

# **Prolonged home working for Scottish Government staff and new safe and secure workplace arrangements in response to Covid-19**

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

## Equality Impact Assessment Record

Title of policy/ practice/ strategy/ legislation etc.	Prolonged home working for Scottish Government staff and new safe and secure workplace arrangements in response to Covid-19
Minister	Minister for Parliamentary Business
Lead official	Ken Goodlad, Workplace Division
Main officials involved in the EQIA	Ashleigh Meikle, Workplace Division Andrew Ferguson, Workplace Division
Directorate: Division: Team	Corporate Transformation and Workplace Directorate; Work:Spaces Team
Is this new policy or revision to an existing policy?	This is a new policy in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

## **Screening**

### **Policy Aim**

This EQIA aims to evaluate the impact of the Scottish Government's corporate policy on prolonged home working and Covid safety measures to return to offices, particularly on staff of one or more protected characteristic groups.

In line with [Scotland's Covid-19 Strategic Framework](#), Scottish Government buildings have been mostly closed with the majority of staff working from home. When buildings re-open, they will do so in accordance with the latest health and safety guidance to minimise the risk of transmission of Covid-19 for anyone accessing our buildings.

### **Who will it affect?**

The policy will impact directly on SG Staff, tenants, wider public bodies, contractors, service providers and visitors to the Scottish Government buildings.

In carrying out this assessment, the Scottish Government is mindful of the three needs of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED): eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

While the measures in place may positively impact on one or more of the protected characteristics<sup>1</sup>, they may have a disproportionate negative impact on one or more of the protected characteristics. Where any negative impacts have been identified, we have sought to mitigate or, where possible, eliminate these. Our equality duty is not limited to negating or mitigating negative impacts however, and we also have a positive duty to promote equality.

While it is the view of the Scottish Government that any remaining impacts are currently justified and a proportionate means of helping to achieve the legitimate aim of reducing the public health risks posed by Covid-19, the Scottish Government also recognises that these measures are only required to respond to the current set of circumstances. They are only necessary as long as the potential benefits justify any negative impacts caused.

### **The Scope of the Equality Impact Assessment**

In line with Scotland's Covid-19 Strategic Framework, the majority of Scottish Government staff have been working from home since March 2020. This

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<sup>1</sup> Section 4 of the Equality Act 2010

decision was taken in line with public health advice, with the objective of protecting staff, visitors and the wider population.

For the small number of essential workers who had a need to attend a Scottish Government office for work, new measures were introduced across the estate to provide a safe workplace. As we look to re-open offices, these measures have been extended across all of our buildings to limit the spread of the virus and ensure compliance with public health guidance.

Given the importance of assessing the impact on each of the protected characteristics, the Scottish Government has considered the measures against the needs of the general equality duty as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity; and
- Foster good relations.

With most Scottish Government staff and stakeholders working from home, there has been limited opportunity to gather evidence on the possible impacts of the measures put in place. Where evidence and information exists, we have used emerging analysis of the impact of Covid-19 to inform the policy decisions taken.

## **Key Findings**

The safe and secure measures Scottish Government has put in place for its staff, which includes the decision to work from home wherever possible and new safe and secure building protocols for buildings that are open, are designed to reduce the public health risks posed by Covid-19 by limiting the spread of the disease, and are therefore designed to prevent harm to individuals in Scotland.

This impact assessment has identified some potential positive impacts on one or more of the protected characteristics. In general, reductions in the spread of Covid-19 are designed to reduce risk of health harm to the whole population, with a particular focus on the health of those people who are most at risk of serious harm from Covid-19.

We recognise that there may be some potential indirect and disproportionate negative impacts of the measures we have taken on one or more of the protected characteristic groups within SG staff. These are set out and explored further in this impact assessment.

Whilst the view of the Scottish Government is that these measures are justified and a proportionate means for limiting the spread of the disease amongst our workforce, we have also sought to mitigate the negative effects identified.

Insofar as these mitigating actions may not be able to mitigate all of the potential impacts, the Scottish Government considers the potential impacts justified, a proportionate means of achieving the legitimate aim of reducing the public health risks posed by Covid-19, and the prevention of harm to individuals living in Scotland.

### **What might prevent the desired outcomes being achieved?**

There are a wide range of issues that may prevent staff returning to the workplace with the continued prevalence of Covid-19. Further outbreaks of Covid-19, either locally and/or nationally, and lack of sufficient suppression of the virus mean we cannot be certain that the conditions to allow the wider re-opening of buildings are met.

If the measures deployed do not adequately address the negative impacts of working from home or a return to buildings then the desired outcomes are at risk of not being fully achieved. For example, we must consider the impact a prolonged period of working from home is having on physical and mental health, on colleagues' learning and development, and the overall experience of work. We must also carefully consider the changes to the physical design of the workplace and support that are introduced to ensure these support our aim of an inclusive and accessible workplace.

## **Stage 1: Framing**

### **Results of framing exercise**

The policies associated with this impact assessment have been coordinated by the Corporate Continuity Recovery Programme, a senior-led working group, comprising representatives from the organisation's corporate services business areas (People Directorate; Workplace Division - Security and Business Continuity, Facilities Services, Occupational Health & Safety, Projects Unit; Corporate Communications; and iTECS) and Trade Unions.

This programme approach provided the opportunity to consider widely the impacts of continued home working and the measures being put in place to provide Covid-19-safe workplaces. Consultation was carried out with a number of stakeholders within Scottish Government including Digital Directorate, Chief Medical Officer, Organisational Readiness, Health & Social Care Hub and Economy Hub. Consultation with Ministers, the Scottish Government's Executive Team and Trade Unions throughout the development and introduction of measures referred to in this document, and various research studies consolidated in the "Measuring the impact of working from home - Phase 1 Report"<sup>2</sup> have all informed our thinking.

An internal framing exercise identified that there was potential for a period of prolonged working from home to have some impact on all protected characteristic groups, with some groups being more disproportionately impacted than others.

### **Protected characteristic age**

Evidence tells us that older people are at higher risk of serious illness or death from Covid-19. Working from home reduces the risk of exposure to Covid-19 and the design of the workplace will need to comply with government guidelines to help ensure that the risk of transmission at work is low. We will continue to review measures in line with the developments of the pandemic and the interventions to manage it, such as the vaccination programme.

### **Protected characteristic: disability**

Evidence<sup>3</sup> tells us that some disabled people are more likely to experience exacerbation of already poor physical and mental health as a result of Covid-19 restrictions. The support available to staff needs to consider both physical and mental health of all colleagues, with particular care given to ensuring the range of support and the design of new workplace measures considers the needs of disabled colleagues.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://erdm.scotland.gov.uk:8443/documents/A30303478/details>

<sup>3</sup> [Inequalities by disability in the context of Covid-19 \(slide-pack\) - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

### **Protected characteristic: sex**

Women are more likely to have limiting long-term conditions (36% vs 30% of men, 2018), which can be exacerbated by Covid-19 restrictions.

Women represent the majority of the Scottish Government workforce (54%). We know that women in Scotland have a disproportionate level of caring responsibilities in the home environment. With schools and other caring facilities closed during most of 2020, it is likely that women will have been impacted more than men having to balance working from home whilst caring for others.

Evidence also tells us that over the period of lockdown, many Violence Against Women and Girls organisations observed significant increases in crisis work with victims. This needs to be considered in the range of support available and design of any return to work criteria or classification of essential workers.

### **Protected characteristic: sexual orientation**

There may be an increased risk of exposure to challenging domestic situations with prolonged remote working leading to heightened reporting levels of anxiety and other mental health issues within this category. The range of support and criteria for return therefore needs consideration within that context.

### **Protected characteristic: race**

Minority ethnic staff are more likely to fall into the 'vulnerable health groups' classification of the population, and have a higher risk of serious illness from Covid-19. [Early data](#) showed that the Covid-19 virus was more harmful for people with underlying health conditions. Prevalence of some of these health conditions is known to be higher in certain ethnic groups. For example, Type 2 diabetes is six times more likely in people of South Asian descent and three times more likely in African and Afro-Caribbean people.

### **Protected characteristic: religion or belief**

Consideration of suitable prayer and reflection spaces at work needs consideration as part of any new measures and changes introduced in workplaces with regards room capacity and available space.

### **Interaction with Other Policies (Draft or Existing)**

#### Accessibility and Inclusion Workspace strategy

The aim of the Accessibility and Inclusion Workspace strategy is to have a strategic approach for Workplace Division to deliver their functions (Security and Business Continuity; Facilities Services; Projects Unit) in a manner which considers all aspects of making our workplaces as accessible and

inclusive as possible for colleagues, visitors and contractors from design to delivery.

Whilst the work from home decision and the changes to workplace to ensure safe environments for staff is the current priority, this needs to be done within the context of a wider need to ensure accessible and inclusive workplaces for all staff and those with a need to visit our buildings.

### **Extent/Level of EQIA required**

The evidence captured in the next section has been drawn from a broad range of sources. Primarily, evidence has been gathered from emerging publicly-available analysis as more is understood about the impact of Covid-19 in the community.

The EQIA process has highlighted the need for Scottish Government to continue to engage closely with staff as we take the next steps in Scotland's Covid-19 Strategic Framework to ensure that equalities issues continue to be considered in the decisions that impact our workforce whilst Covid-19 remains prevalent.



## Stage 2: Data and evidence gathering, involvement and consultation

While there is a growing evidence base for the impact of Covid-19 on protected characteristic groups and the measures to limit the spread of the virus in the community, we have less data on the direct impact Covid-19 has had on Scottish Government staff. We are running an all staff survey [June 2021] to capture staff responses methodically. Where we have been able to associate evidence captured from Scottish Government staff we have included that in the tables below. Further engagement across all groups as we prepare for any future return to buildings or new ways of working is recommended as part of a wider programme of staff engagement.

### This series of tables breaks down evidence gathered for different protected characteristics<sup>4</sup>

#### Age

Evidence gathered and Strength/quality of evidence	Source	Data gaps identified and action taken
<p>33.1% of the workforce are aged 50+ 15% of the workforce are aged 16 - 29</p>	<p>Equality outcomes and mainstreaming report 2019 - <a href="#">SG Mainstreaming report</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>
<p><b>Health</b> Older people are at a higher risk of ill health or death from Covid-19</p> <p>They are more likely to have a long-term health condition than not to have one (55+) and more</p>	<p>Impact of coronavirus on Equality Groups - <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/inequalities-by-age-in-the-context-of-coronavirus-slide-pack/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/inequalities-by-age-in-the-context-of-coronavirus-slide-pack/</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p>

<sup>4</sup> Refer to Definitions of Protected Characteristics document for information on the characteristics

Evidence gathered and Strength/quality of evidence	Source	Data gaps identified and action taken
likely to be disabled (have a limiting long-term health condition) than not to be (75+).		There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.
<p><b>Anxiety</b> Older people (60+) are experiencing some aspects of the lockdown situation differently from younger people, worrying less about finances but worrying more about access to essentials.</p>	<p>Coronavirus and the social impacts on older people in Great Britain: 3 April to 10 May 2020 - <a href="https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/ageing/articles/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsonolderpeopleingreatbritain/3aprilto10may2020">https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/ageing/articles/coronavirusandthesocialimpactsonolderpeopleingreatbritain/3aprilto10may2020</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>
<p><b>Wellbeing</b> Older people have higher mean WEMWBS scores in general, indicative of better wellbeing (52.0 for 65-74 year olds and 50.4 for 75+, compared to 49.8 overall in 2019), while younger people have a lower mean WEMWBS score (49.3 for 16-24 year olds and 49.1 for 25-34 years olds).</p> <p>Older people have increased levels of social isolation caused by the impacts of Covid-19</p>	<p>Impact of coronavirus on Equality Groups - <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/inequalities-by-age-in-the-context-of-coronavirus-slide-pack/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/inequalities-by-age-in-the-context-of-coronavirus-slide-pack/</a></p> <p>Coronavirus Health and Social Impact Assessment - <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>

Evidence gathered and Strength/quality of evidence	Source	Data gaps identified and action taken
<p><b>Caring</b> Staff concerns reported to the People Advice and Wellbeing Team related to the impact of additional caring responsibilities on career progression/development due to Covid-19 and its related impacts on normal educational and/or care arrangements of children, specifically people were concerned that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Additional caring demands meant less time to apply for roles or to take on developmental work</li> <li>- Managers might view them as less committed because they needed greater flexibility to cope with caring responsibilities</li> <li>- Unable to take on high profile/high demand pieces of work due to time pressures associated with additional caring demands, and concern that this in turn would impact on longer term career progression.</li> </ul>	<p>Concerns reported to the People Advice and Wellbeing team</p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>
<p><b>Economic consequences</b> Younger people in Scotland were more likely to already be financially vulnerable and in unmanageable debt before the pandemic (50% and 6.3% respectively of households where the highest income earner was aged 16-34, compared to 34% and 2.9% overall). Initial UK surveys suggest they may already have resorted to using up savings, relying on overdrafts, borrowing from family and friends or accessing a new loan or credit card (Ipsos, 18-34 year olds).</p>	<p>Impact of coronavirus on Equality Groups - <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/inequalities-by-age-in-the-context-of-coronavirus-slide-pack/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/inequalities-by-age-in-the-context-of-coronavirus-slide-pack/</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>

Evidence gathered and Strength/quality of evidence	Source	Data gaps identified and action taken
<p><b>Career progression, leaning and development</b></p> <p>Survey respondents mentioned a desire to have greater access to training/events for professional development. This may be more prevalent for younger colleagues and those earlier on in their career than for those who have been employed for longer.</p>	<p>'Homeworking Research - Phase 1 Report - August 2020' - <a href="https://erdm.scotland.gov.uk:8443/documents/A30303478/details">https://erdm.scotland.gov.uk:8443/documents/A30303478/details</a></p>	<p>Further engagement with L&amp;D colleagues to better understand the views and concerns from new members</p>

### Disability

Evidence gathered and Strength/quality of evidence	Source	Data gaps identified and action taken
<p>8% of workers in the SG are recorded as being disabled. This includes staff having respiratory, cardiovascular, diabetes or other long term progressive illness and also staff with undefined long term conditions/illnesses that lead them to be classified as disabled.</p>	<p>Equality outcomes and mainstreaming report 2019 - <a href="#">SG Mainstreaming report</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>

Evidence gathered and Strength/quality of evidence	Source	Data gaps identified and action taken
<p><b>Health</b> Disabled people are more likely to experience exacerbation of already poor physical health and a higher risk of death due to Covid-19</p>	<p>Impact of coronavirus on Equality Groups - <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/inequalities-by-disability-in-the-context-of-coronavirus-slide-pack/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/inequalities-by-disability-in-the-context-of-coronavirus-slide-pack/</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>
<p><b>Mental Health</b> Disabled people are more likely to experience exacerbation of already poor mental health due to loneliness and reductions in mental wellbeing experienced during isolation and restrictions in the ability to undertake physical activity.</p>	<p>Impact of coronavirus on Equality Groups - <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/inequalities-by-disability-in-the-context-of-coronavirus-slide-pack/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/inequalities-by-disability-in-the-context-of-coronavirus-slide-pack/</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>

Evidence gathered and Strength/quality of evidence	Source	Data gaps identified and action taken
<p><b>Access to essentials</b> Disabled people are more likely to experience difficulties accessing food and other essential supplies due to potential shortages of food in shops, difficulties affording food, and isolation.</p>	<p>Impact of coronavirus on Equality Groups - <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/inequalities-by-disability-in-the-context-of-coronavirus-slide-pack/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/inequalities-by-disability-in-the-context-of-coronavirus-slide-pack/</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>
<p><b>Face coverings</b> Staff carrying out essential business that cannot be done from home and who have to access our buildings to work should follow the latest Scottish Government guidance on the wearing of face coverings in workplaces. Some colleagues with a physical or mental illness, disability, or who suffer distress as a result of wearing a face covering may be exempt from having to wear a face covering, possibly increasing the risk of transmitting Covid-19. They may also be at an increased risk of catching the virus as face coverings also provide some protection to the wearer (if worn correctly and of good quality). Face coverings must be used in addition to (and not in replacement of) further measures such as physical distancing, hygiene and ventilation and to reduce risk of COVID via all transmission routes (via air, close contact and contaminated surfaces)</p>	<p>Wearing face coverings in our buildings - <a href="http://saltire/my-workplace/buildings-and-environment/coronavirus-and-our-buildings/Pages/Supply-of-face-coverings-to-essential-staff.aspx">http://saltire/my-workplace/buildings-and-environment/coronavirus-and-our-buildings/Pages/Supply-of-face-coverings-to-essential-staff.aspx</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>

Evidence gathered and Strength/quality of evidence	Source	Data gaps identified and action taken
<p><b>Accessible workplaces</b> We have a duty to put in place workplace adjustments for disabled people.<sup>5</sup>. This includes the digital workplace to support home working.</p>	<p>Equality Act 2010 - <a href="https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents">https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents</a></p>	<p>Engagement with Accessibility Unit to better understand where accessibility improvements should be made</p>
<p><b>Return to workplaces</b> Many disabled colleagues are feeling anxious about return to workplaces and there are many issues that individuals are thinking about. However, disabled colleagues are excited about what the medium and longer term opportunities for different working arrangements given the new flexibility and innovation seen during the previous 12 months.</p>	<p>Staff Network and DG Economy conversation 2020-21</p>	

## Sex

Evidence gathered and Strength/quality of evidence	Source	Data gaps identified and action taken
<p>Women make up 54% of the SG workforce.</p>	<p>Equality outcomes and mainstreaming report 2019 - <a href="#">SG Mainstreaming report</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>

<sup>5</sup> Equality Act 2010

Evidence gathered and Strength/quality of evidence	Source	Data gaps identified and action taken
<p><b>Part time lower paid work</b> Some women are overrepresented in part time lower paid work and Covid-19 will have increased their workplace risk</p>	<p>Impact of coronavirus on Equality Groups - <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/inequalities-by-gender-in-the-context-of-coronavirus-slide-pack/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/inequalities-by-gender-in-the-context-of-coronavirus-slide-pack/</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>
<p><b>Caring responsibilities</b> Caring responsibilities may make it harder to maintain or take on employment. The vast majority of lone parents are also women, and three-quarters of lone parent households were already financially vulnerable in 2016-18 (73%), and more likely than average to be in unmanageable debt.</p>	<p>Impact of coronavirus on Equality Groups - <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/inequalities-by-gender-in-the-context-of-coronavirus-slide-pack/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/inequalities-by-gender-in-the-context-of-coronavirus-slide-pack/</a></p> <p>Engagement session with Women's Development Network, 23 February 2020</p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>



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<p><b>Domestic abuse</b> In 2018-19 82% of all incidents of domestic abuse recorded by the Police in 2018-19 the victim was a woman and the accused was a man (where gender information was recorded).</p> <p>Over the period of lockdown and Phases 1 to 3 many Violence Against Women and Girls organisations observed significant increases in crisis work with victims, with many people experiencing suicidal ideation, depression and anxiety, increasing substance misuse as a coping mechanism, and/or increased levels of fear, both of the perpetrator and the virus.</p>	<p>Impact of coronavirus on Equality Groups - <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/inequalities-by-gender-in-the-context-of-coronavirus-slide-pack/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/inequalities-by-gender-in-the-context-of-coronavirus-slide-pack/</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>
<p><b>Wellbeing</b> Women are experiencing significant mental health impacts from the pandemic and women in the UK continue to be more lonely than men.</p>	<p>The impacts of coronavirus on equality in Scotland - <a href="https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/research-and-analysis/2020/09/the-impacts-of-coronavirus-on-equality-in-scotland/documents/full-report/full-report/govscot%3Adocument/coronavirus%2Band%2Binequalities%2BFinal%2BReport%2BFor%2BPublication%2B-%2BPDF.pdf">https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/research-and-analysis/2020/09/the-impacts-of-coronavirus-on-equality-in-scotland/documents/full-report/full-report/govscot%3Adocument/coronavirus%2Band%2Binequalities%2BFinal%2BReport%2BFor%2BPublication%2B-%2BPDF.pdf</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>

## Pregnancy And Maternity

Evidence gathered and Strength/quality of evidence	Source	Data gaps identified and action taken
<p>On the 16th March, the UK government classed pregnant women, particularly those over 28 weeks, as 'vulnerable' to severe illness if infected with Covid-19. Official UK government advice is that all pregnant women should 'carefully' adhere to social distancing rules.</p>	<p>NHS Inform - <a href="https://www.nhsinform.scot/illness-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-coronavirus-">https://www.nhsinform.scot/illness-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-coronavirus-</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>
<p><b>Mental Health</b> More than 1 in 10 women develop a mental illness in the perinatal period</p>	<p>Maternal Mental Health Alliance - <a href="https://maternalmentalhealthalliance.org/about/the-issue/">https://maternalmentalhealthalliance.org/about/the-issue/</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government</p>

Evidence gathered and Strength/quality of evidence	Source	Data gaps identified and action taken
<p><b>Workplace changes</b>  Returning to the workplace generally after maternity leave – the workplace will look very different from what the individual left due to risk mitigation measures against the transmission of Covid-19.</p> <p>Some women returning to work after a period of maternity leave will be experiencing working from home for the first time. This compares to their colleagues who may now be comfortable working from home, and therefore consideration and support may be needed to help them reintegrate into teams.</p>	<p>Returning to our workplaces - <a href="http://saltire/my-workplace/buildings-and-environment/coronavirus-and-our-buildings/Pages/Returning-to-our-workplaces.aspx">http://saltire/my-workplace/buildings-and-environment/coronavirus-and-our-buildings/Pages/Returning-to-our-workplaces.aspx</a></p> <p>Engagement session with Women’s Development Network, 23 February 2020</p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government</p>

## Gender Reassignment

Evidence gathered and Strength/quality of evidence	Source	Data gaps identified and action taken
<p><b>Mental Health</b> Increased levels of mental health problems including depression, anxiety and self-harm, which are already prevalent amongst the trans community. In the current crisis situation, these problems are likely to be exacerbated by all of the issues outlined above, as well as the general stress of the crisis. At the same time, many NHS and third-sector mental health services have less capacity to offer support.</p> <p>Lack of access to gender-affirming health care potentially deemed non-essential, which could lead to negative mental health outcomes for those intending to use it.</p>	<p>Scottish Government Equality Outcomes: Gender Evidence Review - <a href="https://www2.gov.scot/Publications/2013/04/8765">https://www2.gov.scot/Publications/2013/04/8765</a></p> <p>Equality and Fairer Scotland Duty. Assessment of the Health and Social Impacts of coronavirus - <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>
<p><b>Access to prescriptions</b> Hormone prescriptions, some of which require administration by a practice nurse, may not be readily available. This can lead to anxiety and unwanted side-effects of hormonal changes, and could potentially contribute to unsafe self-injection or use of unverified drugs</p>	<p>Equality and Fairer Scotland Duty. Assessment of the Health and Social Impacts of coronavirus - <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>

Evidence gathered and Strength/quality of evidence	Source	Data gaps identified and action taken
<p><b>Domestic Abuse</b> Abuse from unsupportive families or partners who some trans people may be required to spend time with due to the 'lockdown'. This could contribute to increased stress or distress, and increased risk of abuse or exacerbation of existing abuse, with less likelihood that others will identify the abuse or be able to intervene.</p>	<p>Equality and Fairer Scotland Duty. Assessment of the Health and Social Impacts of coronavirus - <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>

Evidence gathered and Strength/quality of evidence	Source	Data gaps identified and action taken
<p><b>Workplace Discrimination</b></p> <p>The Scottish Transgender Alliance<sup>[66]</sup> observes that the workplace is one of the most likely locations for transphobic discrimination and harassment to occur.</p> <p>The three key issues identified by the Scottish Transgender Alliance for Transgender people in employment are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the risk of transphobic workplace gossip, bullying and harassment occurring if their work colleagues or managers find out they are Transgender</li> <li>• discrimination during the recruitment process, especially at interview</li> <li>• for employees undergoing gender reassignment, arranging with their employer to get the necessary time off for medical appointments and any surgery.</li> </ul> <p>26% of LGBT young people in employment had experienced verbal abuse at work   22% had experienced rumours and 21% had been ignored   5% had been physically assaulted   5% had their belongings stolen. These figures were similar for transgender young people.</p>	<p>Equality and Fairer Scotland Duty. Assessment of the Health and Social Impacts of coronavirus - <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/</a></p> <p>Scottish Government Equality Outcomes: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Evidence Review - <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-government-equality-outcomes-lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender-lgbt-evidence-review/pages/8/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-government-equality-outcomes-lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender-lgbt-evidence-review/pages/8/</a></p> <p>Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report 2019 - <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/equality-outcomes-mainstreaming-report-2019/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/equality-outcomes-mainstreaming-report-2019/</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>

## Sexual Orientation

Evidence gathered and Strength/quality of evidence	Source	Data gaps identified and action taken
<p>Around 3% of adults responding to Scottish Government core surveys self-identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or other. However, it is likely this undercounts the number of adults self-identifying as LGBO. LGBO respondents may not feel comfortable being open with a survey interviewer, and some respondents might see this question as intrusive and personal.</p> <p>The proportion of SG staff identifying as LGBT+ is 4%.</p>	<p>Equality and Fairer Scotland Duty. Assessment of the Health and Social Impacts of coronavirus - <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>
<p><b>Mental wellbeing</b> Results from an online survey conducted by the LGBT Foundation showed that 42% of LGBT people would like to access support for their mental health, with the number rising to 66% for BAME LGBT people.</p>	<p>Equality and Fairer Scotland Duty. Assessment of the Health and Social Impacts of coronavirus - <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>

Evidence gathered and Strength/quality of evidence	Source	Data gaps identified and action taken
<p><b>Domestic abuse</b> Due to the collapse of employment opportunities and closure of colleges and universities, some LGBT people have been forced to return home to self-isolate with family opposed to their sexuality<sup>6</sup></p>	<p>Equality and Fairer Scotland Duty. Assessment of the Health and Social Impacts of coronavirus - <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>
<p><b>Health and Social Care</b> For some LGBT people, existing inequalities such as restricted access to healthcare will deepen as a result of the health crisis<sup>7</sup>. The LGBT Foundation found that 34% of LGBT people responding to its online survey have had a medical appointment cancelled, and 23% have either been unable to access medication or were worried that they might not be able to access medication.</p>	<p>Equality and Fairer Scotland Duty. Assessment of the Health and Social Impacts of coronavirus - <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-52039832>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/about-us/news/coronavirus---how-lgbt-inclusive-organisations-can-help>



## Race

Evidence gathered and Strength/quality of evidence	Source	Data gaps identified and action taken
<p>2% of staff within the Scottish Government are minority ethnic.</p>	<p>Equality outcomes and mainstreaming report 2019 - <a href="#">SG Mainstreaming report</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>
<p><b>Risk of infection</b> Higher likelihood of multi-generational families which may increase risk of infection. There may be a need for further advice on self-isolation or shielding in these circumstances.</p>	<p>Equality and Fairer Scotland Duty. Assessment of the Health and Social Impacts of coronavirus - <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>

Evidence gathered and Strength/quality of evidence	Source	Data gaps identified and action taken
<p><b>Underlying illness</b> Higher rates of underlying illness especially diabetes and cardio-vascular disease, which may mean there are higher numbers in shielded groups and may indicate a need for some specialised advice and support.</p>	<p>Equality and Fairer Scotland Duty. Assessment of the Health and Social Impacts of coronavirus - <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>
<p><b>Communication and cultural differences</b> Inability to communicate adequately because of language, stigma, prejudice or other cultural differences in health and social care settings are likely to lead to negative outcomes. This is particularly the case while people are attending primary care settings unaccompanied.</p>	<p>Equality and Fairer Scotland Duty. Assessment of the Health and Social Impacts of coronavirus - <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>

Evidence gathered and Strength/quality of evidence	Source	Data gaps identified and action taken
<p><b>Housing</b>            Considerations around the housing context for ethnic minorities especially around relationships between tenants and landlords.</p>	<p>Equality and Fairer Scotland Duty. Assessment of the Health and Social Impacts of coronavirus - <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>
<p><b>Attainment</b>            Attainment issues which may arise both for those ethnicities with tradition of high attainment (in terms of anxiety and sense of loss) and those who tend to be more disadvantaged (in terms of staying motivated, access to resources and remaining on track).</p>	<p>Equality and Fairer Scotland Duty. Assessment of the Health and Social Impacts of coronavirus - <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>

Evidence gathered and Strength/quality of evidence	Source	Data gaps identified and action taken
<p><b>Hate Crime</b> Increases in racially motivated hate crime. Monitoring of hate crime data will be needed to ensure that any spikes in racially aggravated hate crime due to Covid-19 are dealt with.</p>	<p>Equality and Fairer Scotland Duty. Assessment of the Health and Social Impacts of coronavirus - <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>
<p><b>Support for minority groups</b> Ethnic minorities were more likely to say that they didn't have support in times of crisis. While ethnic minorities are unable to access traditional community spaces (including religious buildings) due to Covid-19 there may be an even greater need to ensure that routes are open for people to provide and receive culturally appropriate practical and social support.</p>	<p>Equality and Fairer Scotland Duty. Assessment of the Health and Social Impacts of coronavirus - <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>

## Religion Or Belief

Evidence gathered and Strength/quality of evidence	Source	Data gaps identified and action taken
<p><b>Places of worship</b> The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted religion in various ways, including the cancellation of the worship services of various faiths and the closure of Sunday Schools. Religious groups have been forced to sacrifice major festivals that punctuate their practice over the year. Christians were unable to attend Holy Week services, Muslims have experienced Ramadan without communal Iftar meals each day. The Jewish community experienced Passover without extended Seders, and Sikhs were unable to mark the festival of Vaisakhi.</p> <p>The Health Protection (Covid-19) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 require that places of worship are closed for the duration of this emergency period, with effect from 26 March.</p>	<p>Equality and Fairer Scotland Duty. Assessment of the Health and Social Impacts of coronavirus - <a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-health-and-social-impact-assessment/</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>
<p><b>Multi-faith and contemplation facilities</b> Consideration must be made to the availability of safe facilities when buildings re-open</p>	<p>St Andrew's House during coronavirus - <a href="http://saltire/my-workplace/buildings-and-environment/coronavirus-and-our-buildings/Pages/St-Andrews-House-during-coronavirus.aspx">http://saltire/my-workplace/buildings-and-environment/coronavirus-and-our-buildings/Pages/St-Andrews-House-during-coronavirus.aspx</a></p>	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>

### Marriage And Civil Partnership

<b>Evidence gathered and Strength/quality of evidence</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Data gaps identified and action taken</b>
We are not aware of any relevant existing evidence at this time on marriage and civil partnership in relation to the policy.		No further action is required for this EQIA

### Single Households And Lone Workers

<b>Evidence gathered and Strength/quality of evidence</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Data gaps identified and action taken</b>
Where people live and/or work alone, working from home could lead to concerns regarding isolation, mental health and wellbeing, and space for suitable workspace	Anecdotal	<p>Evidence available is predominantly relevant to the impact in the community, rather than SG specifically. Although some evidence exists on the impact of SG staff, this does not provide enough detail to distinguish between protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>There would be benefit in further consultation with staff networks to explore in more detail the impact Covid-19 and working from home has had on different groups to help inform the future of work at Scottish Government.</p>

**Stage 3: Assessing the impacts and identifying opportunities to promote equality**

**Do you think that the policy impacts on people because of their age?**

Age	Positive	Negative	None	Reasons for your decision
Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation			X	The measures introduced to support staff continuing to work from home and the new building protocols to ensure safe and secure workplaces should be designed in such a way that it will not create unlawful discrimination related to age.
Advancing equality of opportunity	x	x		<p>There are potentially positive and negative impacts on older and younger people</p> <p>Working from home allows everyone to limit contact with others out of the home and shield if necessary. This helps older people who are at a higher risk of ill health due to Covid-19, and all ages with underlying health conditions to maintain existing working patterns.</p> <p>Older people can have increased levels of social isolation (compared to younger people) due to Covid-19 as a result of extended periods of homeworking with no face-to-face contact with peers and little opportunity to network.</p> <p>The opportunities for young people to network in the workplace or be visible in a range of work settings is no longer there as a result of home working. Furthermore, there are challenges with on-boarding new or inexperienced colleagues and limitations in the ability to mentor or develop people, particularly those earlier in their career, who are generally younger.</p> <p>Younger people in Scotland are more likely to be financially vulnerable and in unmanageable debt before</p>

<b>Age</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Reasons for your decision</b>
				<p>the pandemic. They may therefore find it harder to afford suitable work place adjustments to allow for effective home working and other essentials.</p> <p>People with childcare responsibilities, including grandparents, may have additional caring responsibilities due to school closures and period of home schooling. This can mean staff with caring responsibilities need greater flexibility, may be unable to take on additional or time pressure work and have less time to apply for new roles or take on development activity. There is concern from some that this would impact on longer term career progression.</p>
Promoting good relations among and between different age groups	x	x		<p>Whilst working from home may help reduce the gap between older and younger people because interactions are [‘invisible’], it may also lead to more prejudice due to the lack of workplace interactions and friendships which can break down misconceptions.</p> <p>If WFH long-term there are less opportunity for workplace interactions against different groups, risks of isolation by tech generation (typically younger) as they stick to their own networks and little opportunity to socialise across Scottish Government’s diverse workforce</p>

**Do you think that the policy impacts disabled people?**

<b>Disability</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Reasons for your decision</b>
Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation			x	The measures introduced to support staff continuing to work from home and the new building protocols to ensure safe and secure workplaces should be designed in such a way that it will not create unlawful discrimination related to disability



Disability	Positive	Negative	None	Reasons for your decision
Advancing equality of opportunity	x	x		<p>There could potentially be positive and negative impacts on people with disabilities.</p> <p>Disabled people are more likely to experience exacerbation of already poor physical health due to Covid-19 so home working allows for less interaction with others (e.g. during the commute, in the workplace, etc.) to minimise exposure.</p> <p>With no commute, home working may better support the needs of some disabled people.</p> <p>However, with no workplace interactions disabled people are more likely to experience exacerbation of already poor mental health due to loneliness and reduced mental wellbeing and restrictions in the ability to undertake physical activity.</p> <p>Home working and relaxed flexible working policies may make it easier to access essentials at a time that better suits some disabled people.</p> <p>If a disabled person had additional equipment in the office to support their working arrangement, then it is possible they will not have similar equipment already in the home making home working more difficult.</p> <p>On returning to buildings, all new safe and secure building protocols will need to be inclusive to ensure all users of our building can access the areas they need to unimpeded.</p>

Disability	Positive	Negative	None	Reasons for your decision
				Many disabled colleagues are feeling anxious about return to workplaces and there are many issues that individuals are thinking about. However, disabled colleagues are excited about what the medium and longer term opportunities for different working arrangements given the new flexibility and innovation seen during the previous 12 months.
Promoting good relations among and between disabled and non-disabled people	x	x		<p>Whilst working from home may help reduce the gap between disabled and non-disabled people because interactions are ['invisible'], it may also lead to more prejudice due to the lack of workplace interactions and friendships which can break down misconceptions.</p> <p>If WFH long-term there are less opportunity for workplace interactions against different groups, risks of isolation by tech generation (typically younger) as they stick to their own networks and little opportunity to socialise across Scottish Government's diverse workforce</p>

**Do you think that the policy impacts on men and women in different ways?**

Sex	Positive	Negative	None	Reasons for your decision
Eliminating unlawful discrimination			x	The measures introduced to support staff continuing to work from home and the new building protocols to ensure safe and secure workplaces should be designed in such a way that it will not create unlawful discrimination related to gender.
Advancing equality of opportunity	x	x		<p>Women are more likely to be balancing part-time, caring and/or schooling if working from home for sustained periods, which can have a negative impact on wellbeing.</p> <p>Home working reduces the opportunities for networking and potentially career-progression. However, flexibility</p>

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Reasons for your decision</b>
				<p>around hours of work and location can be positive to opening up opportunities for both existing and new employees.</p> <p>At a UK level, over the period of lockdown Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) organisations observed significant increases in crisis work with victims. Home working and reduced interactions with others can increase the risk of domestic abuse for both genders with more time spent indoors.</p> <p>Women in the UK continue to be more lonely than men and without workplace interactions, levels of loneliness can increase due to home working.</p>
Promoting good relations between men and women			x	The measures introduced to support staff continuing to work from home and the new building protocols to ensure safe and secure workplaces are unlikely to impact on the promotion of good relations between men and women.

**Do you think that the policy impacts on women because of pregnancy and maternity?**

<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Reasons for your decision</b>
Eliminating unlawful discrimination			x	The measures introduced to support staff continuing to work from home and the new building protocols to ensure safe and secure workplaces should be designed in such a way that it will not create unlawful discrimination for pregnant women.
Advancing equality of opportunity	x	x		Home working supports pregnant women to continue working fully whilst adhering to social distancing rules.

<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Reasons for your decision</b>
				<p>It can also provide greater flexibility for any appointments that may be needed and the home may provide a more comfortable physical working environment.</p> <p>With more than 1 in 10 women developing a mental illness in the perinatal period, home working and a lack of social interaction with peers could exacerbate mental health.</p> <p>For women who return to work after a period of maternity leave, the physical office environment may look very different as a result of the new safe and secure building protocols. This may increase levels of anxiety about returning to work and uncertainty of what to expect.</p>
Promoting good relations			x	The measures introduced to support staff continuing to work from home and the new building protocols to ensure safe and secure workplaces are unlikely to impact on the promotion of good relations between pregnant women and other people.

**Do you think your policy impacts on people proposing to undergo, undergoing, or who have undergone a process for the purpose of reassigning their sex? (NB: the Equality Act 2010 uses the term ‘transsexual people’ but ‘trans people’ is more commonly used)**

<b>Gender reassignment</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Reasons for your decision</b>
Eliminating unlawful discrimination			x	The measures introduced to support staff continuing to work from home and the new building protocols to ensure safe and secure workplaces should be designed in such a way that it will not create unlawful discrimination related to gender reassignment.
Advancing equality of opportunity	x	x		Covid-19 has exacerbated already increased levels of mental health problems for trans people.

Gender reassignment	Positive	Negative	None	Reasons for your decision
				<p>The workplace is one of the most likely locations for transphobic discrimination and harassment to occur, and therefore working from home limits discrimination from peers. A comfortable and supportive home environment can also provide more privacy and security</p> <p>However, longer periods at home can mean greater abuse from unsupportive families or partners, contributing to increased stress or distress, and increased risk of abuse.</p>
Promoting good relations	x			Digital home-working could enable a more inclusive environment for all where all colleagues are treated equally with no labels.

**Do you think that the policy impacts on people because of their sexual orientation?**

Sexual orientation	Positive	Negative	None	Reasons for your decision
Eliminating unlawful discrimination			x	The measures introduced to support staff continuing to work from home and the new building protocols to ensure safe and secure workplaces should be designed in such a way that it will not create unlawful discrimination related to sexual orientation.
Advancing equality of opportunity				<p>A recent LGBT Foundation survey showed that 42% of LGBT people would like to access support for their mental health. That number rises to 66% of BAME LGBT people. Home working during Covid-19 has already shown to exacerbate existing mental health issues and therefore continued home working can further impact mental health with longer periods of social isolation and no contact with colleagues.</p> <p>Long periods at home can mean greater abuse from unsupportive families or partners, contributing to increased stress or distress, and increased risk of abuse.</p>

<b>Sexual orientation</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Reasons for your decision</b>
Promoting good relations	x			Digital home-working could enable a more inclusive environment for all where all colleagues are treated equally with no labels.

**Do you think the policy impacts on people on the grounds of their race?**

<b>Race</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Reasons for your decision</b>
Eliminating unlawful discrimination			x	The measures introduced to support staff continuing to work from home and the new building protocols to ensure safe and secure workplaces should be designed in such a way that it will not create unlawful discrimination related to race.
Advancing equality of opportunity	x			Higher rates of underlying illness may mean higher numbers in shielded groups and therefore home working will limit social interaction and can help existing working patterns to continue.
Promoting good race relations	x	x		Continued working from home may lead to greater isolation in communities and limited societal integration.  However, digital home-working could enable a more inclusive environment for all where all colleagues are treated equally with no labels.

**Do you think the policy impacts on people because of their religion or belief?**

<b>Religion or belief</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Reasons for your decision</b>
Eliminating unlawful discrimination			x	The measures introduced to support staff continuing to work from home and the new building protocols to ensure safe and secure workplaces should be designed in such a way that it will not create unlawful discrimination related to religion or belief.
Advancing equality of opportunity			x	We are unaware of any relevant and existing evidence, at this time, on the religion or belief protected characteristic in

Religion or belief	Positive	Negative	None	Reasons for your decision
				relation to the policy. Consultation may seek views from representative organisations on whether the policy proposals are likely to have any disproportionate effects.
Promoting good relations			x	The policy is unlikely to impact on the promotion of good relations between married people and those in a civil partnership, and those not in a similar relationship.

**Do you think the policy impacts on people because of their marriage or civil partnership?**

Marriage and Civil Partnership <sup>8</sup>	Positive	Negative	None	Reasons for your decision
Eliminating unlawful discrimination			x	The measures introduced to support staff continuing to work from home and the new building protocols to ensure safe and secure workplaces should be designed in such a way that it will not create unlawful discrimination related to marriage or civil partnership.
Advancing equality of opportunity			x	We are unaware of any relevant and existing evidence, at this time, on the marriage or civil partnership protected characteristic in relation to the policy. Consultation may seek views from representative organisations on whether the policy proposals are likely to have any disproportionate effects.

<sup>8</sup> In respect of this protected characteristic, a body subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (which includes Scottish Government) only needs to comply with the first need of the duty (to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010) and only in relation to work. This is because the parts of the Act covering services and public functions, premises, education etc. do not apply to that protected characteristic. Equality impact assessment within the Scottish Government does not require assessment against the protected characteristic of Marriage and Civil Partnership unless the policy or practice relates to work, for example HR policies and practices.

<b>Marriage and Civil Partnership<sup>8</sup></b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Reasons for your decision</b>
Promoting good relations			x	The policy is unlikely to impact on the promotion of good relations between married people and those in a civil partnership, and those not in a similar relationship.



## Stage 4: Decision making and monitoring

Given the broad scope of the policy, we have separated this stage into two parts.

Part A summarises the findings and actions taken within the context of prolonged home working.

Part B summarises the findings and actions taken in respect of the safe and secure protocols in place for anyone accessing our buildings now or in future whilst preventative measures remain.

### Part A: Prolonged home working

#### Identifying and establishing any required mitigating action

<p>Have positive or negative impacts been identified for any of the equality groups?</p>	<p>Home working for extended periods of time can have both positive and negative impacts to varying degrees for most protected characteristics groups.</p> <p>The impact on mental health requires careful consideration, particularly for people with underlying mental health issues where social isolation, as well as fear and uncertainty around Covid-19 can exacerbate previous health concerns.</p> <p>Home working does, however, help limit the risk of infection and better protect vulnerable individuals due to reduced socialisation with no need to travel to work or interact face-to-face with colleagues.</p> <p>A lack of a collaborative physical environment does give rise to challenges for networking in the workplace and less opportunities for development, mentoring, coaching. This is particularly relevant for inexperienced staff or those early on in their careers where visibility and networking is perceived to be beneficial for career progression.</p> <p>Whilst home working is seen as positive for many groups, particularly for some disabled colleagues and those who have been asked to shield, if the home working environment is not conducive to work then challenges remain. Configuring the home working environment to suit may be costly and unaffordable for lower-income colleagues.</p>
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	<p>Some groups may also have a higher prevalence of caring responsibilities and therefore balancing home working with caring for others can be difficult. This is particularly the case for women and older people.</p> <p>Longer periods at home can mean greater abuse from unsupportive families or partners for many protected groups, contributing to increased stress or distress, and increased risk of abuse</p> <p>However, home working can reduce the prevalence of discrimination and harassment from colleagues.</p> <p>Digital home-working can also enable a more inclusive environment where colleagues are treated equally in the absence of 'labelling'.</p>
Is the policy directly or indirectly discriminatory under the Equality Act 2010 <sup>9</sup> ?	<p>Indirectly. The policy position to prolong home working applies to the majority of Scottish Government.</p> <p>As we progress through Scotland's Covid-19 Strategic Framework and more staff return to buildings these measures will continue to be reviewed in recognition of this EQIA.</p>
If the policy is indirectly discriminatory, how is it justified under the relevant legislation?	The organisation has a duty of care to protect staff and not put them at unnecessary risk
If not justified, what mitigating action will be undertaken?	N/A

### **Describing how Equality Impact analysis has shaped the policy making process**

The impact assessment recognises the wide and differing impacts that Covid-19 has on all individuals.

When a nationwide lockdown was announced on 23<sup>rd</sup> March, Scottish Government buildings were closed and the organisation moved to support the majority (97%) of staff to work from home. A range of measures across the People, Workplace and Technology spaces were introduced to support this policy and mitigate its impact.

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<sup>9</sup> See EQIA – Setting the Scene for further information on the legislation.

## People

The importance of health and wellbeing support in the workplace has become even more visible during Covid-19. Although it applies to all, health issues are more prevalent in some protected characteristic groups. It is therefore important that adequate provision is in place to support colleagues better manage their mental and physical health and wellbeing, and controls designed to provide opportunities for early intervention where it may be required.

A range of measures have been introduced to support colleagues work safely and effectively from home,

1. Revised home working arrangements – <http://saltire/my-workplace/attendance-and-flexi/flexible-working/Pages/Working-from-home-Covid-19.aspx?pageid=dc189269-7b1a-4dce-b34e-a264f46ae782>
2. Guidance on homeworking while caring for others - <http://saltire/my-workplace/attendance-and-flexi/flexible-working/Pages/Working-from-home-Covid-19.aspx?pageid=dc189269-7b1a-4dce-b34e-a264f46ae782>
3. EAS factsheets on managing anxiety / mental health - <http://saltire/my-workplace/Wellbeing-and-staff-support/Advice-and-wellbeing-support/Pages/Employee-Assistance-Service.aspx>
4. Corporate Communications, key messages on managing well-being / directing colleagues to EAS
5. Increased resource to SG well-being counsellors
6. Well-being = 'mindfulness moment' blogs on Saltire - <http://saltire/our-organisation/blogs/Pages/Beyond-words.aspx>
7. Covid-19 guidance and support - <http://saltire/my-workplace/communications-and-engagement/Resilience/Pages/Covid-19-guidance-and-support.aspx>
8. Regular wellbeing conversations have been encouraged between colleagues and their managers - <http://saltire/my-workplace/Wellbeing-and-staff-support/Mental-health/Pages/Mental-health-and-you.aspx>
9. New learning offer to support professional and personal development, including the Mutual Mentoring Programme and virtual Future Leaders scheme
10. Staff in abusive home settings to be considered for potentially returning to buildings earlier.
11. Refreshing our Trans equality and Inclusion Policy, to contribute to building a supportive environment for trans colleagues.

## Workplace

1. Guidance on how to create a comfortable and healthy working environment - <http://saltire/my-workplace/attendance-and-flexi/flexible-working/Pages/Working-from-home-coronavirus.aspx?pageid=1b7d52ec-32e0-4072-b496-3071bb64df66>
2. Home working equipment provision to allow staff to order and take delivery of essential equipment.
3. Additional specialised equipment delivered to those that need it.
4. Public Health Scotland will join a new expert group working with the Scottish Government to provide a clearer picture of how minority ethnic communities in Scotland are affected by Covid-19. Their findings will be used to identify further measures that may protect minority ethnic groups.

## Technology

1. Increase to the number of concurrent users to provide access for up to 20,000 remote users
2. Enhanced communication tools, including video conferencing which may alleviate some feelings of anxiety and isolation - <http://saltire/my-workplace/meetings/Audio-and-video-conferencing/Pages/Using-conferencing-tools.aspx>
3. Early introduction of Microsoft Teams to better support collaborative working and engagement with colleagues and plans expedited for the introduction of Office 365.

## Part B: Safe and secure building protocols

The changes to our buildings will impact anyone who has a need to enter a Scottish Government building, for work or any other reason.

### Identifying and establishing any required mitigating action

Have positive or negative impacts been identified for any of the equality groups?	When buildings do re-open, care will be needed to ensure that the safe and secure protocols put in place do not discriminate. This includes consideration of infrastructure measures and changes, as well as decisions about how any return will be managed.
Is the policy directly or indirectly discriminatory under the Equality Act 2010 <sup>10</sup> ?	Indirectly. Whilst a small number of staff have continued to work in St Andrews House, the majority have been working from home since early 2020. As buildings re-open, more staff will begin to return to the office.  As we progress through Scotland's Covid-19 Strategic Framework and more staff return to buildings these measures will continue to be reviewed in recognition of this EQIA.
If the policy is indirectly discriminatory, how is it justified under the relevant legislation?	The organisation has a duty of care to protect staff and not put them at unnecessary risk
If not justified, what mitigating action will be undertaken?	N/A

### Describing how Equality Impact analysis has shaped the policy making process

As we return to offices, care must be taken to help ensure that the decisions we take are cognisant of the findings presented here and of the importance of creating an inclusive culture at Scottish Government.

Some of the actions already being taken are included below.

#### People

The importance of health and wellbeing support in the workplace will continue to be a priority as we look to returning to buildings.

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<sup>10</sup> See EQIA – Setting the Scene for further information on the legislation.

1. Wellbeing conversations with line managers will be required as part of preparations for any return and wellbeing forms will guide the conversation and capture actions, supported by the use of the Covid-19 occupational risk assessment form. Where additional HR support or workplace adjustments are required, professional support will be provided through the HR People Advice and Wellbeing Team.
2. A return to buildings induction pack will help provide reassurance that buildings are safe and take people through the changes that have been made prior to any actual return.
3. Hybrid working guidance for both employees and managers will be developed to enable more flexibility in the future on where work can take place.
4. A review of core content material is being taken forward by Learning and Development colleagues and, as part of this, consideration will be given into how to support hybrid working, both in supporting managers and staff, but also in the delivery mechanisms that we use.
5. Learning and Development colleagues are working closely with colleagues across Scottish Government to support those staff new into the organisation who have never visited one of our buildings due to being on-boarded during the pandemic.

## **Workplace**

1. Redesign of our workplaces in collaboration with the Diversity and Inclusion team and Trade Unions to seek to ensure the measures being put in place are suitable for all colleagues
2. A full suite of Covid-19-safe protocols for all of our buildings has been prepared to highlight the new arrangements that are in place across the estate, to include e.g. one-way signage, how to access and move around the building, open facilities and spaces, etc. These will be tested with volunteers from the Disabled Staff Network.
3. To help reduce anxiety about returning, a package of induction material will help staff familiarise themselves with the changes that are in place and the support available, as well as their responsibilities to protect themselves and colleagues.

## **Technology**

1. Testing of new space management solutions to support the safe booking of work spaces, ensuring the preferred supplier can meet required accessibility
2. Introduction of new accessible meeting room technology to improve collaborative working

## **Monitoring and Review**

This impact assessment has highlighted the impacts that Covid-19 can have on Scottish Government staff of protected characteristic groups. These findings have

informed the decisions taken by the Corporate Recovery Programme throughout our corporate response to the pandemic and other business areas in supporting staff to work from home and in the planning for the re-opening of Scottish Government buildings.

## Stage 5 - Authorisation of EQIA

Please confirm that:

- ◆ This Equality Impact Assessment has informed the development of this policy:

Yes  No

- ◆ Opportunities to promote equality in respect of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation have been considered, i.e.:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation;
- Removing or minimising any barriers and/or disadvantages;
- Taking steps which assist with promoting equality and meeting people's different needs;
- Encouraging participation (e.g. in public life)
- Fostering good relations, tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

Yes  No

- ◆ If the Marriage and Civil Partnership protected characteristic applies to this policy, the Equality Impact Assessment has also assessed against the duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation in respect of this protected characteristic:

Yes  No  Not applicable

## Declaration

I am satisfied with the equality impact assessment that has been undertaken for prolonged home working and new safe and secure workplace arrangements in response to Covid-19 and give my authorisation for the results of this assessment to be published on the Scottish Government's website.

Name: Trudi Sharp

Position: Head of Workplace

Authorisation date: 29 June 2021





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