

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT – STAGE 1

EIA Ref		
Lead Officer	Name	John Gallagher/Lisa Driscoll
	Position	Principal Policy Officers, Corporate and Organisational Policy
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SECTION 1 –Context & Background

1.0 What is the title of the policy / practice/service?

Absence Management Policy 2017

1.1 What is the current status of the policy / practice / service?

Existing

Changed ✓

New

1.2 Who are the main stakeholders and who has primary responsibility for delivering the policy / practice / service?

HBC Management, Staff and Elected Members.

The Policy, People, Performance & Efficiency Division will collectively have the responsibility in terms of implementation and monitoring the effectiveness of the Policy.

Employees with line management duties will be responsible for the operational, day to day implementation of the Policy.

Monitoring the effectiveness of the Policy will be in the first instance 6 months and annual review to Management Team. In addition to this, quarterly monitoring will take place.

1.3 Are there any other related policies / practices / services?

This Policy underpins many policies/practices/services within the Policy, People, Performance & Efficiency Division, more specifically Capability, Disciplinary, time off guidance, payroll, the health & wellbeing and equality & diversity of its workforce.

1.4 Who is the policy / practice / service intended to affect?

Residents

Staff ✓

Specific Group(s)

(add details below)

1.5 What are the principal aims and the intended outcomes of the policy/ practice / service?

The aim of this policy is to promote the attendance of employees at work and to ensure that absence is managed effectively.

There are 4 principal objectives:

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1. To provide a clear, consistent and fair approach to managing absence across the organisation and ensure all employees are aware of this approach and their obligations
2. To minimise the levels of sickness absence, and the impact of this, in the workplace
3. To encourage collaborative working between management, employees, employees' representatives, Human Resources and Occupational Health to promote an early and sustained return to work wherever possible; and
4. To support the health and wellbeing of employees in the workplace, as well as supporting those who are absent from work.

SECTION 2 – Consideration of Impact

2.1 Is there sufficient evidence to determine, on the balance of probability, that the policy / practice / service has, or could have, an impact upon each of the equality groups identified below?

Yes ✓ (proceed to question 2.4) No

2.2 Where further data / intelligence / consultation is required please provide details below.

Information Activity	Source / Planned	Timeframe	Lead Officer
N/A			

2.3 What were the principal findings / conclusions of this research / consultation?

N/A

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2.4.1 On the basis of evidence has the actual / potential impact of the policy / practice been judged to be positive (+), neutral (=), or negative (-) for each of the equality groups and is the level of impact considered to be high (H), Medium (M) or low (L

Equality Impact Assessment – Absence

Management Policy

Key

R- Race/Ethnicity A – Age G – Gender SO – Sexual Orientation GR – Gender Reassignment SE – Socio Economic	D – Disability F – Faith/Religion PM – Pregnancy and Maternity MCP – Marriage/Civil Partnership C - Carers PSED – Public Sector Equality Duty*	- Negative Impact + Positive Impact = Neutral Impact
* Does this service ✓ Help towards the elimination of discrimination, harassment and victimisation ✓ Advance equality of opportunity ✓ Foster good relations (✓ or X – give evidence where appropriate) ✓ - This Policy applies equally to all staff and all protected characteristics		
It is recognised that the management of absence is often complex, and that no one solution applies to all cases. However, it is also recognised that there should be a set of fundamental principles and procedures to manage absence that need to be followed by all staff in order to provide fairness and consistency across the organisation. Many stakeholders were consulted in the production of this Policy.		

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STRATEGIC AIM	R	A	G	SO	G R	D	F	PM	MCP	SE	C	PSED *	COMMENTS
Consistent & fair approach to managing Absence	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	√	This policy is based on the principle that management will take a positive approach to absence, which is seen as preventative and not punitive and which promotes a culture where attendance is encouraged, irrespective of protected characteristic.
Minimise levels of sickness absence	=	+ L	=	=	=	+ L	=	+ L	=	=	+ L	√	
Minimise impact of sickness absence	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	=	√	This Policy ensures consistency of approach and treatment. Differing practices and tolerances with different employees in the same division/directorate and across directorates, simply leads to confusion and claims of unfair treatment. Training for managers is mandatory as part of this Policy which ensures a supportive, consistent and fair approach.
Support Health & Wellbeing	+ M	+ M	+ M	+ M	+ M	+ M	+ M	+ M	+ M	+ M	+ M	√	
Encourage collaborative working	+ L	+ L	+ L	+ L	+ L	+ L	+ L	+ L	+ L	+ L	+ L	√	

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													Absence is not always as a result of physical/mental illness. Problems at home, demotivation, the avoidance of difficult workplace situations and stress may be factors resulting in non-attendance. It is possible to reduce the amount of absence through positive measures and managers are encouraged to consider the use of existing policies on flexible working hours, granting of special leave in appropriate circumstances and authorising reasonable absences for medical appointments, etc. Halton BC has an ageing Workforce and consequently long term sickness can be an issue at times. This Policy ensures staff are supported in these circumstances via a range of health and wellbeing measures. This is not thought to have a negative effect on older people. The Equality Act has been considered throughout the development of the Policy with measures in place to cover people under the Act.
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2.4.2 Does the policy / practice / service have any potential impact upon safeguarding vulnerable people?

No specific impact

2.5 What data and information has been used in determining the positive impact of the policy / procedure / service under review in relation to promoting equality or good relations or eliminating discrimination and is this justifiable and lawful in regards to any negative impacts for other groups?

Equality Group(s)	All Absence Management data was considered along with the Organisations Workforce profile. Consultation also took place with stakeholders. Good practice was considered from other Local Authorities and adopted where appropriate. The Policy will be monitored to assess its impact.
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Baseline data and information

Workforce Profile 2015 / Absence data (2013-2016) / Managers Questionnaire and Focus Group / Internal Audit Report (Jan.2016)

Nature of impact and where this is positive justification

The aim is to reduce absence levels and improve employee health & wellbeing.

2.6 How will the impact of the policy / practice / service be monitored?

HR Systems, Workforce Profile: self access to updating personal information, future Staff Survey.
Regular monitoring & Evaluation reports on the implementation of the Policy to Management Team and Corporate Services PPB.

2.7 Who will be responsible for monitoring and how will this be arranged?

The Corporate Policy Team will co-ordinate monitoring, which will take place via Directorate SMT's, Management Team and Corporate Services PPB.
Updated workforce profile will take place on a regular basis. Staff Survey will take place in 2017/18.

2.8 What actions, if any, has this review identified (that do not form part of a stage 2 assessment) to promote equality of opportunity or relations between groups and to support community cohesion? If no actions have been identified please insert 'no further action identified' within first column.

Action & purpose / outcome	Priority	Timeframe	Lead Officer

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No further action required			
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2.9 Summary of stakeholders involved in this review

Job Title or Name	Organisation / representative of
John Gallagher	HBC: Policy, People, Performance & Efficiency Division
Lisa Driscoll	HBC: Policy, People, Performance & Efficiency Division

2.10 Public Sector Equality Duty

General Duty

Does this policy / service take into account the need to: -

- (a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conflict that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010 Yes ✓
No
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it Yes ✓
No
- (c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it Yes ✓
No

2.11 Completion Statement

**As the identified Lead Officer of this review I confirm that:-
(Please complete only one of the following sections)**

1. A negative impact has been identified for one or more equality groups and that a Stage 2 Assessment is required
2. There is sufficient information available to provide assurance that there will be a positive differential impact for one or more equality groups, and that this is justifiable and lawful OR a neutral impact has been determined but actions to mitigate the impact have been identified. ✓

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Signed	
Dated	April 28 th 2017

Completed CIRAs should be sent to Policy, People, Performance and Efficiency Division to be given a unique reference number and for inclusion on the central register