

South Cambridgeshire District Council Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Introduction – Please read

Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) allow the Council to:

- Show that the Council is meeting its legal duty, demonstrating due regard for the provisions of the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) as below:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
 - Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
 - Foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- Methodically consider and assess the impacts of proposals across the [nine protected characteristics](#)
- Allow the Council to develop and implement high quality proposals that maximise positive outcomes for all.

EqIAs should be completed during the development and review of all Council policies, strategies, procedures, projects or functions. Where there is any doubt, the completion of an EqIA is always recommended.

When the form is completed, please send an electronic copy to equality.schemes@scambs.gov.uk. Further support and guidance available on Insite or contact the Policy and Performance Team.

Equality Impact Assessment Complete Form

Section 1: Identifying Details

- 1.1 Officer completing EqIA:
Click or tap here to enter text.
- 1.2 Team and Service:
4 Day Week Project Team
- 1.3 Title of proposal:
Decision re 4 Day Week Trial Extension
- 1.4 EqIA start date:
15/03/2023
- 1.5 Proposal implementation date:
15/05/2023
- 1.6 Who will be responsible for implementing this proposal (Officer and/or Team):
4 Day Week Project Team headed by Chief Executive

Section 2: Proposal to be Assessed

- 2.1 Type of proposal:
Other - Please specify
If other, please specify
Trial of 4 Day Working Week
- 2.2 Is the proposal:
New
- 2.3 State the date of any previous equality impact assessment completed in relation to this proposal (if applicable):
Click or tap to enter a date.

2.4 What are the headline aims of the proposal and the objectives that will help to accomplish these aims? (Max 250 words)

The four-day week extended trial is the second stage in the council's consideration of the four-day week. The first trial was for three months, and tested whether council performance (as measured by KPIs) could be maintained and employee health and wellbeing (as measured by an independent survey carried out before and after the trial) could be improved under the new working pattern. If so, an extended trial would be recommended to test the council's success in recruitment and retention over a longer period. This is in direct response to the difficulties the council has experienced in recruiting new employees, and the associated disruption and cost that goes with failure to recruit and the subsequent need to hire agency/contract staff.

2.5 Which of the Council's equality objectives (as detailed in the Council's Equality Scheme) does this proposal link to or help to achieve?

- Identify, prioritise and deliver actions that will narrow the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged groups and the wider community
- SCDC is an employer that values difference and recognises the strength that a diverse workforce brings.
- Protected characteristic groups have a voice and are represented in forming the future shape of the district.
- None.

2.6 Which groups or individuals will the proposal affect:

- Service Users
- Councillors
- External Stakeholders
- Other
- Employees

If other, please specify [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

2.7 Broadly speaking, how will these groups or individuals be affected? (you will be asked to provide more detail on the specific impacts on different protected characteristic groups later in the form) (max 250 words)

Service Users – the aim of the four-day week is to deliver 100% of the work in 80% of the time for 100% of the pay. Therefore, service users should not be impacted, in so far as the service received is still delivered satisfactorily. It may be that through the streamlining of processes to increase productivity some teams change the way a service is delivered (for example by moving more elements of the service online) but this type of approach was already in progress under the auspices of the council's transformation programme and so the 4DW is likely to have simply sped it up. **Councillors** – as above, councillors should notice no difference in their interactions with council employees. The target for responding to a councillor is 48 hours and this should be maintained in the 4DW environment. **External Stakeholders** – the most likely area where an external stakeholder may be affected is if their partner colleague from the council is unavailable on their non working day. For most colleagues they should be able to provide an alternative person to represent them, or rearrange their working days that week (for example to attend an external partnership meeting). **Employees** – the trial is directly impacting the health and wellbeing of employees, and will result in a rigorous, third-party analysis of the effect on employees. The trial demonstrates that the Council cares about its employees and is prepared to try new ways of working.

2.8 If any part of the proposal is being undertaken by external partners, please specify how the Council will ensure that they will meet equality standards? (Max 250 words)

n/a

Section 3: Evidence and Data

- 3.1 Describe any work you have done (this could include consultation) to understand any effects on groups of people, including those within [9 protected characteristic groups?](#) Please list any key sources (e.g. web-search, previous versions of document, customer feedback etc) that you used to reach your conclusions.

(Max 250 words)

Employees – the health and wellbeing survey asks for a range of demographic information, including age, sex, disability, race, sexual orientation, so this data will be able to be analysed once the survey has been completed, thereby identifying any issues raised in particular protected groups. It does NOT ask about gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, religion and belief. We have also run a series of focus groups targeted at different demographics of workers, and have collated their feedback on the specific impacts they have felt in relation to any protected characteristics. **Service users** – the Council has a customer feedback survey that we advertise on our website and in email signatures, and ask customers to respond to after they have received a service from us. This survey only started in October 2022, but we now have data for the three months preceding the trial and the three months of the trial. This survey does NOT ask if people are in any of the protected characteristics, and it may be a deterrent to people completing the survey to ask for this detailed level of information. However, the text responses are reviewed in relation to how they may relate to protected characteristics.

- 3.2 If you have not undertaken any consultation, please detail why not, or when consultation is planned to take place.

(Max 250)

Formal consultation has not been undertaken, although extensive engagement has been. Also, the unions have been involved in the project

team and Unison have provided a final report on their engagement with their members. This will be reviewed with Unison during a tba meeting (or one of our regular meetings).

Section 4: Impact of proposal on those with protected characteristics

4.1 Please select all characteristics that may or will be impacted (positive or negative). When providing details of the impact please consider the following questions

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. (both the number of persons affected and the severity of the impact)
- you will be asked to set out actions to manage these impacts in the following question (4.2)

All - general to all protected Characteristics.

Details: All members of staff in scope for the trial have had the opportunity to be included within the desk-based trial. There is no discrimination based on protected characteristic in terms of participation in the trial. There have been no changes to terms and conditions during the three month trial, and will be no changes in the proposed extension; all terms and conditions (including pensions) remain the same. The only difference (which is not contractual) is that if employees can maintain increased productivity they can reduce their working hours by 20%.

Age

Details: There are several age-related impacts that may happen, but it is not clear that any of these would be singularly positive or negative; each impact will affect people in different ways, depending on the individual. Examples of impact of the policy are: those approaching retirement age may particularly value the opportunity to experience more time off work and understand the impact on them of retirement/phased retirement without having to reduce their income or pension



contributions; some older people who have less experience of IT may struggle with being more time efficient using new approaches and technologies; older people may have more experience of adapting to change within an organisation or they may find it more difficult to adapt to a different routine that they may have held for a longer period of time; younger people may be more IT literate but have less experience of adapting to change in an organisation. Their work routine may not be as established as is the case in relation to older colleagues, which may make change easier. Potential negative impact on apprentices, who may be younger – increased pressure due to combining studying and working within a reduced timeframe (although not all apprentices are younger). The Robertson Cooper data suggests that younger employees lack confidence in a way that more experienced employees do not. While this couldn't be uniquely attributed to the 4DW (it is also likely to be a result of hybrid-working), it is a flag to all managers and colleagues to ensure that younger/new employees are receiving the support they need to grow their confidence in their role.

☒ Disability

Details: Benefits – additional time to attend medical appointments and take action to look after health and wellbeing. Flexibility in application of the 4DW allows employees to opt to work reduced number of days or reduced hours per day, which could be beneficial to those with disabilities involving fatigue who struggle with long days. Potential negative – depending on the disability some staff may struggle to adapt to new ways of working required under the 4 day week, as well as adapting to sudden changes in the 4 day week routine when it comes to things like having to take certain days off for bank holidays. Certain disabilities may require people to take extra time at work and some individuals may become anxious about trying to keep up with their workload. Pulse survey responses have reported positive impacts in relation to wellbeing, including for those who may have disabilities / long time health conditions. Mental health - could also negatively impact due to isolation/loneliness, or positively due to the opportunity to take up new hobbies, do more exercise, etc. As with age, the policy is likely to impact the same protected group in different ways, depending on the individual.



The results of the Robertson Cooper survey were marginally less positive for those with disabilities than those without, although in some areas (performance, sense of purpose, employee commitment) those with disabilities scored higher than those without. There is no pattern that suggests the 4DW discriminates against those with disabilities.

Gender reassignment

Details: no information available

Marriage and Civil Partnership

Details: no information available

Pregnancy and maternity

Details: Reported savings in relation to childcare costs. Potential in terms of the 4 day week contributing to easier pregnancy. There has been some anecdotal evidence from staff that spending more time with children helps avoid 'parent guilt' that comes from working full time. Time off to attend appointments. Pre and post childcare clubs and appointments etc. Also may make return to work after pregnancy easier. The extended trial does not impact maternity pay or statutory maternity pay. There is an issue around part time workers, which may be relevant for this protected characteristic, which is raised in the sex category below.

Race

Details: The Robertson Cooper data for those from any ethnicity apart from white has better scores for all metrics across the board during 2023. This was the same in the 2022 data, so while it can't be said that the 4DW has had a positive effect on those from BAME groups, it has certainly not had a negative effect. (It should be noted that the sample for each survey was relatively small - under 20).

Religion and belief

Details: Guidance has been submitted to provide more flexibility to staff members of different religions in relation to which days are taken as non-working days. Benefit for Muslim and Jewish staff in relation to option to take Friday off every week. Staff may also now opt to work on a Bank Holiday, which are frequently associated with Christian events, if they would prefer to take their non-working day on another day.



Sex

Details: Anecdotal reports from wider studies that 4DW can help male staff with a greater work / family balance. An issue has been raised by a number of part-time staff (nearly all of whom are women) that if a member of staff was already part-time before the three-month trial started and has therefore reduced their hours by a further 20%, they aren't always able to deliver all of their work. This seems to be particularly for people doing a full-time job, who negotiated a four day contract (before the trial) and during the trial are now doing 3.2 days (or three longer days). Some of these employees have said the workload is not deliverable. This is a gender issue, as it is mainly women in the part time staff group. The issue is being reviewed by HR to see what options there are to address it. There was also data that those with caring responsibilities (more likely to be women than men) found it more difficult to swap a non-working day on things like bank holidays due to having to rearrange childcare cover. Now the 4 day week is replacing the old flexitime system, there were also some reported difficulties in being able to cover childcare appointments.

However, in general women report slightly higher wellbeing than men overall (4.5 'good days at work' compared to 4.4 in the general population), demonstrating that the policy does not in general discriminate against women. Employees with caring responsibilities (generally more likely to be women than men) also report better wellbeing as a result of the 4DW.

Sexual orientation

Details: Scores for non-heterosexual employees (gay men, lesbians, bisexual people) were increased from 3.70 good days at work to 4.30 days after the trial.

Other (socio economic, rural isolation, covid)

Details: Socio-economic - saving money on commuting costs on 5th day, allowing colleagues to benefit from mid-week costs rather than weekend (e.g. Tesco delivery is cheaper during week days, gym classes can be cheaper mid week, etc). Rural isolation - could result in increased isolation if not interacting with colleagues on 5th day, an issue that could extend to social isolation as well. There has been a

suggestion that some staff, particularly lower earners, may see the fifth day as a chance to get another job in order to top up wages, especially during the cost of living crisis. This has the potential for increased stress to the individual and would require them to have a strict separation between their role at the council and any new role they take on elsewhere.

None of the above

4.2 Considering the above impacts you have identified above, please detail any actions (specific or general) which may help to enhance or mitigate impacts. Please include the timescale for completing the action.

Action and timescale	Officer
Part-time colleagues – review of the feedback from sessions and wellbeing survey, and consideration of additional options/guidance to support part-time colleagues	HR, Jeff Membery, May 15 th 2023
Detailed Review of Robertson Cooper survey by protected characteristics (where available) to assess any adverse issues arising from the three month trial	HR, July 2023
Provide ongoing training opportunities on time management and ways of working efficiently	HR Ongoing
Engage with apprentices and apprenticeship providers to ensure apprentices are receiving adequate support and the trial is not adversely affecting their work performance or their studies	HR Ongoing

4.3 How will you monitor that the above actions have been completed and that this proposal, once implemented, is impacting fairly on everyone it affects? In answering this question, please include information about feedback you will seek and/or data you will collect and analyse, and how often you will do this



There will be another review at the end of the one-year trial and a report to Cabinet. Data has been collected, in a 2022 Wellbeing survey to see how staff are feeling, and another survey has just been completed to see how their answers have changed after three months of the 4 day week trial. This will form a basis for our reviews.

Section 5: Summary

5.1 Briefly summarise the key findings of the EqIA and any significant equality considerations that should be taken into account when deciding how to proceed with the proposal (this section can be included within the 'equality implications' section of any committee reports). (Max. 250 words)

The Robertson Cooper survey data indicates that in general all groups of employees with protected characteristics saw an increase in their general health and wellbeing as a result of the trial.

5.2 Confirm the recommendation of the officer completing the EqIA:

Proceed with the proposal (with any actions identified as required within Section 4 of the EqIA). Analysis demonstrates that the proposal is robust, we have taken all appropriate opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations between groups.

Reject the proposal: Analysis demonstrates that the proposal will cause unlawful discrimination and it must be removed or changed

Section 6: Sign Off

6.1 Signature of individual completing EqIA:

Liz Watts, with support from a number of colleagues

6.2 Date of completion:

20/04/2023



6.3 When will this proposal next be reviewed and who will this be? (when in doubt 3 years minimum)

Liz Watts, at end of 1 year extended trial (should it be approved)

6.4 Approving officer signature *, this should be your Head of Service, Service Area Manager, or Project Sponsor:

Click or tap here to enter text.

6.5 Date of approval:

Click or tap to enter a date.

Please send the completed document to Equality.Schemes@scambs.gov.uk for publishing on the website.

**in the event that this EqIA is completed by Head of Service, then no additional approving signature is required.*