

South Cambridgeshire District Council Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Introduction – Please read

Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) allow the Council to:

- Show that the Council is meeting its legal duty, demonstrating due regard for the provisions of the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) as below:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
 - Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
 - Foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- Methodically consider and assess the impacts of proposals across the [nine protected characteristics](#)
- Allow the Council to develop and implement high quality proposals that maximise positive outcomes for all.

EqIAs should be completed during the development and review of all Council policies, strategies, procedures, projects or functions. Where there is any doubt, the completion of an EqIA is always recommended.

When the form is completed, please send an electronic copy to equality.schemes@scambs.gov.uk. Further support and guidance available on Insite or contact the Policy and Performance Team.

Equality Impact Assessment Complete Form

Section 1: Identifying Details

- 1.1 Officer completing EqIA:
Helen Cornwell
- 1.2 Team and Service:
People Team
- 1.3 Title of proposal:
4 Day Week permanent adoption through Productivity Policy
- 1.4 EqIA start date:
23/07/2025
- 1.5 Proposal implementation date:
01/10/2025
- 1.6 Who will be responsible for implementing this proposal (Officer and/or Team):
Chief Executive

Section 2: Proposal to be Assessed

- 2.1 Type of proposal:
Policy
If other, please specify
[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- 2.2 Is the proposal:
Review of existing
- 2.3 State the date of any previous equality impact assessment completed in relation to this proposal (if applicable):
15/03/2023

2.4 What are the headline aims of the proposal and the objectives that will help to accomplish these aims? (Max 250 words)

The Council voted to adopt the four-day week as a permanent mode of working and to implement this by way of an opt in Productivity Policy. The Policy aims to clarify the elements of the scheme operation which supports recruitment and retention of colleagues and improved wellbeing

2.5 Which of the Council's equality objectives (as detailed in the Council's Equality Scheme) does this proposal link to or help to achieve?

- ☐ Identify, prioritise and deliver actions that will narrow the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged groups and the wider community
- ☒ SCDC is an employer that values difference and recognises the strength that a diverse workforce brings.
- ☐ Protected characteristic groups have a voice and are represented in forming the future shape of the district.
- ☐ None.

2.6 Which groups or individuals will the proposal affect:

- ☒ Service Users ☒ Councillors
- ☒ External Stakeholders ☐ Other
- ☒ Employees

If other, please specify [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

2.7 Broadly speaking, how will these groups or individuals be affected? (you will be asked to provide more detail on the specific impacts on different protected characteristic groups later in the form) (max 250 words)

Service Users – the aim of the four-day week is to deliver 100% of the work in 86.5% of the time for 100% of the pay. Therefore, service users should not be impacted, in so far as the service received is still delivered satisfactorily as monitored through mechanisms such as regular KPI reporting. It may be that

through the streamlining of processes to increase productivity some teams change the way a service is delivered (for example by moving more elements of the service online) but this type of approach was already in progress under the auspices of the council's transformation programme and so the 4DW is likely to have simply sped it up. **Councillors** – as above, councillors should notice no difference in their interactions with council employees. The target for responding to a councillor is 48 hours and this should be maintained in the 4DW environment. **External Stakeholders** – the most likely area where an external stakeholder may be affected is if their partner colleague from the council is unavailable on their scheduled rest day. For most colleagues they will provide an alternative person to represent them, or rearrange their working days that week (for example to attend an external partnership meeting). **Employees** – the policy directly impacts the health and wellbeing of employees. The trial demonstrates that the Council cares about its employees and is prepared to try new ways of working.

- 2.8 If any part of the proposal is being undertaken by external partners, please specify how the Council will ensure that they will meet equality standards?
(Max 250 words)
n/a

Section 3: Evidence and Data

- 3.1 Describe any work you have done (this could include consultation) to understand any effects on groups of people, including those within [9 protected characteristic groups](#)? Please list any key sources (e.g. web-search, previous versions of document, customer feedback etc) that you used to reach your conclusions.
(Max 250 words)
Employees – the health and wellbeing survey asked for a range of demographic information, including age, sex, disability, race, sexual

orientation, this data was able to be analysed and did not note any significant impact on protected characteristic groupings. It does NOT ask about gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, religion and belief. We have also run a series of focus groups targeted at different demographics of workers, and have collated their feedback on the specific impacts they have felt in relation to any protected characteristics. Colleagues have had the opportunity to provide feedback before the final draft goes to Employment and Staffing Committee for sign off **Service users** – the Council has a customer feedback survey that we advertise on our website.

Consultation with residents was also undertaken between 27 Jan and 23 March 2025 to gather feedback on Council Services before and after the 4DW was introduced on a temporary basis (the results of which were reported to Council 17/07/25. This included analysis of responses from different subgroups on an optional basis. Limited variation was found in the responses of varying subgroups compared with the wider population. One exception to this was in relation to awareness of the 4DW, with older people being more aware.

Unions – The Productivity policy has been shared with unions for feedback and engagement

- 3.2 If you have not undertaken any consultation, please detail why not, or when consultation is planned to take place.

(Max 250)

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Section 4: Impact of proposal on those with protected characteristics

- 4.1 Please select all characteristics that may or will be impacted (positive or negative). When providing details of the impact please consider the following questions

- whether each impact is positive, neutral or negative
- whether it is a high, medium or low impact. (both the number of persons affected and the severity of the impact)
- you will be asked to set out actions to manage these impacts in the following question (4.2)

☒ All - general to all protected Characteristics.

Details: All colleagues who meet the eligibility criteria under the Productivity Policy are able to opt in . There is no discrimination based on protected characteristic in terms of participation. Colleagues who prefer not to declare their protected characteristics as a group tend to score lower wellbeing results, this was reported to us by Robertson Cooper, and our survey responses support this, however this also inhibits our ability to understand the cause or to seek actions to address. This trend is often seen in surveys nationally, the focus should be on encouraging colleagues to share this information so that we can target support needed . In order to ensure there is no detrimental impact on those opting out or being removed, this will be monitored in terms of protected characteristics. In the event of a colleague being removed, this would only be in the event of a formal process, which would have the opportunity to be supported and an appeal process.

☒ Age

Details: There are several age-related impacts that may happen, but it is not clear that any of these would be singularly positive or negative; each impact will affect people in different ways, depending on the individual. Examples of impact of the policy are: those approaching retirement age may particularly value the opportunity to experience more time off work and understand the impact on them of retirement/phased retirement without having to reduce their income or pension contributions; some older people who have less experience of IT may struggle with being more time efficient using new approaches and technologies; older people may have more experience of adapting to change within an organisation or they may find it more difficult to adapt to a different routine that they may have held for a longer

period of time; younger people may be more IT literate but have less experience of adapting to change in an organisation. Their work routine may not be as established as is the case in relation to older colleagues, which may make change easier.

Potential negative impact on apprentices, who may be younger – increased pressure due to combining studying and working within a reduced timeframe (although not all apprentices are younger). The Robertson Cooper data suggests that younger employees lack confidence in a way that more experienced employees do not.

While this couldn't be uniquely attributed to the 4DW (it is also likely to be a result of hybrid-working), it is a flag to all managers and colleagues to ensure that younger/new employees are receiving the support they need to grow their confidence in their role.

☒ Disability

Details: Benefits – additional time to attend medical appointments and take action to look after health and wellbeing. Flexibility in application of the 4DW allows employees to opt to work reduced number of days or reduced hours per day, which could be beneficial to those with disabilities involving fatigue who struggle with long days. Potential negative – depending on the disability some staff may struggle to adapt to new ways of working required under the 4 day week, as well as adapting to sudden changes in the 4 day week routine when it comes to things like having to take certain days off for bank holidays although there are limited changes under the proposed productivity policy and we continue to operate in many respects as under the extended trial period. Certain disabilities may require people to take extra time at work and some individuals may become anxious about trying to keep up with their workload or undertaking training, support in the form of reasonable adjustments can be requested for colleagues affected. Survey responses have reported positive impacts in relation to wellbeing, including for those who may have disabilities / long time health conditions. Mental health - could also negatively impact due to isolation/loneliness, or positively due to the opportunity to take up new hobbies, do more exercise, etc. As with age, the policy is likely to impact the same protected group in different ways, depending on the individual.



An additional study by Dr. Emma Hughes, University of Cambridge, was also carried out in late 2024 on the impact of working time reduction at SCDC on disabled people, people with a medical condition and informal carers. The key finding was that, overall, disabled employees or employees with medical conditions or caring responsibilities were overwhelmingly positive about the four-day week and the transformational impact on their Health and Wellbeing

The results of the Robertson Cooper survey were marginally less positive for those with disabilities than those without. There is no pattern that suggests the 4DW discriminates against those with disabilities.

In order to ensure there is no detrimental impact on those opting out or being removed, this will be monitored in terms of protected characteristics. In the event of a colleague being removed, this would only be in the event of a formal process, which would have the opportunity to be supported and an appeal process.

☐ Gender reassignment

Details: no information available

☐ Marriage and Civil Partnership

Details: no information available

☒ Pregnancy and maternity

Details: Reported savings in relation to childcare costs. Potential in terms of the 4 day week contributing to easier pregnancy in terms of greater flexibility to attend appointments and more available rest time. There has been some anecdotal evidence from staff that spending more time with children helps avoid 'parent guilt' that comes from working full time. Time off to attend appointments. Pre and post childcare clubs and appointments etc. Also may make return to work after pregnancy easier. The extended trial does not impact maternity pay or statutory maternity pay. There is an issue around part time workers, which may be relevant for this protected characteristic, which is raised in the sex category below.

☒ Race

Details: The Robertson Cooper data broken down by ethnicity has very few general variances and is broadly consistent across the categories, so neutral impact

☒ Religion and belief

Details: Guidance has been submitted to provide more flexibility to staff members of different religions in relation to which days are taken as non-working days. Benefit for Muslim and Jewish staff in relation to option to take Friday off every week. Staff may also now opt to work on a Bank Holiday, which are frequently associated with Christian events, if they would prefer to take their non-working day on another day.

☒ Sex

Details: Anecdotal reports from wider studies that 4DW can help male staff with a greater work / family balance. There was data that those with caring responsibilities (more likely to be women than men) found it more difficult to swap a non-working day on things like bank holidays due to having to rearrange childcare cover, so added flexibility to be able to work or rearrange hours has been put in place to help with the situation.

However, in general women report slightly higher wellbeing in many categories than men overall demonstrating that the policy does not in general discriminate against women. Employees with caring responsibilities (generally more likely to be women than men) have broadly the same wellbeing, areas which are still within a typical range but slightly lower are physical and mental health, likely to be reflective of having to balance their caring responsibilities with work and personal life.

☒ Sexual orientation

Details: Scores for non-heterosexual employees (gay men, lesbians, bisexual people) were increased from 3.70 good days at work to 4.30 days after the trial which was maintained in the subsequent surveys 4.3 in 2025, it should be noted that this is a relatively small percentage of the organisation, however this is slightly less compared to heterosexual colleagues (4.45).

☒ Other (socio economic, rural isolation, covid)

Details: Socio-economic - saving money on commuting costs on 5th day, allowing colleagues to benefit from mid-week costs rather than weekend (e.g. Tesco delivery is cheaper during week days, gym classes can be cheaper mid week, etc). Rural isolation - could result in increased isolation if not interacting with colleagues on 5th

day, an issue that could extend to social isolation as well. Secondary employment is restricted under the policy on the contracted rest day to preserve the wellbeing benefits realised by the policy, secondary employment is allowed once declared on non contractual rest days.

☐ None of the above

4.2 Considering the above impacts you have identified above, please detail any actions (specific or general) which may help to enhance or mitigate impacts.

Please include the timescale for completing the action.

Action and timescale	Officer
Additional flexibility added into Policy to allow alternative arrangements for bank holidays and working arrangements	People Team
Monitoring of opt outs in relation to protected characteristics	People Team
Reasonable Adjustment passport policy implemented to ensure colleagues with disability have documented support	People Team
Continue to monitor colleague wellbeing through surveys and ongoing casework	People Team

4.3 How will you monitor that the above actions have been completed and that this proposal, once implemented, is impacting fairly on everyone it affects? In answering this question, please include information about feedback you will seek and/or data you will collect and analyse, and how often you will do this

Colleagues will be encouraged to continuously provide feedback and there will be a further annual H&WB surveys to ensure the benefits are continuing to be realised.

Section 5: Summary

5.1 Briefly summarise the key findings of the EqIA and any significant equality considerations that should be taken into account when deciding how to

proceed with the proposal (this section can be included within the 'equality implications' section of any committee reports). (Max. 250 words)

The Robertson Cooper survey data indicates that in general all groups of employees with protected characteristics maintained the positive results during the period of the extended trial.

5.2 Confirm the recommendation of the officer completing the EqIA:

☒ Proceed with the proposal (with any actions identified as required within Section 4 of the EqIA). Analysis demonstrates that the proposal is robust, we have taken all appropriate opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations between groups.

☐ Reject the proposal: Analysis demonstrates that the proposal will cause unlawful discrimination and it must be removed or changed

Section 6: Sign Off

6.1 Signature of individual completing EqIA:

Liz Watts, original – update provided by Helen Cornwell

6.2 Date of completion:

29/08/2025

6.3 When will this proposal next be reviewed and who will this be? (when in doubt 3 years minimum)

Monitored by Employment and Staffing Committee annually

6.4 Approving officer signature *, this should be your Head of Service, Service Area Manager, or Project Sponsor:

Jeff Mambery

6.5 Date of approval:

Click or tap to enter a date.



Please send the completed document to Equality.Schemes@scambs.gov.uk for publishing on the website.

**in the event that this EqIA is completed by Head of Service, then no additional approving signature is required.*