

Scottish Borders Council

Equality Impact Assessment

3.1	Title of Proposal:	Managing Stress in the Workplace Policy Human Resources Policy
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3.2	Service Area: Department:	Human Resources
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3.3	Description:	<p>The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate Scottish Borders Council's (SBC) commitment to the well being of its employees by providing a framework and guidance of support for the mental health of its staff for the effective prevention and management of stress at work.</p> <p>The policy's aim is to develop working practices that reduce or prevent factors which may lead to stress in the workplace and identify support. Key features of the policy includes reducing sickness absence rates due to stress and provide a supportive environment for employees with a view to minimising and reducing work related stress and support for employees with non-work related stress.</p> <p>The policy defines stress and clearly describes the roles and responsibilities for both management and employees. Good practice tips including recognising the signs of stress to taking action to reduce stress is also included within the policy along with a comprehensive list of useful contacts covering a number of support agencies/organisations.</p>
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3.4	Equality Characteristic	Impact			Description	Mitigation & Recommendations
		No Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact		

Note:

SBC does not currently collate or analyse equality data for those who may suffer from or be prone to workplace stress. It is acknowledged that this is a practice that needs to be introduced in order to ensure that the policy is effective and is of use. Consequently the impacts identified below are based on the commitment to address workplace stress and the good practice currently promoted and in use. Soon to be introduced local monitoring of the equality data should confirm the initial findings.

Characteristics including: Age, Race and Religion/belief	X			The policy is applied and supports all employees irrespective of their characteristic groups therefore overall it is considered to have no impact. Additionally this policy provides a framework to identify those at risk and provide support in line with Occupational Health advice/PAM assist Employee Assistance Programme. In conducting this assessment where it is worth noting we have identified aspects that have been considered for the following characteristics:	
Disability e.g. Effects on people with mental, physical, sensory impairment, learning disability, visible/invisible, progressive or recurring	X			Those with a mental health condition may be more vulnerable to stress and anxiety due to their condition. Some physical conditions such as epilepsy can be triggered by stress. This policy is applied and supports all employees irrespective if they have a disability or not therefore it is considered to have no impact.	
Gender (Males, Females, Transgender or Transsexual people) Carers (those who have caring responsibilities for someone with an equality characteristic)	X			Considered no impact. However, those with caring responsibilities may be more vulnerable to stress and anxiety. This would be managed by referral to the Occupational Health service if appropriate. Employees may also refer themselves to PAM assist, the Council's Employee Assistance Programme	
Pregnancy and Maternity (refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context,	X			Employees who are pregnant may be more vulnerable to stress and anxiety due to their pregnancy or when they return to work. This would be managed by referral to the Occupational Health service if appropriate. Employees may also refer themselves to PAM assist, the Council's Employee	

protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth),				Assistance Programme	
Sexual Orientation , e.g. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Heterosexual	X			Irrespective of the lack of monitoring the official figures for employees within this category it is known and acknowledged that there will be a number of gay/lesbian staff who may be subject to stress and anxiety due to not being 'out' in the workplace meaning that they don't feel confident in being themselves and feel they are putting on a performance. This policy will help to provide a framework to identify those at risk and provide support in line with Occupational Health advice/PAM Assist.	
Gender Reassignment (Where person is living as the opposite gender to their birth)	X			Similarly there is no data to support this, but it is considered that employees who undergo a gender transition may be more vulnerable to stress and anxiety due to this major life transformation. This policy will help to provide a framework to identify those at risk and provide support in line with Occupational Health advice/PAM Assist. Additionally there is specific SBC guidance on Managing Gender Reassignment that employees and managers can make reference to.	
Poverty (people who are on a low income including benefits claimants, people experiencing fuel poverty, isolated rural communities etc)	X			Again, there is no supporting data, but it is known that lack of finances and poor social standing can play its part on employees resulting in stress and anxiety. This policy will help to provide a framework to identify those at risk. Employees can also gain support and advice from PAM Assist.	

3.5	Relevance to the Equality Duty in Summary:
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What impact will your proposal have on the following :	
Equality Duty	Reasoning:
Elimination of discrimination (both direct & indirect), victimisation and harassment.	Although not specific to this aspect of the general duty the policy is likely to have a positive impact as the policy is easily accessible and available to all.
Promotion of equality of opportunity	Ultimately this policy should assist SBC in the promotion of equality of opportunity, as the guidance contained within are equitable and accords with good practice
Foster good relations	The policy should have a positive impact on the need to foster good relations as it encourages managers to recognise and deal sympathetically with the symptoms of stress The guidance also encourages those who may be suffering from stress to recognise and seek appropriate support as soon as possible.

3.6 Recommendations & Mitigation		
Characteristic	Mitigation/Recommendation	Approved Yes/No
General	Council's commitment to equalities is communicated to all	Yes
	Amend policy to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accessible format strapline and version control matrix 	Yes
	Check contents of the reflect Health Safety Executive Guidance on Stress Management standards	Yes
	Both HR and H&S have published policies it should be established which policy should be the used across SBC	Yes
	Formulate a process to collate, monitor and analysis figures for employees utilising this policy	Yes
	The outcomes of this policy will be reviewed at least every two years. If any trends emerge these will be analysed and appropriate steps taken, potentially including a full review of the policy.	Yes

Signed Off (Sign off <u>must</u> be completed by Service Manager or Director)			
Name:	Claire Hepburn	Directorate:	Chief Executive
Post:	Chief Officer Human Resources	Date:	19/2/17

EIA Completed By			
Name	Iain Davidson	Service Area.	Chief Executive - Human Resources
Post	Employee Relations Manager	Date	7 th February 2017
Name	Simone Doyle	Service Area	Chief Executive - Human Resources
Post	Equality & Diversity Officer (HR)	Date	7 th February 2017
Name	Dee Maclean	Service Area	Chief Executive - Human Resources
Post	HR Business Partner	Date	7 th February 2017