

# Appendix 1 Equality Screening Form

## Policy Scoping

Policy Title:

**Brief Description of Policy (please attach copy if available). Please state if it is a new, existing or amended policy.**

Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council (The Council) believes that its staff members are its most valuable asset and is committed to attracting and retaining the very best talent. It appreciates that our workforce is becoming increasingly diverse.

The Council recognises the importance of helping its employees balance their work and home lives by offering flexible working arrangements that enable them to balance their work commitments with other priorities. One such flexible working arrangement is hybrid working.

This procedure aims to set out the ways in which hybrid working will be managed by the Council.

This is a new procedure

**Intended aims/outcomes. What is the policy trying to achieve?**

The aim of the procedure is to increase the rate of retention of staff, reduce absence, attract new talent, promote work-life balance, reduce employee stress and assist climate change mitigation by reducing our carbon footprint. In doing so, this will improve the Council's efficiency, productivity and competitiveness.

## Policy Framework

Has the policy been developed in response to statutory requirements, legal advice or on the basis of any other professional advice? Does this affect the discretion available to The Council to amend the policy?

N/A

**Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the policy? If so, please outline.**

This procedure provides the opportunity for staff to work more flexibly and potentially create a better work/life balance and for some this may improve health and wellbeing. Disabled staff and staff with caring responsibilities may be encouraged to apply for hybrid positions where a commute to office everyday may act as a barrier to participation or retaining employment. There is a potential benefit from improved health & wellbeing with the opportunity to avail of 40% hybrid working arrangement. In addition to this a return to a 60% presence in Council premises will offer increased opportunity for all staff to interact

with colleagues and engage in health & wellbeing initiatives resulting in a positive impact on staff wellbeing.

**Who initiated or wrote the policy (if The Council decision, please state). Who is responsible for implementing the policy?**

<b>Who initiated or wrote the policy?</b>	<b>Niamh Shannon with support of HoD working group</b>
<b>Who is responsible for implementation?</b>	<b>The Council</b>

**Are there any factors which might contribute to or detract from the implementation of the policy (e.g. financial, legislative, other)?**

Financial constraints in general and as any costs for additional equipment must be met by individual departments. Staffing levels within departments could be a factor in being able to approve hybrid working arrangements.

### **Main stakeholders in relation to the policy**

Please list main stakeholders affected by the policy (e.g. staff, customers, other statutory bodies, community or voluntary sector, private sector)

The procedure is applicable to all Council staff who are not listed on appendix A as exempt

**Are there any other policies with a bearing on this policy? If so, please identify them and how they impact on this policy.**

Travel, Flexi, ICT and Information Governance policies are referenced in this new Hybrid working procedure (but only in the context that they apply as normal).

### **Available Evidence**

The Council should ensure that its screening decisions are informed by relevant data. What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories. For up to date [S75 Borough Statistics](#)

<b>Section 75 category</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
Religious belief	This procedure provides the opportunity for staff to work more flexibly and create better work life balance and for some this may improve health and wellbeing. The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland advises that there is evidence to show that most employers in Northern Ireland believe that employees should be able to achieve a satisfactory work life balance. The provision of flexible working arrangements either has no negative impacts on their businesses or that it delivers positive benefits, such as increased employee motivation, commitment and
Political opinion	
Racial group	
Age	
Marital status	
Sexual orientation	

	<p>productivity, less absenteeism and better employee relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having flexible working practices often encourages staff retention and cuts down on recruitment costs.</li> </ul> <p>Other benefits highlighted by the Labour Relations Agency include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attract talent – Employers who offer hybrid working will have access to a wider talent pool as it will not only attract staff from more geographically distant locations, but will also attract those who want a more flexible way of working; and,</li> <li>• Team availability-Geography and travel time are less of an impediment and teams can be assembled more easily.</li> </ul> <p>As stated in the procedure it is important that there are regular check ins so that staff do not feel isolated. This may be more likely for new employees.</p> <p>It is important that line managers understand the potential wellbeing implications of hybrid working and they have appropriate wellbeing conversations. The Council has a wellbeing hub which includes a range of policies and support services for staff.</p> <p>Those with caring responsibilities for children, disabled children, disabled adults or dependant adults may particularly benefit from the opportunity to work more flexibly</p>
Men and women generally	<p>As stated above there are health and wellbeing benefits of achieving a good work/life balance which more flexible working can help some people achieve. In addition, those with caring responsibilities (often women) may particularly benefit from the opportunity to work more flexibly. However, both men and women with caring responsibilities may benefit. (Although hybrid working still requires suitable caring arrangements to be in place).</p>
Disability	<p>For some disabled people accessing travel or care support may be a barrier to securing or retaining employment. Depending on the particular circumstances and the operational needs, the opportunity to work from home may be the reasonable adjustment required in order to fully participate in employment.</p>
Dependants	<p>Those with dependants and caring responsibilities may benefit from the opportunity to work more flexibly. (Although hybrid working still requires suitable caring arrangements to be in place).</p>

## Needs, experiences and priorities

Taking into account the information gathered above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories in relation to this particular policy/decision?

<b>Section 75 category</b>	<b>Needs, experiences and priorities</b>
Religious belief	N/A
Political opinion	N/A
Racial group	N/A
Age	Those with caring responsibilities for children, disabled children, disabled adults or dependant adults may particularly benefit from the opportunity to work more flexibly. (Although hybrid working still requires suitable caring arrangements to be in place).
Marital status	N/A
Sexual orientation	N/A
Men and women generally	This procedure provides the opportunity for staff to work more flexibly and create a better work life balance and for some this may improve health and wellbeing. Staff who choose to work remotely will be treated fairly and have equal and fair access to training and communication. Those with caring responsibilities (often women) may particularly benefit from the opportunity to work more flexibly. However, both men and women with caring responsibilities may benefit (Although hybrid working still requires suitable caring arrangements to be in place).
Disability	For some disabled people accessing travel or care support may be a barrier to securing or retaining employment. Depending on the particular circumstances and the operational needs, the opportunity to work from home may be the reasonable adjustment required in order to fully participate in employment.
Dependants	Those with dependants and caring responsibilities may particularly benefit from the opportunity to work more flexibly. (Although hybrid working still requires suitable caring arrangements to be in place).

## Screening Questions

### 1. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy for each of the Section 75 categories?

Category	Policy Impact	Level of impact (Major/minor/none)
Religious belief	None	None
Political opinion	None	None
Racial group	None	None
Age	Those with caring responsibilities for children, disabled children, disabled adults or dependant adults may particularly benefit from the opportunity to work more flexibly. (Although hybrid working still requires suitable caring arrangements to be in place).	Positive minor
Marital status	None	None
Sexual orientation	None	None
Men and women generally	Alongside the general health and wellbeing benefits of achieving a work/life balance. Those with caring responsibilities (often women) may particularly benefit from the opportunity to work more flexibly. However both men and women with caring responsibilities may benefit. (Although hybrid working still requires suitable caring arrangements to be in place).	Positive Minor
Disability	For some disabled people accessing travel or care support may be a barrier to securing or retaining employment. Depending on the particular circumstances and the operational needs, the opportunity to work from home may be the reasonable adjustment required in order to fully participate in employment.	Positive Minor
Dependants	Those with dependants and caring responsibilities may particularly benefit from the opportunity to work more flexibly. (Although hybrid working still requires	Positive Minor

	suitable caring arrangements to be in place).	
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**2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 categories?**

Category	If yes, provide details	If no, provide reasons
Religious belief		No
Political opinion		No
Racial group		No
Age		No
Marital status		No
Sexual orientation		No
Men and women generally	The procedure provides the opportunity for men and women with caring responsibilities to work more flexibly. (Although hybrid working still requires suitable caring arrangements to be in place).	
Disability	The procedure provides the opportunity for disabled people to work more flexibly.	
Dependants	The procedure provides the opportunity for those with dependants and caring responsibilities to work more flexibly. (Although hybrid working still requires suitable caring arrangements to be in place).	

**3. To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion, or racial group?**

Category	Details of Policy Impact	Level of impact (major/minor/none)
Religious belief	None	None
Political opinion	None	None
Racial group	None	None

**4. Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?**

Category	If yes, provide details	If no, provide reasons
Religious belief		No
Political opinion		No
Racial group		No

## **Multiple Identity**

Generally speaking, people fall into more than one Section 75 category (for example: disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; young lesbian, gay and bisexual people). Provide details of data on the impact of the policy on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant s75 categories concerned.

This procedure will benefit staff from a range of section 75 categories including men and women and staff with caring responsibilities

## **Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006**

Is there an opportunity for the policy to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?

Staff will be treated fairly and consistently within this procedure and if a job role is eligible for hybrid working then it may provide the opportunity for disabled people to work more flexibly.

Is there an opportunity for the policy to encourage participation by disabled people in public life?

N/A

## **Screening Decision**

### **A: NO IMPACT IDENTIFIED ON ANY CATEGORY – EQIA UNNECESSARY**

Please identify reasons for this below

This procedure provides the opportunity for staff to work more flexibly and potentially create a better work/life balance and for some this may improve health and wellbeing. The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland advises that there is evidence to show that most employers in Northern Ireland believe that employees should be able to achieve a satisfactory work life balance.

It can benefit a range of section 75 categories including disabled staff and staff with caring responsibilities where a commute to the office everyday may act as a barrier to participation in employment.

As stated in the procedure it is important that there are regular check ins so that staff do not feel isolated, and productivity is not negatively impacted by the arrangement. This may be more likely for new employees.

It is important that line managers understand the potential wellbeing implications of hybrid working and they have appropriate wellbeing conversations. The Council has a wellbeing hub which includes a range of policies and support services for staff.

**B: MINOR IMPACT IDENTIFIED – EQIA NOT CONSIDERED NECESSARY AS IMPACT CAN BE ELIMINATED OR MITIGATED**

Where the impact is likely to be minor, you should consider if the policy can be mitigated, or an alternative policy introduced. If so, an EQIA may not be considered necessary. You must indicate the reasons for this decision below, together with details of measures to mitigate the adverse impact or the alternative policy proposed.

**C: MAJOR IMPACT IDENTIFIED – EQIA REQUIRED**

If the decision is to conduct an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

**Timetabling and Prioritising**

**If the policy has been screened in for equality impact assessment**, please answer the following questions to determine its priority for timetabling the equality impact assessment.

On a scale of 1-3 with 1 being the lowest priority and 3 being the highest, assess the policy in terms of its priority for equality impact assessment.

**Policy Criterion**

**Rating (1-3)**

Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations

Social need

Effect on people’s daily lives

The total rating score should be used to prioritise the policy in rank order with other policies screened in for equality impact assessment. This list of priorities will assist the Council in timetabling its EQIAs.

Is the policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities? If yes, please give details.

No

## Monitoring

Effective monitoring will help the authority identify any future adverse impact arising from the policy. It is recommended that where a policy has been amended or an alternative policy introduced to mitigate adverse impact, monitoring be undertaken on a broader basis to identify any impact (positive or adverse).

Further information on monitoring is available in the Equality Commission's guidance on monitoring ([www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org)).

Identify how the impact of the policy is to be monitored

The HR&OD department will monitor the effectiveness of this procedure. Amendments will be made as and when deemed necessary and where appropriate, after consultation with recognised Trade Unions.

## Approval and Authorisation

A copy of the screening form for each policy screened should be signed off by the senior manager responsible for that policy. The screening recommendation should be reported to the relevant Committee/The Council when the policy is submitted for approval.

Screened by	Position/Job title	Date
Elaine Gillespie	HoD CPPR	23/10/2024
Approved by	Position/Job Title	Date
Lisa McAleer	Senior Human Resources Manager	06/06/2025

**A copy of the completed screening form should be signed off and approved by the senior manager responsible for that policy. The completed screening form should be attached to the relevant Committee paper when the policy is submitted for approval.**

**Following approval by Council please forward a copy of the completed approved policy and screening form to:**

**[Equality@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk](mailto:Equality@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk)**

**The policy and completed screening form will be made available on the Council's website.**

## Appendix 2 Rural Needs Impact Assessment (RNIA)

### SECTION 1

#### Defining the activity subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016

**1A. Name of Public Authority: Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough The Council**

**1B. Please provide a short title which describes the activity being undertaken by the Public Authority that is subject to Section 1(1) of the Rural Needs Act (NI) 2016.**

Hybrid Working Procedure

**1C Please indicate which category the activity specified in Section 1B above relates to:**

**Developing a Procedure**

**Adopting a**

**Implementing a**

**Revising a**

**Designing a Public Service**

**Delivering a Public Service**

**1D. Please provide the official title (if any) of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service document or initiative relating to the category indicated in Section 1C above**

Hybrid Working Procedure

**1E. Please provide details of the aims and/or objectives of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service**

This procedure aims to set out the ways in which hybrid working will be managed by the Council.

**1F. What definition of 'rural' is the Public Authority using in respect of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?**

Population Settlements of less than 5,000 (Default definition)

Other Definition (Provide details and the rationale below)

A definition of 'rural' is not applicable

**Details of alternative definition of 'rural' used**

Rationale for using alternative definition of 'rural'.

Reasons why a definition of 'rural' is not applicable.

This is an internal procedure which is not likely to impact on people in rural areas. The policy will be applied equitably and consistently to all regardless of where they live or work.

**SECTION 2**

**Understanding the impact of the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service**

**2A. Is the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service likely to impact on people in rural areas?**

Yes  No  If response is No go to 2E

**2B. Please explain how the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas.**

**2C. If the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to impact on people in rural areas *differently* from people in urban areas, please explain how it is likely to impact on people in rural areas differently.**

**2D. Please indicate which of the following rural policy areas the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is likely to primarily impact on.**

- Rural Businesses
- Rural Tourism
- Rural Housing
- Jobs or Employment in Rural Areas
- Education or Training in Rural Areas
- Broadband or Mobile Communications in Rural Areas
- Transport Services or Infrastructure in Rural Areas
- Health or Social Care Services in Rural Areas
- Poverty in Rural Areas
- Deprivation in Rural Areas
- Rural Crime or Community Safety
- Rural Development
- Agri-Environment
- Other (Please state)

**If the response to Section 2A was YES GO TO Section 3A.**

**2E. Please explain why the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service is NOT likely to impact on people in rural areas.**

This is an internal staff procedure which is not likely to impact on people in rural areas. The policy will be applied equitably and consistently to all regardless of where they live or work.

**SECTION 3****Identifying the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas**

**3A. Has the Public Authority taken steps to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas that are relevant to the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service?**

Yes

No

If response is No go to 3E

**3B. Please indicate which of the following methods or information sources were used by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.**

Consultation with Rural Stakeholders

Consultation with Other organisations

Published Statistics

Research Papers

Surveys or Questionnaires

Other Publications

Other Methods or Information Sources

(include details in Question 3C below)

**3C. Please provide details of the methods and information sources used to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas including relevant dates, names of organisations, titles of publications, website references, details of surveys or consultations undertaken etc.**

**3D. Please provide details of the social and economic needs of people in rural areas which have been identified by the Public Authority?**

**If the response to Section 3A was YES GO TO Section 4A.**

**3E. Please explain why no steps were taken by the Public Authority to identify the social and economic needs of people in rural areas?**

**SECTION 4**

**Considering the Social and Economic Needs of Persons in Rural Areas**

This is an internal staff procedure which is not likely to impact on people in rural areas. The policy will be applied equitably and consistently to all regardless of where they live or work.

**4A. Please provide details of the issues considered in relation to the social and economic needs of people in rural areas.**

N/A

**SECTION 5**

**Influencing the Policy, Strategy, Plan or Public Service**

**5A. Has the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, been influenced by the rural needs identified?**

Yes

No

If response is No go to 5C

**5B. Please explain how the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or delivery of the Public Service, has been influenced by the rural needs identified.**

If the response to Section 5A was YES go to 6A.

**5C. Please explain why the development, adoption, implementation or revising of the Policy, Strategy or Plan, or the design or the delivery of the Public Service, has NOT been influenced by the rural needs identified.**

This is an internal staff procedure which is not likely to impact on people in rural areas. The policy will be applied equitably and consistently to all regardless of where they live or work.

**SECTION 6**

**Documenting and Recording**

**6A. Please tick below to confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained by the Public Authority and relevant information on the Section 1 activity compiled in accordance with paragraph 6.7 of the guidance.**

I confirm that the RNIA Template will be retained, and relevant information compiled.

Rural Needs Impact Assessment undertaken by:

Position:

Department / Directorate:

Signature: *Elaine Gillespie*

Date: 23/10/2024

Rural Needs Impact Assessment approved by:

Position:

Department / Directorate:

Signature: *Lisa McAleer*

Date: 06/06/2025