Equality impact assessment required? (Two Yes above = full assessment necessary)	
YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Decision rationale	
<p>A full Equality Impact Assessment will be required in this instance. The project's core objective is to identify efficiency savings through process redesign of systems used by social work staff across all areas of social policy. Depending on the criteria used for the process redesign and efficiency savings, the project could have significant implications for groups covered by the equality protected characteristics. Proposed measures include a reduction in staffing which is likely to disproportionately impact on women who occupy most of the social care and administrative roles due to be cut.</p>	

- No assessment required – process ends
- Assessment required – continue to next section

Equality Impact Assessment

1. Details of proposal	
Details of others involved	Jennifer Scott – Head of Social Policy Kenny Selbie – Equality Officer Hannah Gardner – Equalities Analyst
Date assessment conducted	16/12/14
2. Aims of the proposed change to council policy or resources	
<p>The main objective of the project is to identify efficiency savings through process re-design of systems used by social work staff across all areas of social policy. Increased use of technology functionality, including Swift, continuing benefits from Worksmart which breaks the dependency of having social work and administrative staff based in the same location, and taking an overarching high level view of ad hoc processes that have developed and evolved over a number of years should lead to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A reduction in the reliance on paper based systems• Visibility of workload and case management for all appropriate staff working on a case• Use of mobile and flexible working technologies• Increased time available to spend on client contact <p>Current business processes create barriers to allowing staff to be more flexible. It is estimated that professional staff across the service can spend as much as 70% of their time in office bases, completing paperwork and other support activities. It is now recognised that significant efficiencies can be achieved through a redesign of the business processes which support the professional practice, including more effective use of the technology available within the service. In addition it is recognised that social work practice has become overly focussed on procedures and processes resulting in the focus on direct work with clients being lost.</p>	
3. What equality data, research or other evidence has been used to inform this assessment?	
Evidence was collected from local, national & academic research, including, census data for West Lothian. Research was also drawn from gender pay gap specialists Close the Gap, and the EHRC.	
4. Details of consultation and involvement	
The assessment has been subject to scrutiny by representatives of the equality community forums through a specific focus on Delivering Better Outcomes projects as agreed by the council's Corporate Working Group on Equality.	
5. Issues identified and 'protected characteristics' impact (Covering: age; disability; gender; gender identity; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief and sexual orientation equality)	

Due to the makeup of the workforce profile of the administration and social care services in West Lothian Council, there is a possible risk that female employees could be adversely impacted. The posts affected by the proposed project are predominately support posts – with 96% of the employees affected by the proposed restructuring being female. The proposed project is also likely to have an adverse negative impact on females working in social care. The 2011 Scottish Census results indicate that over 300,000 women work in a social work / care capacity, compared to just 74,000 males.

Research published by *Close the Gap*¹ indicates that women generally work in a handful of job roles. Defined as the ‘five C’s’, women are more likely to be found in one of these low-paying roles: cleaning; catering; clerical (administration); cashiering (retail); and caring work. Women are also far more likely to work in the public sector than men, with women representing 67% of employees in local government, and 78% of NHS staff (*Economics of Occupational Segregation, Close the Gap*).

Those who have caring responsibilities may also be adversely affected by the proposed plans. Primary carers of children are more likely to be female, and as a result there is a direct overlap between these protected groups. This group may be affected if there is a change to the geographical location of their workplace, or a change to their working hours. Females and those with caring responsibilities are more likely to work part-time hours, and therefore a change to work structures may impact on them in a negative way (*Close the Gap, 2013*). 41% of women in employment worked part-time in 2005, compared with 10% of men. This proportion of women is largely unchanged since 1984. The Office for National Statistics data for March 2011 – April 2012 show 48% of women employees in Scotland working part-time, compared to 16% of men (*Scottish Government, 2013*).

Conversely, there may be a possible positive impact on the protected groups served by the service. By streamlining administration and IT services used by the service, a more efficient service could be passed on to the client. The service serves range of clients who may be considered to be vulnerable, and includes those from protected groups – in particular older adults, young children, and individuals with disabilities.

6. What measures are in place to monitor the actual impact following implementation?

The Delivering Better Outcomes projects are being monitored by the Modernisation Board during implementation and equality impact assessment is identified as a key enabler for projects.

7. Recommendation

- Implement proposal with no amendments
- Implement proposal taking account of mitigating actions (as outlined below)
- Reject proposal due to disproportionate impact on equality

8. Mitigating actions and additional outputs

The council has a position of no compulsory redundancy. While an individual's current post and working practices may be impacted upon by a number of budget proposals, the potential impact of compulsory redundancy is mitigated regardless of a protected characteristic. The workforce management policy enables staff that may be displaced to be offered alternative posts elsewhere in the service or organisation. Significant opportunities for flexible transition, including training and development, are supported. Skills matching and the consultation process ensure that the particular needs and issues of each individual employee are taken into account during the implementation of the policy. Work is being undertaken to profile the council's workforce. This will assist to pro-actively identify services or teams that have capacity to accept employees via the redeployment process. This work assists in advance to identify required skills, training and other development which may be necessary to transition from one role into another. The council's policies on flexible working, reduced hours working, voluntary severance and early retirement provide further options to manage and mitigate the impact of the measure.

- **Equality impact assessment completed**