

Equality Impact Assessment Level 3 FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Flexible Working Arrangements

Executive Summary

A level one impact assessment was conducted on the Flexi Time Scheme in 2009. This identified potential adverse impact on some of the equality target groups and recommended that a full impact assessment should take place and that the scheme should be reviewed. The review will also encompass special leave arrangements.

The aims and intended outcomes of the Scheme are:

- to provide flexibility for individual employees to adjust, where possible (whilst meeting the needs of the service) their working hours to accommodate personal circumstances and so improve work life balance;
- to promote the Council as an employer of choice and help us to recruit and retain a diverse range of employees;
- to improve the Council's services to the customer through increased flexibility;
- to help employees who care for dependants and support people in times of emergency;
- to positively impact on the environment through staggering journey times; and
- to increase employee engagement and job satisfaction, leading to improved performance.

Background

Flexible working hours have been in place for a number of years and are used in most parts of the council, where service needs allow. This is valued by employees, as shown in staff surveys, although some feedback from employees suggests that they would like to see some improvements. We have arrangements for special leave for a range of circumstances, although concerns that these were not being consistently applied led to a clarification to managers in 2009, which Unison object to. It is therefore timely to review the relevant policies.

Methodology and Sources of Data

We have used information from the following sources:

- data available on our HR system around special leave;
- results from our staff survey in 2008, the Times survey 2009 and the Engagement Test in 2010;
- analysis of flexible working arrangements in other Lancashire local authorities.

Assessment of Impact on Equality

| Equality group | Potential adverse impact? | Comments |
|---------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Race | No | The scheme itself does not include reference to breaks for religious purposes e.g., prayer times or periods of fasting. However, the employee handbook covers this separately and allows for use of leave or relaxation of flexi scheme rules to accommodate requests wherever possible. |
| Religion and belief | | |
| Gender | Yes | We have “core times” within the flexi scheme, which could be considered to be gender biased as they require employees to be in work between 10am and 4pm. This could create issues for those employees with caring responsibilities who may wish to collect children from school without the need to reduce their hours. Traditionally women may take more caring responsibilities although this is changing. It is important that both men and women are treated equally and that there is not an assumption made that childcare – or other home / life responsibility - is “women’s work”. |
| Disability | No | Employees who have a disability may require more flexibility around working times to enable them to accommodate such conditions (e.g. late starting due to mobility problems). The current scheme plus our practice of making reasonable adjustments should allow the necessary flexibility. |
| Sexual Orientation | No | |
| Age | No | With an aging population, there may be an increased need for people caring for elderly dependants to make use of the flexible working arrangements. |

The following pages show the breakdown of who has been granted special leave. From this, we can make some broad observations:

- There are differences in how much special leave is given between different service areas which suggests the policy needs to ensure a consistent approach.
- A disproportionate amount of leave is taken by the people between 30 and 49. This may be because working parents of young / school age children are more likely to fall within this range.
- While the percentages suggest BME staff are more likely to use special leave, the numbers of days actually taken are so small that it is difficult to infer any differential impact.
- The reasons for special leave are not recorded.
- Requests for special leave are not recorded, only actual days taken.

Special Leave 2008/9

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------|---------------------------|------|
| Total Days | 121.5 | People taken leave | 46 |
| Occassions | 81 | Days / person | 2.64 |
| Average days / occasion | 1.5 | | |

| | No. of days Taken | % of days | % of workforce in group | Difference | Service Area | | % of Days | % of workforce in service area | Difference |
|------------------|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|------|------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Male | 64 | 52.67 | 55.1 | 2.43 | IT | 17 | 13.94 | 1.92 | -12.02 |
| Female | 57.5 | 47.33 | 44.93 | -2.4 | Customer Service & Bens | 27.5 | 22.55 | 13.44 | -9.11 |
| Disabled | 3.5 | 2.88 | 4.83 | 1.95 | Accountancy | 16 | 13.12 | 6.48 | -6.64 |
| Not Disabled | 118 | 96.76 | 95.17 | -1.59 | Planning | 15.5 | 12.71 | 7.44 | -5.27 |
| Age | | | | | Regen | 18.5 | 15.17 | 10.8 | -4.37 |
| 17-19 | 1 | 0.82 | 1 | 0.18 | Legal & Democratic | 6.5 | 5.33 | 2.88 | -2.45 |
| 20-29 | 4 | 3.28 | 13 | 9.72 | Corporate Property | 4 | 3.28 | 1.2 | -2.08 |
| 30-39 | 45 | 36.9 | 22 | -14.9 | Mgt/comms/PA | 2 | 1.64 | 2.16 | 0.52 |
| 40-49 | 61.5 | 50.43 | 30 | -20.43 | Env. Maintenance | 14.5 | 11.89 | 29.28 | 17.39 |
| 50-59 | 8 | 6.56 | 25 | 18.44 | | | | | |
| 60+ | 2 | 1.64 | 9 | 7.36 | | | | | |
| Ethnicity | | | | | | | | | |
| BME | 13 | 11 | 4.35 | -6.65 | | | | | |
| White British | 108.5 | 89 | 93.24 | 4.24 | | | | | |

Special Leave 1.4.09-28.2.10

| | | | |
|-------------------|------|---------------------------|------|
| Total Days | 93.5 | People taken leave | 54 |
| Occassions | 80 | Days / person | 1.73 |

Average days / occasion
1.17

| | No. of days Taken | % of days | % of workforce in group | Difference | Service Area | | % of days | % of workforce in service area | Difference |
|------------------|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|------|------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Male | 47 | 50.3 | 54.74 | 4.44 | Regen | 21 | 22.47 | 10.8 | -11.67 |
| Female | 46.5 | 49.7 | 45.26 | -4.44 | Legal & Democratic | 8 | 8.56 | 2.4 | -6.16 |
| Disabled | 3 | 3.5 | 4.62 | 1.12 | IT | 6.5 | 6.96 | 2.16 | -4.8 |
| Not Disabled | 90.5 | 96.5 | 95.38 | -1.12 | Accountancy | 10.5 | 11.24 | 6.48 | -4.76 |
| Age | | | | | Environmental Health | 13 | 13.91 | 9.36 | -4.55 |
| 17-19 | 0.5 | 0.54 | 1 | 0.46 | Corporate Property | 4.5 | 4.82 | 1.68 | -3.14 |
| 20-29 | 3 | 3.21 | 13 | 9.79 | Planning | 9 | 9.63 | 7.92 | -1.71 |
| 30-39 | 23.5 | 25.15 | 22 | -3.15 | Customer Service & Bens | 9.5 | 10.17 | 12.48 | 2.31 |
| 40-49 | 39.5 | 42.27 | 31 | -11.27 | Env. Maintenance | 11.5 | 12.31 | 29.28 | 16.97 |
| 50-59 | 19.5 | 20.87 | 24 | 3.13 | | | | | |
| 60+ | 7.5 | 8.03 | 9 | 0.97 | | | | | |
| Ethnicity | | | | | | | | | |
| BME | 8.5 | 9.1 | 4.52 | -4.58 | | | | | |
| White British | 85 | 90.95 | 93.92 | 2.97 | | | | | |

Consideration of Alternative Approaches/Mitigation of Negative Impact

- Look at other authorities' flexi scheme and special leave arrangements to determine best practice.
- Review our policies.

Formal Consultation

Initial consultation has taken place with Unison and we will work jointly on reviewing the policy.

Publication of the EIA

This will be published on the Council's website.

Conclusions

The data does not show any adverse impact by equality groups. However, it is clear that to feel and be fair to all employees, regardless of where they work, clear, agreed guidelines around special leave are required.

This Full Impact Assessment has been completed to the best of our knowledge

Details of Officer Completing Full Impact Assessment

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Name: | Kirsten Burnett |
| Post Title | Head of Human Resources |
| Department/Section | HR |
| Contact Number | 01254 380694 |
| Signature: | |
| Date | March 2010 |

Details of Departmental Equalities Representative

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Name: | |
| Post Title | |
| Department/Section | |
| Contact Number | |

Signature:

Date

If any actions have been identified, please indicate date of review:
(This is usually 12 months after the initial EIA has taken place)