Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

## Skills Development Scotland has a legal duty to consider the impact of any new ‘policy’ on equality groups. A ‘policy’ in this context is taken to mean any new activity, function, policy or product, essentially anything that SDS does. Assessing impact includes considering relevant evidence, including evidence received from equality groups and the likelihood of a positive or negative impact on equality groups of introducing that new product, project or policy. The final section of this form requires us to think about how negative consequences can be mitigated against or removed, and how potential positive impacts can be encouraged. Equality impact assessment helps SDS meet its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. In addition, SDS took the decision to use the impact assessment process to make progress as a Corporate Parent in relation to care experienced young people, which is a component part of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The process might also be used to consider other groups that SDS has evidence of experiencing discrimination or underrepresentation.

For more detailed information about equality impact assessment, please see EHRC guidance here:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/assessing-impact-and-public-sector-equality-duty-guide-public-authorities>

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| --- | --- |
| **Name of EqIA** (e.g. directorate, large project or service) | SDS Interim Hybrid Working Approach |
| **Senior Responsible Officer (SRO):** name and job title | Carolyn Anderson |
| **Does your project link to any other** [**published EqIAs**](https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/publications-statistics/publications/?page=1&topic%5b%5d=3-6&order=date-desc)**?**  If so please provide the name of the EqIA (e.g. WBL) | [Future of Workplace Practices](https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/48702/sds-eqia-future-of-workplace-practice.docx) |

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| **Approved by:** | **Director of:** | **Date approved:** | **Review date:** |
| Signed: | Human Resources | 25th May 2022 | June 2023 |

1. **Purpose of project, policy or product**

Provide details of what is being impact assessed below, including the target audience for this project:

SDS define hybrid working as “spending a proportion of time in a SDS recognised workplace, with the balance of working time at home.”. The purpose of the hybrid working approach is to “provide a framework to enable SDS, people managers and colleagues to make simple, customer-focussed decisions on where we work.” The approach is interim and is intended to apply during the "Review" phase of our pandemic response from 6 June 2022 and to at least 31 May 2023, with extension thereafter subject to evaluation.

1. **Evidence and Impact**

This section should consider the impact of your large project/directorate on each of the equality groups in turn. The [Equality Evidence Review](https://skillsdevelopmentscotland.sharepoint.com/sites/IShare/Connectcontent/Resource%20Library/Forms/NotArchived.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FIShare%2FConnectcontent%2FResource%20Library%2FHR%20%5E%2FCulture%20and%20Standards%2FEquality%2C%20Diversity%20and%20Inclusion%2FEquality%20Mainstreaming%20report%5FEquality%20Evidence%20Review%5FJune%202019%2Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2FIShare%2FConnectcontent%2FResource%20Library%2FHR%20%5E%2FCulture%20and%20Standards%2FEquality%2C%20Diversity%20and%20Inclusion&p=true&cid=90e8ed31-d77d-4e91-9365-940facfb6e8e) has information on school, Further/Higher education and employment for different groups. Think about the **actions** required. They will be collated on the action plan in the next section. Please add rows, as required.

* 1. **Age**

**Context:** 669 colleagues are 50 years old or more, representing 39% of the workforce, 95 colleagues are aged 24 or less, representing less than 6% of the workforce

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence | Activity to date | Further activity required |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| If we don’t offer opportunities for engagement in a physical environment, this could reduce the opportunity for networking across the rest of the workforce, as well as socialising, particularly for younger employees. | [SG EqIA Prolonged home working](https://www.gov.scot/publications/prolonged-home-working-scottish-government-staff-new-safe-secure-workplace-arrangements-response-covid-19-equality-impact-assessment/pages/8/) | Hybrid working enables a physical environment for colleagues to work in, ensuring younger employees have the opportunity for face to face networking | Evaluation plan to evaluate the Interim approach and gather evidence from young people e.g. gather feedback from the Youth Board on how the approach has specifically impacted them. |
| Hybrid Working could allow a greater work life balance for those with caring responsibilities including children and older relatives, as well as managing own health. | [Age UK](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/reports-and-publications/reports-and-briefings/active-communities/rb_sept12_a_means_to_many_ends_older_workers_experiences_of_flexible_working.pdf) | Range of flexible working opportunities currently available.  Caring responsibilities considered for return to offices, see Reset Restart EqIA  Section in Hybrid Working guidance relating to consideration for colleagues with Caring Responsibilities | Evaluation plan to evaluate the Interim approach. |

* 1. **Disability**

**Context:** 5.2% of SDS workforce identify as disabled

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence | Activity to date | Further activity required |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Disabled people have more opportunities available to them as a result of increased home working. Hybrid working could have a positive impact on opportunities for disabled colleagues. | [Guardian, linked to CIPD research](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/jun/02/remote-working-disabled-people-back-to-normal-disability-inclusion) | [Reset Restart EqIA](https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/media/48702/sds-eqia-future-of-workplace-practice.docx)  Hybrid working approach and guidance set expectation that all colleagues consider needs of their team members in relation to hybrid working.  Home as contractual base agreed as a reasonable adjustment for colleagues with a disability, with supporting evidence. | Evaluation plan to evaluate the Interim approach e.g. gather evidence from disabled people. |
| Disabled people may be likely to feel isolated, as well as being overlooked for opportunities if they are most likely to work from home more often. | [Research from Cardiff University](https://theconversation.com/covid-is-changing-the-way-we-work-and-for-disabled-people-too-150670) | Equality Impact Assessment for our approach to Reset & Restart  Equality Impact Assessment for rollout of Microsoft Teams  Developing technology and facilities to allow greater remote/ hybrid participation e.g. in meetings and discussions. | Continuing development of technology and facilities to support remote working. |
| If reasonable adjustments aren’t available for both homeworking and in the workplace as part of a hybrid model, disabled colleagues may be disadvantaged | N/A | Commitment within approach to ensure that (where relevant) all colleagues are able to access a Home Workstation Assessment. Where a Home Workstation Assessment highlights a need for any specialist kit due to a reasonable adjustment, colleagues will be referred to a suitable external DSE advice or Occupational Health provider for recommendations | N/A |
| A Hybrid approach may benefit people with Mental Health Problems, with particular challenges working from home and could better support better management of mental health | [SAMH](https://www.samh.org.uk/about-mental-health/self-help-and-wellbeing/coronavirus-information-hub/staying-mentally-healthy-when-working-from-home) | Can be considered through HR case management support service where management discussions highlight need. | N/A |
| Re-induction for colleagues returning from long-term sick to the organisation can be been more difficult when working remotely. | Feedback from colleagues | Hybrid approach will enable regular contact with team members in these circumstances as appropriate part of return to workplace plan. | N/A |

* 1. **Gender reassignment** (sometimes under heading of Transgender)

**Context:** Under SDS 10 employees are recorded as identifying as trans

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence | Activity to date | Further activity required |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Hybrid working could have an impact on colleagues where they are not out as trans either at home or in the workplace. | Stonewall | Hybrid working approach and guidance set expectation that all colleagues consider needs of their team members in relation to hybrid working. | Evaluation plan to evaluate the Interim approach e.g include LGBTI+ Network Group for any potential feedback in the review stage of the interim approach. |

* 1. **Marriage and civil partnership**

**Context:** We have reviewed this and do not believe there is a potential impact on this group.

* 1. **Pregnancy and maternity**

**Context:** From 1 Apr 2020 to 31 March 2021 we had 25 individuals on maternity leave

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence | Activity to date | Further activity required |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Increased flexibility could help improve work/life balance for those with caring responsibilities. | [Guardian, linked to CIPD research](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/jun/02/remote-working-disabled-people-back-to-normal-disability-inclusion) | Range of flexible working opportunities currently available.  Caring responsibilities considered for return to offices, see Reset Restart EqIA  Hybrid working approach will provide additional flexibility relative to contractual terms – where possible, taking account of customer and team need. | N/A |
| Re-induction for colleagues returning from maternity leave to the organisation can be more difficult when working remotely. | Feedback from colleagues | Hybrid approach will enable regular contact with team members in these circumstances as appropriate part of return to workplace plan. | N/A |

* 1. **Race**

**Context:** 2% of SDS colleagues are from a minority ethnic community

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence | Activity to date | Further activity required |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| “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.” | SG EqIA | Opportunities for virtual networking through “Chin-wags” throughout lockdown.  Hybrid working approach and guidance set expectation that all colleagues consider needs of their team members in relation to hybrid working | Evaluation plan to evaluate the Interim approach e.g. gather evidence from colleagues from a Minority ethnic background. |

* 1. **Religion or belief**

**Context:** 43.7% of our employees state that they do not have a religion or belief: Full breakdown available in our Equality & Diversity Mainstreaming Report 2021.

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence | Activity to date | Further activity required |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Hybrid working could increase the freedom to observe religious practice, fasting, prayer, religious holidays etc. | N/A | Hybrid working approach and guidance set expectation that all colleagues consider needs of their team members in relation to hybrid working  Hybrid working approach will provide additional flexibility relative to contractual terms – where possible, taking account of customer and team need |  |

* 1. **Sex** (or gender)

**Context:** SDS workforce gender breakdown as per the last Equality Mainstreaming Report is 72.3% female 28.7% male

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence | Activity to date | Further activity required |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Women are more likely to be primary care-givers, increased Hybrid working could have a positive impact on the balance between home and work. Could also be good for occupation vertical segregation where Hybrid Working is open for senior roles. | Equality Evidence Review | Hybrid working approach will provide additional flexibility relative to contractual terms – where possible, taking account of customer and team need | Evaluation plan to evaluate the Interim approach e.g. gather evidence from Women, identifying any specific trends. |
| If a culture of presenteeism develops, women may be disadvantages if they are likely to be in the office for the least amount of days e.g. more likely to be Part-time and more likely to have increased caring responsibilities | [CIPD](https://www.cipd.co.uk/Community/blogs/b/katie-jacobs/posts/making-sure-hybrid-working-is-inclusive#gref)  [Guardian](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/jun/19/switch-to-more-home-working-after-covid-will-make-gender-inequality-worse) | Hybrid working approach and guidance set expectation that all colleagues consider needs of their team members in relation to hybrid working. | Evaluation plan to evaluate the Interim approach e.g. gather evidence from Women, identifying any specific trends. |
| Rise in domestic abuse when working from home during pandemic in society and less opportunities for colleagues to potentially help (camera off etc). | ONS, 2020 | Awareness raising campaigns throughout lockdown.  Domestic Abuse Guidance is scheduled to be refreshed in 2022.  Hybrid Approach allows flexibility for colleagues and could increase opportunities for colleagues to support relative to lockdown period | Compete refresh and promote Domestic Abuse Guidance in 2022. |
| People going through the Menopause may benefit from a Hybrid approach, allowing flexibility in working while experiencing menopausal symptoms. | [Unison](https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2019/10/25831.pdf) | Introduction of Menopause Guidance and promotion of an SDS ‘Menopause Café’ on Yammer for colleagues.  Included in Hybrid Working guidance | N/A |

* 1. **Sexual orientation**

**Context:** 3.2% of workforce identify as Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or ‘Other’.

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence | Activity to date | Further activity required |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Hybrid working could have an impact on colleagues where they are not out as LGBO+ either at home or in the workplace. | Stonewall | Included specific consideration as part of Hybrid Working Guidance | Evaluation plan to evaluate the Interim approach e.g. include LGBTI+ Network Group for any potential feedback in the review stage of the interim approach. |

1. Assessing impact on other groups

This section is the same as above only considers the impact of groups not covered in the Equality Act (2010), e.g. care experience, carers, socio-economic disadvantage). Add sections as required.

* 1. **Care experience**

**Context:** As per the latest Equality Mainstreaming Report, 1.1% of SDS colleagues disclosed that they are care experienced. As a corporate parent, SDS consider those with care experience have the same protection as those groups listed in the legislation

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence | Activity to date | Further activity required |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Hybrid working could reduce costs of commuting for younger care experienced people where money could be more of an issue. | Lack of published evidence on impact of care experienced workers and hybrid working | Hybrid working approach will provide additional flexibility relative to contractual terms – where possible, taking account of customer and team need | N/A |
| Care experienced people potentially less likely to have a suitable work environment at home, and the costs involved in setting this up. Home broadband etc. | Equality Evidence Review | SDS Commitment to providing desk and chairs, allowing colleagues to be able to access Home Working (where appropriate), regardless of financial situation  Interim Hybrid Working Approach is opt in i.e. colleagues can choose to work full time in an SDS recognised workplace | N/A |

* 1. **Poverty**

**Context:**

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence | Activity to date | Further activity required |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Hybrid working could reduce costs of commuting for people experiencing poverty. |  | Hybrid working approach will provide additional flexibility relative to contractual terms – where possible, taking account of customer and team need. | N/A |
| People experiencing poverty are potentially less likely to have a suitable work environment at home, and the costs involved in setting this up. Home broadband etc. |  | SDS Commitment to providing desk and chairs, allowing colleagues to be able to access Home Working (where appropriate), regardless of financial situation  Interim Hybrid Working Approach is opt in i.e. colleagues can choose to work full time in an SDS recognised workplace | N/A |

1. Island Community Impact Assessment

This section covers our commitments under the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018. This follows the same process as the rest of the form. Please see Scottish Government Toolkit for more information.

**Context:**

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence | Activity to date | Further activity required |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Hybrid Working/Home could offer opportunities for colleagues living in island and rural locations. |  | Hybrid working approach will provide additional flexibility relative to contractual terms – where possible, taking account of customer and team need | Evaluation plan to evaluate the Interim approach |
| Contracts lead in time for KIT, reasonable adjustment and cost for homeworking may differ for employees in island communities |  | Commitment within approach that all colleagues will have, including, where relevant and reasonable, any specialist kit identified through a Home Work Station Assessment | N/A |

1. **Action Plan**

The SRO is responsible for all actions.

| **What is the action?** | **Which group(s) does it relate to?** | **What is the anticipated outcome?** | **Timescale** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Evaluation plan for interim hybrid working approach to ensure engagement with relevant communities of interest, including colleagues with relevant protected characteristics. | Potentially all groups, but particularly those identified as relevant in EQIA above | Consultation and involvement to ensure lived experienced is considered in the evaluation of the Interim Hybrid Working Approach | June 2023 |
| Equality Impact Assessment to be reviewed and updated as appropriate as part of decision on hybrid working approach following Review period. | All groups | Develop evidence base to inform future approach to Hybrid Working is as inclusive as possible | June 2023 |