

Equality impact assessment – Covid-19 and working from home

Audit Director, Audit Services

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Purpose

1. An equality impact assessment on working from home (WFH) arrangements is attached for consideration by Management Team.

Background

2. After the commencement of lockdown, the internal Equalities and Human Rights Steering Group (EHRSG) had a scheduled meeting on 23 March 2020. After completion of planned business there was a general discussion and the need for an equality impact assessment, in light of new working arrangements, was identified.
3. This work was carried out by a subgroup of EHRSG. The remit of the assessment extended beyond protected characteristics to take account of socio-economic circumstances which may impact of WFH arrangements.
4. It is normal practice for equality impact assessments to be published on our website.

Considerations

5. The equality impact assessment records the process and groups that were consulted. In view of the rich and detailed feedback received, collation and consideration of the emerging key messages is captured in an appendix. Acknowledgement is given to the many actions that the organisation has implemented to date. The assessment concludes with three broad areas for further consideration:
 - Measures to alleviate workload pressure.
 - Measures to alleviate challenges to well-being.
 - Measures to alleviate obstacles to working from home.

Conclusion

6. As the Scottish Government progresses its route map out of an unprecedented global pandemic, so does Audit Scotland. Pulse surveys and other means of communication indicate that staff are appreciative of the actions and communications to-date from Management Team. By conducting an equality impact assessment, we are in effect carrying out a gap analysis to assess how working from home may be experienced differently for those staff that associate with certain protected characteristics or for whom there are socio-economic challenges.

Recommendations

7. Management Team is invited to:
 - consider the final section of the equality impact assessment and how those areas for consideration may influence subsequent steps in how Audit Scotland supports staff to work from home at a time of a global pandemic
 - decide whether they are happy for the equality impact assessment to be published on the Audit Scotland website, as is, demonstrating that this is a dynamic scenario which the organisation is responding to on an ongoing basis, or not.