

Equality Impact Assessment - Results

Title of Policy	Accessibility and Inclusion Workplace Strategy
Summary of aims and desired outcomes of Policy	The aim of the strategy is to have a strategic approach for Workplace Division to deliver its functions in a manner which considers all aspects of making our core estate offices as accessible and inclusive as possible for all from design to delivery.
Directorate: Division: team	Directorate for Corporate Transformation / Workplace Division / Estate Strategy and Planning

Executive summary

The EQIA helps understand the impact of the strategy on people who share certain 'protected characteristics'. In particular: age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief. Socio-economic impact and other groupings were also considered. The strategy provides an opportunity to promote equality.

A wide range of stakeholders consulted shared perspectives of using the offices. This included engagement across our internal networks and external perspectives. An Equality Impact Assessment Forming Workshop identified impacts. A further workshop assessed the risk of impact and mitigating actions.

The strategy covers:

- Colleagues - for example permanent employees, contractors, agency workers;
- Visitors/guests - for example stakeholders, public, colleagues from other organisations.

The strategy considers the whole building, including internal and outside space through:

- Entry to / arrival;
- Movement in and around; and
- Exiting / leaving.

By embedding this strategy we will help 'deliver a high quality workplace that enables the Scottish Government to thrive'.

Accessibility and inclusion within our offices aims to deliver better outcomes for users. This will lead to more positive and trusting interactions. Scottish Government can be an employer of choice for a diverse workforce.

Background

The Workplace Division, identified a policy gap within the Scottish Government core estate. The development of an accessibility and inclusion strategy for the workplace was undertaken.

Trudi Sharp, Head of Workplace, commissioned the work. The Report "EASI - Workplaces for All", approved by the Workplace Division, led to the strategy.

It was immediately evident that an Equality Impact Assessment required consultation. This included colleagues, staff networks, Equality Unit, Council of Scottish Government Unions and legal.

It is important to note the delay of the introduction of this strategy due to Covid-19. The lessons from this and the 2020 People Survey have been considered.

The Scope of the EQIA

This covers buildings used for office activities across the core Scottish Government estate. The 'Prolonged home working on Scottish Government staff in the context of Covid-19 and of the measures to support a return to buildings' EQIA covers home workspaces.

It is widely documented that to be successful a corporate strategy needs to include:

- People
- Place
- Technology

'Place' is only one element which covers offices. As the world of work continues to change so does the business and individual needs. The development of a new future vision for the organisation post Covid-19 will determine the organisation we want to be.

Key Findings

Robust data on protected characteristics were all considered as part of this EQIA.

Workshops discussed the impact, positive and negative, on all identified groups. Risks discussed helped identify mitigation actions to minimise and/or remove the risk. The risk and mitigation will depend on the size of building and appropriateness of the action.

The findings are:

1. Intersectionality plays a significant part, in particular: Disability, Age and Sex.
2. Offices present the opportunity to offer a fairer Socio- Economic platform.
3. Action recommendations of accessibility audits and reports for a more inclusive workspace.
4. Disability is one of the most complex due to the range of different experiences. Create a variety of workspaces to cater for a range of needs.
5. A range of different spaces which operate in a variety of ways makes 'reasonable adjustment(s)' possible.
6. Men and women need access to toilets and changing facilities on the same basis with privacy.
7. Gender-neutral toilets and changing facilities provided on the same basis with privacy.
8. Private, lockable spaces should be accessible. For example bottle feeding spaces for parents or time out.

This strategy has the potential to improve the user experience. People, Place and Technology can align to make the organisation accessible and inclusive.

It is important to recognise the individual perspectives within protected characteristic groupings. An impact identified as positive will not always be positive for all, it may be the opposite. Bearing this in mind choice and proportionality are the foundation of the strategy.

Key areas with potential for positive impact on potential groups are:

- accessible and navigable offices;
- consistent standard of modern workspaces in offices;
- range of workspaces - quiet, individual working through to buzzy, collaborative working;
- inclusion of all voices from outset of major projects;
- co-creation of internal spaces;
- focus on accessibility and inclusion in business cases for property acquisition; and
- focus on accessibility and inclusion when refurbishment opportunities arise.

Areas where there are potential areas for negative impact on particular groups are:

- limited or no access to range of workspaces within offices; and
- lack of consistency of workspace offer across the estate.

Recommendations and Conclusion

An Accessibility and Inclusion Workspace Workplace Strategy can offer positive impact for all. It should be part of the Corporate Strategy for the Scottish Government and an integral part of 'how we do things'. This latter work is currently in development.

The greatest risk is not in the strategy itself rather failure to follow its ambition. Workplace Division will develop an Implementation Plan to embed this into their work. This recognises the challenge of diverse needs and to manage expectations. The division will act to minimise risks, providing clear explanations when not possible.

This strategy is central to the commencement of any pipeline construction and refurbishment projects. This EQIA will be updated with insights gained. It is also central to future policy development. For example development of the Accommodation Policy.

ISBN: 978-1-80201-113-5

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA
PPDAS894026 (06/21)