

# Equality Screening and Impact Assessment

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## INTRODUCTORY GUIDANCE TO EQUALITY SCREENING AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT

**What is it?** Equality screening and impact assessment helps us consider the effect of our policies and practices<sup>1</sup> on different people. It helps us minimise negative impact and potential discrimination and promote opportunities to advance equality, inclusion and good relations between different groups of people.

There are two main elements to equality screening and impact assessment. Firstly a set of equality screening questions are reviewed. These questions help determine whether the policy is relevant to equality and whether it needs to go through an equality impact assessment. The second element, if required, is the equality impact assessment meeting. This is where a panel of people review the proposed policy, particularly thinking about its impact on different groups of people, trying to identify and counter any potential negative impact and promote any opportunities to enhance equality. The panel suggests actions for the policy owner to adopt.

**Why do we do it?** The process helps us improve our policies and build equality into our work. Equality screening and impact assessment helps us consider the potential impact of what we do on different groups who are susceptible to unjustified discrimination, some of whom are legally protected against this, whether by UK or other law. It helps us demonstrate that we have proactively considered equality when developing our policies.

**When should we do it?** Assessing the impact on equality should start early in the policy development process, or at the early stage of a review. Assessing the impact on equality should be ongoing rather than a one-off exercise, because circumstances change over time, so equality considerations should be taken into account both as the policy is developed and also as it is implemented. The guidance here is to help assess the impact on equality before the policy is implemented.

It takes some time to properly set up an equality impact assessment meeting if one is needed, so the equality screening questions should be considered as early as possible once the policy is drafted. If an equality impact assessment is required it will take a little time to identify a chair, a note-taker, a diverse panel and to set up the meeting arrangements. In addition once the meeting has taken place there are likely to be actions to be implemented before the policy is launched. All this needs to be considered when determining the best time to address equality screening and impact assessment.

When we are implementing a policy that has been developed elsewhere, for example by a government department, or by a partner organisation we also need to assess the impact on equality. Although responsibility for the policy itself rests with the organisation that developed it, we may have choices in how it is implemented that can help eliminate potential discrimination and promote equality, inclusion and good relations.

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<sup>1</sup> Consistent with its broad definition in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act and other equality legislation, this guidance uses the term ‘policy’ as a shorthand for policies, practices, activities and significant decisions about how we work and carry out our functions.

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**How do we do it?** Consider the purpose of the policy, the context in which it will operate, who it should benefit and what results are intended from it. Reflect on its potential impact on people with different equality categories and think about which aspects of the policy, if any, are most relevant to equality. Answer the equality screening questions to determine whether an equality impact assessment meeting is necessary.

Identify someone to chair the equality impact assessment panel meeting, if one is necessary, and someone to take the notes. The chair and note-taker play a crucial role and specific guidance has been developed to support them ([guidance for Chairs](#); [guidance for Note-takers](#)). A diverse panel should be approached, including a range of colleagues from different teams/departments/countries/regions as appropriate, some of whom should be directly involved in or impacted by the policy. Panel members should be sent the part-completed ESIA form and the policy documents, giving them at least a full week to read them and prepare for the meeting.

We particularly focus on the following equality categories (many of which are protected by equality legislation in the UK and beyond): age, dependant responsibilities (with or without), disability, gender including transgender, marital status/civil partnership, political opinion, pregnancy and maternity, race or ethnic origin, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Invariably there are other areas to consider including full-time/part-time working, geographical location, tribe/caste/clan or language, dependent on the country. We also review what is being proposed against the organisation's values (creativity, integrity, mutuality, professionalism and valuing people).

After the meeting the action points identified by the panel are reviewed by the policy owner and implemented as appropriate. The policy owner confirms implementation of the action points (and outlines a justification for any action points that won't be taken forward) and then signs off and sends the completed form to [ESIA@britishcouncil.org](mailto:ESIA@britishcouncil.org).

## **Northern Ireland**

There is particular legislation in Northern Ireland which requires a more detailed process of equality screening and impact assessment for policies that are deemed to have high relevance to equality. This includes external consultation with relevant contacts and organisations. Given this, there is a need to confirm whether the proposed policy affects anyone in Northern Ireland. **If it does, all parts of the form need to be completed and the guidance at Annex A must be read and followed.**


## **Please note**

**Before submitting this planning tool, ensure that it has been signed and dated by the policy owner on both the Record of Decision page 4 & Part B section 5. The document will be invalid if not correctly completed.**

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## EQUALITY SCREENING

### **POLICY<sup>2</sup> DETAILS** – *Please complete*

<b>Title of policy</b>	<b>British Council philosophy of work</b>
<b>Name of policy owner</b>	<b>Lisa Paniccia-Brown</b>
<b>Intended implementation date</b>	<b>From April 2021</b> 

**BACKGROUND** - *Provide brief background information about the policy, or change to it. Include rationale, intended beneficiaries and expected outcomes.*

*(Use as much space as you wish, the text box below will expand as you enter information).*

The British Council's 'philosophy of work' gives our people choice and flexibility in how they organise their work tasks. This supports the effective and successful delivery of our strategic priorities and offers our people greater choice and flexibility to manage their work/life balance.

#### **Context**

Covid-19 has accelerated the need for organisations to adapt, change and move at pace to a more sustainable model, using technology as the critical enabler.

The British Council has been significantly impacted by Covid-19, and this has been exacerbated by other external factors, including but not limited to: UK and global political situations, the economic downturn, Brexit.

The Foreign Secretary's review of the organisation made clear that government requires the British Council to reduce operating costs.

The way we operate will also need to move to greater digital delivery across all areas of operation, but there will remain a need for some face-to-face delivery to properly serve certain stakeholder groups, aspects of teaching English and administering examinations.

<sup>2</sup> Consistent with its broad definition in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act and other equality legislation, this guidance uses the term 'policy' as a shorthand for policies, practices, activities and significant decisions about how we work and carry out our functions.

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Organisations that can move their workforce to more flexible ways of working will be more attractive to the types of people we want to reach. We need to be at the forefront of these changes, establishing the British Council as the employer of choice in all our markets, enabling us to attract, retain and develop the best people, with the skills and knowledge we need to deliver our strategy.

Nevertheless, we are mindful that the Covid-19 situation continues to evolve and personal attitudes to risk will continue to shift. We will create a balanced response, which enables us to flex to changes in the wider context.

### Background

The pandemic forced us to change the way we work almost overnight. While an exceptional and unforeseen crisis, the experiences of the past months have highlighted both positives and negatives for the organisation. Many colleagues have expressed the desire to keep some of our new ways of working, and not return to the old. Importantly, there are a number of business benefits in terms of efficiency and effectiveness that we can achieve by adapting our approach.

To better understand what has worked well, what hasn't, and a greater understanding of personal preference and motivation, we ran a Future of work survey (8 – 24 July). The results of this survey, and feedback from SLT members and other senior leaders, resulted in the British Council' philosophy of work.

### IS AN EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT REQUIRED?

*To determine this, please answer the following by ticking yes, no or not sure:*

Question	Yes	No	Not sure
Is the policy potentially significant in terms of its anticipated impact on employees, or customers/clients/audiences, or the wider community?			
Is it a major policy, significantly affecting how programmes/services/functions are delivered?			
Might the policy affect people in particular equality categories in a different way?			

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Are the potential equality impacts unknown?			
Does the policy have the possibility to support or detract from our efforts to promote the inclusion of people from under-represented groups?			
Will the policy have an impact on anyone in Northern Ireland?			
<b>Total responses Yes/No/Not sure</b>	6	0	0

### DECIDING IF AN EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT IS NECESSARY

If all the answers to the questions above are 'no' then an equality impact assessment is not needed.

*Please move to the **'Record of decision'** section below.*

If there are any 'yes' responses then an equality impact assessment is necessary.

*Please move to the **'Record of decision'** section below.*

If there are no 'yes' responses but there are any 'not sure' responses then please discuss next steps further with the Regional Diversity Lead or with the Diversity Unit, who will help you decide if an equality impact assessment is necessary. Examples of situations where it is not necessary to carry out an equality impact assessment include:

- Producing a team newsletter
- Changing the time of a meeting
- Planning an internal event

In these instances relevant equality issues should still be considered, but there is no need to carry out an equality impact assessment.

### RECORD OF DECISION

I confirm an equality impact assessment is required

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Policy owner: Lisa Paniccia-Brown (Name)      Global Director Organisational Effectiveness and People Insight (Role)      01 February 2021  
(Date)

**Note 1:** *If an equality impact assessment **is required**, please complete questions 1-3 in the following section and send this part-completed form to the panel along with any relevant background documentation about the policy at least one full week prior to the EIA meeting. This should include the draft policy and any supporting data or relevant papers.*

**Note 2:** *If an equality impact assessment **is not required**, please send this screening section of the form to [ESIA@britishcouncil.org](mailto:ESIA@britishcouncil.org).*

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## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

**PART A:** *This section is to be completed before the EIA panel meeting and sent at least one week in advance to the panel along with the policy and other relevant documents.*

<b>TITLE OF POLICY:</b>	<b>British Council philosophy of work</b>
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*(Take as much space as required under each heading below)*

- 1. Please summarise the purpose of the policy, the context in which it will operate, who it should benefit and what results are intended from it.**

### **Aims and objectives**

Our **strategic** aim is to:

- organise our ways of working to drive organisational effectiveness and efficiency through a more flexible global workforce

Our **people** aim is to:

- create a culture of choice and empowerment for employees, with greater work/life balance, enabling high performance, motivation and personal satisfaction

We shall do this through:

- Globally applicable principles and standards that support leaders to make decisions appropriate to their local operating context.
- Tools that allow managers to assess levels of flexibility by job type.
- Policies that are clear and simple, offering greater flex and ease of application.
- A radical approach to our estates strategy and management that embraces the broadest application of distributed working practices to drive down costs.

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- Technical software and hardware that enables and supports distributed working, including clear equipment and environmental standards for working remotely.
- Supporting line managers to lead and manage teams within our new ways of working.
- A performance management process that focusses on outcomes not tasks, over shorter time frames, and with regular conversations.
- Guidance, training and toolkits for all colleagues that set clear expectations about the 'British Council philosophy of work', supporting them to work productively and effectively.

Given the input from employees (Future of work survey) and interviews with SLT members and other leaders representing the Network, we set out as follows the British Council's proposed statement of intent.

The 'traditional', office-based structure is rapidly being replaced by a blended approach to how people work. The British Council fully embraces the move to flexible ways of working as our norm.

The changes to the way we organise our work will be driven by business needs and fully support the delivery of the British Council's strategic priorities. We will identify how work can be measured by tangible outputs rather than presence.

Alongside the business drivers for this, there are benefits for our employees, too. Offering greater choice and autonomy over how they organise their work is a powerful motivator and supports their work/life balance and well-being.

We will enable teams to choose flexible work environments that are best suited to particular tasks, and to structure the way they work accordingly. This will result in many of our roles being able to work in a distributed model.

We also recognise that we have some job types where greater flexibility is not possible due to the nature of the work tasks. As a result, some colleagues will not have the same level of flexibility and will need to remain office-based for much or all of the time. We will ensure that standards and guidance is in place to ensure fairness and equity across the organisation in decisions that are made concerning flexibility.

This work will support the guiding principles of the way people work as we move to the new Target Operating Model.

**Please note, the ambition for formalising flexible working is aimed at a 'post-pandemic' world when society is stable, rather than responding to Covid-related restrictions. This assumes schools, childcare and other caring-related services are running normally**



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- 2. Please explain any aspects of the policy you've been able to identify that are relevant to equality. This will contribute to the equality-focused discussion the panel will have.**

Fairness of application: how to eliminate manager bias from decisions over 'who' can work more flexibly (it should be about the job role, not the person)

Colleagues in lower pay bands may have more challenges to work from home because of living conditions, access to space and technology. We know that there is greater representation of women and minority ethnic colleagues in the lower paybands

Cultural expectations/norms: in some countries, there are general societal perceptions that people working from home are not really working

Gender pay gap: flexible working can enable women to reconcile work and caring responsibilities, potentially reducing the gender pay gap. Offering flexible working in senior positions can potentially enable women who are not available to work what may be considered a standard, full-time week, to progress despite the reduction in hours.

Attraction: more flexible working may allow us to attract a wider pool of talent into jobs where women are under-represented.

Retention: flexible working may enable us to retain women who are not available to work a full-time or standard working week, or to retain those who are suffering from excessive work-life conflict.

Progression: offering more flexible work in senior positions is particularly important to ensure that employees who want to work part-time or job share are able to progress.

Well-being: well-designed flexible working can help boost employee well-being by reducing the work/life conflict they often face. Greater flexibility could also benefit colleagues with mental or physical ill-health, enabling them to better manage their conditions

Challenging gender norms: opening all positions to flexible working ensures they are open to people with caring responsibilities. It also has the potential to challenge the stereotype that caring responsibilities are women's work by signalling that positions that are currently held by men also offer flexibility

Greater flexibility could benefit colleagues with caring responsibilities, enabling them to better manage these responsibilities

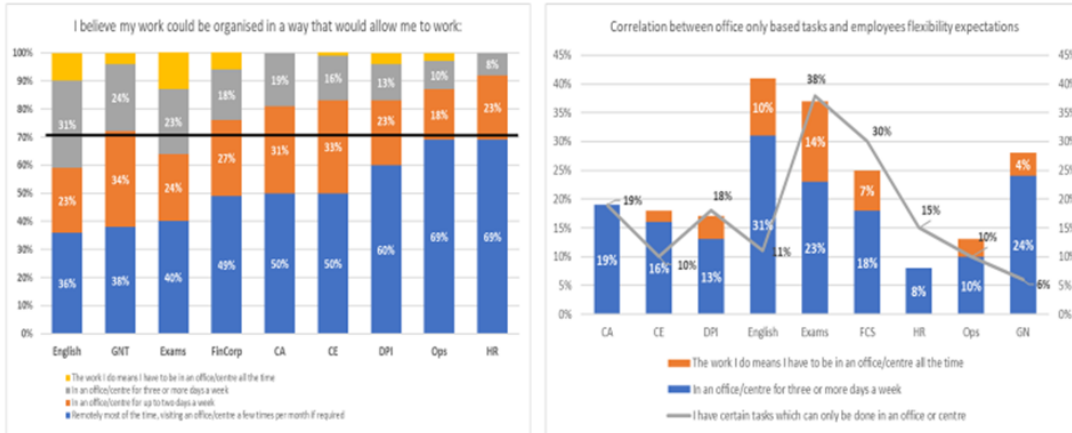
- 3. Please outline any equality-related supporting data that should be considered. This could include consultation with Trades Union Side or staff associations, equality monitoring data, responses from staff surveys or client feedback exercises, external demographic**

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and benchmarking data or other relevant internal or external material.

## Flexibility

**c.70% of respondents would like to work remotely at least three times per week, however, some jobs are required to be on site more than others**



- English, Exams and FCS have a higher proportion of employees believing they can only do their work at the office or centre
  - this is driven in part by certain tasks only possible to be done in the office or centre (Exams 38% and FCS 30%)
- However, even for these SBUs, there is still an overwhelmingly belief and preference to work remotely more often

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## Results by Function

I believe my work could be organised in a way that would allow me to work:	British Council	CA	CE	DPI	English	Exams	FCS	HR	Ops	GN
In an office/centre for three or more days a week	20%	19%	16%	13%	31%	23%	18%	8%	10%	24%
In an office/centre for up to two days a week	25%	31%	33%	23%	23%	24%	27%	23%	18%	35%
Remotely most of the time, visiting an office/centre a few times per month if required	47%	50%	50%	60%	36%	40%	49%	69%	69%	36%
The work I do means I have to be in an office/centre all the time	8%	0%	2%	4%	10%	14%	7%	0%	3%	4%

If I could choose my working pattern, I would prefer:	British Council	CA	CE	DPI	English	Exams	FCS	HR	Ops	GN
Compressed hours (for example, working five days over four)	24%	53%	24%	26%	30%	19%	19%	30%	22%	41%
Flexi-hours	46%	53%	56%	39%	35%	49%	53%	48%	44%	34%
Four-day week (ie, reduce worktime and salary by 20 per cent)	5%	3%	6%	5%	7%	5%	3%	6%	5%	9%
My current work pattern	50%	44%	47%	57%	49%	46%	56%	45%	56%	39%
No set schedule/free to choose when I work	20%	8%	22%	21%	17%	23%	17%	25%	19%	32%
Other	4%	3%	4%	2%	7%	4%	2%	3%	3%	4%
Splitshift	3%	0%	1%	2%	1%	4%	4%	2%	5%	1%

What do you like about working in a British Council office/centre?	British Council	CA	CE	DPI	English	Exams	FCS	HR	Ops	GN
A sense of belonging	31%	17%	32%	34%	30%	31%	31%	33%	29%	38%
Access to equipment and facilities	46%	50%	47%	48%	48%	52%	51%	48%	36%	32%
Connecting with others, face-to-face	62%	78%	62%	69%	62%	61%	64%	66%	58%	74%
It supports career development and opportunities	12%	11%	10%	5%	12%	13%	11%	7%	19%	6%
It supports creative thinking with others	20%	22%	24%	16%	23%	15%	19%	13%	23%	36%
Networking with colleagues	29%	17%	29%	31%	20%	31%	34%	33%	35%	35%
Other	4%	3%	4%	2%	4%	3%	3%	4%	3%	3%
Social connection	30%	47%	31%	34%	33%	28%	28%	34%	29%	35%
The opportunities to learn informally from peers	30%	36%	33%	27%	34%	27%	24%	28%	32%	16%

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## Results by Function

What has been positive for you in the ways we've been working?	British Council	CA	CE	DPI	English	Exams	FCS	HR	Ops	GN
I've been able to contribute more ideas and solutions	18%	17%	19%	20%	17%	17%	19%	16%	18%	10%
I've worked more collaboratively	28%	28%	28%	31%	28%	27%	29%	33%	30%	23%
Meetings have been more efficient	32%	61%	31%	34%	29%	31%	37%	39%	37%	38%
My leadership team has been more accessible	14%	14%	16%	18%	11%	13%	15%	15%	17%	20%
Other	6%	3%	8%	3%	8%	6%	4%	5%	3%	7%
Support for well-being, learning and development has improved	17%	22%	16%	20%	11%	22%	18%	20%	20%	10%
Technology has helped my team work together better	22%	22%	20%	30%	18%	23%	25%	23%	28%	21%
We've been more creative	21%	14%	24%	13%	29%	16%	17%	13%	18%	26%
We've been more flexible	51%	47%	54%	49%	46%	50%	56%	58%	51%	47%
We've improved the way we make decisions	12%	25%	10%	8%	8%	12%	15%	14%	14%	15%
We've taken more risks	13%	6%	9%	12%	21%	11%	6%	12%	10%	18%

What would help you to work remotely more often, if you wanted to?	British Council	CA	CE	DPI	English	Exams	FCS	HR	Ops	GN
A choice of alternative work spaces	23%	11%	27%	17%	20%	22%	20%	23%	21%	24%
Better internet connection at home	38%	17%	38%	32%	31%	43%	43%	32%	42%	31%
I'm already well set up to work remotely	37%	39%	33%	43%	37%	33%	40%	41%	45%	45%
Other	6%	14%	8%	6%	7%	6%	7%	7%	4%	10%
Subtable furniture	42%	67%	51%	52%	40%	35%	38%	53%	42%	47%
Support from my manager to organise my work differently	21%	14%	17%	10%	22%	26%	20%	14%	23%	8%
The right technology	32%	18%	34%	35%	31%	36%	32%	35%	27%	31%

Working remotely isn't just being at home, it covers a range of options. What kind of spaces would you be happy to work from if you had the choice and flexibility to do so?	British Council	CA	CE	DPI	English	Exams	FCS	HR	Ops	GN
A partner's offices (organisations we have an agreement with to use their workspace)	28%	39%	31%	31%	31%	29%	22%	26%	22%	51%
Anywhere with high speed internet access	48%	44%	47%	53%	45%	48%	40%	51%	41%	47%
Co-working space (pre-bookable working spaces used by multiple companies)	30%	42%	37%	41%	30%	28%	24%	36%	27%	48%
Home	82%	89%	83%	86%	84%	78%	80%	83%	85%	88%
Informal settings, for example, local cafe or library	25%	33%	33%	30%	22%	23%	18%	32%	23%	29%
Other British Council premises or facilities	46%	64%	44%	52%	50%	49%	43%	42%	38%	57%

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## Results by Function

What do you like about working remotely?	British Council	CA	CE	DPI	English	Exams	FCS	HR	Ops	GN
I can balance personal responsibilities (for example, time with children or elders)	37%	28%	39%	42%	30%	37%	42%	44%	39%	27%
I can focus without interruption	28%	39%	29%	26%	29%	26%	34%	32%	26%	40%
I don't have to commute	62%	83%	65%	70%	68%	56%	54%	66%	65%	64%
I have a better work/life balance	31%	36%	29%	32%	27%	31%	35%	34%	34%	18%
I have control over my day	21%	25%	22%	21%	21%	23%	16%	19%	19%	15%
I have flexibility in how I organise my work	31%	17%	34%	27%	28%	35%	33%	30%	31%	28%
My team works together more effectively	7%	3%	6%	8%	5%	7%	5%	8%	10%	11%
My time is used more efficiently	29%	31%	28%	30%	29%	25%	31%	30%	32%	31%
Other	4%	6%	3%	5%	7%	4%	5%	4%	3%	4%

What has been challenging for you in the ways we've been working?	British Council	CA	CE	DPI	English	Exams	FCS	HR	Ops	GN
I feel isolated	17%	17%	19%	16%	18%	19%	16%	17%	14%	17%
I feel like I'm 'always on', responding to emails or working outside my usual work time	51%	44%	42%	47%	59%	46%	50%	56%	51%	63%
I find it hard to plan and manage my time	8%	0%	9%	8%	7%	7%	6%	8%	11%	5%
I have certain tasks which can only be done in an office or centre	19%	19%	10%	18%	11%	38%	30%	15%	10%	6%
I'm less likely to take regular breaks	36%	53%	39%	43%	27%	29%	36%	45%	45%	42%
My space and circumstances at home make it very difficult	16%	19%	19%	17%	16%	15%	13%	14%	13%	10%
Other	9%	3%	11%	8%	10%	7%	7%	8%	7%	14%
The lack of social connection	42%	42%	44%	49%	38%	40%	44%	43%	48%	41%
The need to use technology for all interactions is tiring	35%	39%	46%	28%	47%	24%	23%	33%	24%	53%

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## Summary of feedback from SLT members/leadership

- Operations. Don't fully understand the implications of remote working on productivity, well-being and need more detailed evaluation of the longer-term impact on teams. Need best practice standards, right processes and behaviours. Detailed cost analysis of equipment, corresponding with reduction in estate costs. If we get this right, we're in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Need to move quickly in the UK – Stratford and Cardiff as pilots.
- Cultural Engagement. Stakeholder expectations/personal relationships, currently very physical events, workshops etc. at venue or in office, team time in the same space is valuable, online engagement could reduce ability to get into deep discussion, better problem solving when together. Clarity over outputs/performance. Shared understanding of the framework brings equity.
- Corporate Affairs. Must have a framework in order to be very flexible, childcare issues tricky, past performance on performance management not good, dealing with performance issues while remote, regular one-to-ones, handbook for 'when it goes wrong'. Scrap core hours but people must deliver. Remote not just home. Stratford and overseas as pilot. Civic duty for a safe space for colleagues to go.
- Digital, Partnership and Innovation. Disagree with term 'remote working' and office paradigm – call it distributed working. Fundraising – donors and stakeholders may not want digital meetings. Cloud enables more flexibility. Moved away from massive team meetings bringing less travel, better decision making, less bureaucracy.
- Global Network. Analyse extent of success. Meeting etiquette. How to maximise benefit of being in office when there. Change focus to be people centred. Embrace more flexible future but with governing principles. Don't leave people behind – globally some offices are a refuge and haven for some. Don't lost face-to-face completely. Make proper use of Stratford. Young people digital savvy. Led from countries and regions and not imposed.
- Finance and Corporate Services. Effectiveness relies on equipment and technology. Work slows down when we can't convene quickly. Map the interactions we do need across the organisation. Effectiveness cannot be held ransom to individual concerns. Harder to recruit if no face-to-face and we rely on interpersonal relationships in an office. Change must be organisation focused. Current situation is temporary. How is the London Market Allowance affected?
- English and Exams. Not suitable for teaching and customer facing roles. Security on exams and confidential materials. Well-being questions need addressing. Impacts creativity. Screens should also be provided as part of equipment offer. Coming together important.

## Examples of challenges to be worked through

Discussions with leaders have highlighted a range of issues that will need to be thought through. Some are local, others will have wider application. Here are a few examples:

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- Job role/type: when assessing the work, as well as flexibility for the individual an assessment of risk must be included, e.g. what is the impact for safeguarding, fraud, etc
- How to make sure there is no line manager bias in the decision about how much flexibility is permitted
- One person's flexibility could have a negative impact on another's – impact on teams and wider stakeholders
- Global and local policies: time and resource required to review to make sure they are fit for purpose and can be applied consistently
- Constraints out of our control such as local legislation and employment laws, tax, benefits, etc, and legal implications
- Local culture, customs and perceptions: for example, in SSA the prevailing view is you have to be seen in an office to be regarded as working. Home working is not the norm
- National infrastructure: for some colleagues, the office is the only place they can really work well because of space, connectivity and equipment, regardless of job role
- EU contract work specifies certain conditions for employees, including minimum desk size
- Clarity over what is and isn't permissible: can I work from anywhere, ie, move to a different country? This raises multiple issues ([see BBC article on this](#))
- Visibility of leadership: CDs have a very important role in creating cohesion and leading by example. Their regular presence in an office is essential
- H&S complexities: lack of definition of 'your workplace'. What if you have an accident at home while working?
- Line manager capability and confidence: a huge area that needs to be explored; covers all aspects of the employee experience from hire to leaving
- Investment in our internal infrastructure and equipment: costs could be offset by savings made through the reductions of our estates footprint
- Equipment: if we expect colleagues to work from home (or other types of location) then we have to equip them (monitors too!)
- Easy to assess which roles must be in an office/can be done from home: personal choice though means that some will still want to be mainly office based for many reasons
- Security and confidentiality risks, for example, exam papers must be dealt with in a secure, office environment
- Personal choice: even if a role can be remotely based, an individual may have a preference to work in an office – impact on Estates strategy
- Cultural Engagement: a number of stakeholders will expect and require a certain level of face-to-face interaction, irrespective of the shift to greater digital delivery of our work

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- Teaching will continue to require premises to deliver lessons; the aim is that our online teaching offer will be delivered exclusively by remote teachers

<b>Title of policy</b>	<b>British Council philosophy of work</b>
<b>Name of policy owner</b>	<b>Lisa Paniccia-Brown</b>
<b>Intended implementation date</b>	<b>From April 2021</b>

## Equality Screening and Impact Assessment

**PART B:** *This section captures the notes of the Equality Impact Assessment panel meeting.*

<b>TITLE OF POLICY<sup>3</sup>:</b>	<b>British Council philosophy of work</b>
<b>DATE OF EIA PANEL MEETING:</b>	<b>11<sup>th</sup> March 2021</b>

1. Please list the names, roles/business areas and geographical location of the panel members. If contributions have been received in writing by people who could not attend please list their details too and note 'input in writing' by their name.

Lisa Paniccia-Brown – HR (policy owner)  
Gwen McLeod – Senior Equality Diversity Inclusion Project Lead  
Christine Fraser – Global Estates, UK  
Roland Davies – Country Director, Zimbabwe  
Viola Peek – Marketing, Netherlands  
Georgina Reeves-Saad, HR UK  
Joe Bardon – E&E, Japan  
Adrian Judele - E&E, Switzerland  
Hanaa Alshami – Cultural Engagement, Yemen  
Eniko Ravadits – E&E, Austria  
Meltern Gunyuzlu Ates – Marketing, Turkey  
Medy Wang – Schools Cultural Engagement, China (panel chair)  
Tanzeela Hussain – HR, Pakistan  
Aditya Varma – SSC, India

\*Contributions from Sarah Brisbane (Operations & Equality Manager, GNT, UK Region) taken in a separate call with Georgina Reeves-Saad, specifically to discuss legislative requirements for Northern Ireland)

<sup>3</sup> Consistent with its broad definition in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act and other equality legislation, this guidance uses the term 'policy' as a shorthand for policies, practices, activities and significant decisions about how we work and carry out our functions.



## Equality Screening and Impact Assessment

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2. Summarise the main points made in the discussion, noting which documents were reviewed. Note any points relating to clarity/quality assurance as well as points relating to equality issues.

### **Policy Background**

In response to the Covid-19 situation. Everyone working from home at the same time.

There was a concern from SLT and the leadership team whether this would work. No one envisaged that a year later we would still be working from home.

Also tied into the policy is the crisis of our finances; Strategy 25; aspiration to reach more people digitally; talent & succession; attraction and retention of talent.

Covid 19 galvanized all of these into one burning platform.

Future of Work Survey was run in July last year. Feedback of the situation then but also asked people to think about a future when we were more stable, post pandemic.

How would employees feel about flexible working which is not just about working from home.

This is a business led decision. Setting up a framework for the organisation to approach flexible ways of working. Recognise that not everybody can work flexibly. Some roles will not have the same level of flexibility as others. Confidentiality is another aspect and levels of this need to be considered. Move away from line manager interpretation to a more systematic and robust way to analyse this. Not everyone wants to work flexibly. Preference, need, safety can make people want to work from office. Culture is another factor. The negative factors of working from home have been as a direct result of covid such as kids at home, caring responsibilities which would normally not be there.

Finding the balance. Most people have found the experience beneficial with better work life balance. Eliminating manager bias is very important.

SLT wants as flexible as possible. People can organise their work as they want to in order to deliver the work they have to. Core hours don't make sense. Not 9:00-5:00 jobs. Do we need core hours?

Clarifications:

## Equality Screening and Impact Assessment

Once we have unpicked some of the actions that need to be taken. Is the intention that we introduce a policy of remote or flexible working?

Every single job role will need to be assessed to see if it can be flexible.

Convened a working group to look at this. What we can't do ... application in country maybe different which is why we are calling it philosophy of work . Application needs to sit in country and region. Use the job role index.

Leaving it to operationalise in regions may lead to differences and inequalities.

Recommendation: Developing a policy rather than just a framework or philosophy to manage this.

Timing of survey – taken quite early on during covid, so we may get slightly different results a year down the line. Any potential to cross check if that information is still correct. Not done a cost benefit analysis. This is not the driver. It's a bonus if it saves us money.

George: Have a finger on the pulse in a different ways. Colleagues want a hybrid. They don't want to be tied into one office. They want something in between. Anecdotes. Small focus groups is something we can do.

Job Index evaluation: can we do something similar to the way we use hay evaluation to review jobs.

Does this policy disadvantage customer facing jobs?

Mark Robson view: there is a recognition that there will be a level of disparity between jobs around this. How can we manage this sensitively?

In English & Exams – look for opportunities to see where work can be done more flexibly. So not just about roles but looking at tasks etc. as well. E.g. can I do this bit of work at home and come into office to deliver a session. Asking people to think differently.

Nervousness about certain teachers who have been with British Council for a few years who see their terms and conditions being eroded.

More learners are moving to online from face to face teaching.

There is now a change around home working. It's now more accepted.

Efforts of putting objectivity into process:

Concern: If you leave to regions/units, the personality of the leader/unit will have an impact on what happens. Depends upon the CD and their perspective.

Make the assessment of roles to be more objective

Reasonable adjustment: equity: employees with disabilities have equipment in the office but if the same equipment is needed at home it will be expensive and line managers may not approve home working

Agility index can be like a stamp on roles. This is still work in progress

Time frame for roll out: want to do this as soon as we can. Have tools and frameworks in place by June from UK perspective. The sooner we can do it the easier it will be for countries and regions to operationalise it.

EU very keen to move this quickly.

## Equality Screening and Impact Assessment

- We have standards and guidance in place to ensure fairness across the organisation in decisions that are made concerning flexibility (the framework will include some guidance to implement this. All other policies will still apply.)
- What do we need to do to amend the global flexible working policy and any other people policies we need to review in HR or other policies.
- It's important to equality screen the detailed policies as part of this framework

Teams are able to choose in context of the business and customer requirements. This should be more explicit in the document.

Make it more explicit an extra bullet point that there will be regional/country context operationalising policy following these principles.

Some of the language used in this can help reinforce the message. Thinking this through

Would it be mandatory for people to be working from home? There may be instances where colleagues could be required to work remotely, for example on certain days to support the effective management of British Council spaces.

### **Commitment to the environment**

- Flexible working will be part of our commitment to reduce our overall carbon footprint (travel, estates footprint, etc)

This is intended more about how we build this into discussions when things come up for review and not about measuring carbon footprint.

Making it more explicit in the document that this will have a knock on impact on other HR policies.

EDI perspective how we make inclusive decisions.

Job flexibility – jobs which can work independently and with less supervision are likely to be more senior roles and this could be seen as being discriminatory across pay bands and senior vs junior roles

Length of service: longer servicing employees may need help with new ways of working.

Stigmatizing flexible working: don't have colleagues saying that people who are not in the office are not working today. Language issue

Mentioning parents might be discriminating as non-parents may have carer responsibilities. The same could be applied to people with disability or mental health issues or disabilities. It should be everyone.

## Equality Screening and Impact Assessment

3. **Capturing information about the protected groups/characteristics** - Based on the notes of the discussion (section above), record here any potential for negative impact identified and any opportunity to promote equality, inclusion and good relations.

<b>Equality categories</b> (with prompts to guide full consideration)	<b>Potential for negative impact</b>	<b>Opportunity to promote equality, inclusion and/or good relations between different groups</b>
Different ages (older, middle-aged, young adult, teenage, children; authority generation; vulnerable adults)	Young people can be negatively impacted. Are in shared accommodation and don't have enough space. Affordability issue also for young people. Younger age categories can have lesser support network and can suffer from issues.	
Different dependant responsibilities (childcare, eldercare, care for disabled and/or extended family)	Calling out parents in particular may be discriminatory as lots of non-parents have caring responsibilities which are not children	Can give greater progression opportunities. Will enable access to wider opportunities if jobs are more flexible.
Disabled people (physical, sensory, learning, hidden, mental health, HIV/AIDS, other)	Reasonable adjustments in the workplace could be costly and discourage managers in giving flexibility.  Going to the office regularly can be a source of a support network for many colleagues which could be lost due to flexible working.  Will be difficult for mental health first aiders to reach out to people remotely.	Can give greater progression opportunities. Will enable access to wider opportunities if jobs are more flexible.  Finance is available to make it a level playing field i.e. equipment is made available at home for people with disabilities.  Reflect on the well-being index.  Allows colleagues with health conditions to access to medical support and appointments more easily
Different ethnic and cultural groups (majority and minority, including Roma people, people from different tribes/castes/clans)	In some cultures there is a stigma attached to working from home.	Can give greater progression opportunities. Will enable access to wider opportunities if jobs are more flexible.  Allows colleagues to extend visits to family in other countries by including a period of time for working

## Equality Screening and Impact Assessment

Equality categories (with prompts to guide full consideration)	Potential for negative impact	Opportunity to promote equality, inclusion and/or good relations between different groups
Different genders (men, women, transgender, intersex, other)		<p>Can give greater progression opportunities. Will enable access to wider opportunities if jobs are more flexible.</p> <p>Removes the environmental pressures from not having to go into the office. Not have to make the everyday social interactions that could be stressful.</p>
Different marital status (single, married, civil partnership, other)		
Different political views or community backgrounds (particularly relevant to Northern Ireland)		
Pregnancy, maternity, paternity and adoption (before/during/after)		Paternity and perception around fathers. Offers more flexibility to take on active childcare and support partners.
Different or no religious or philosophical beliefs (majority/ minority/ none)		Flexibility to allow colleagues to observe religious and cultural practices, holidays, events
Different sexual orientations (gay, lesbian, bisexual, heterosexual)		
Additional equality grounds (such as full-time/part-time working, language, geographical location, other <sup>4</sup> )	Jobs which can work independently and with less supervision are likely to be more senior roles and this could be seen as being discriminatory across paybands and senior vs junior roles	

<sup>4</sup> Any other categories people share that might impact on how the policy affects them.

## Equality Screening and Impact Assessment

<b>Equality categories</b> (with prompts to guide full consideration)	<b>Potential for negative impact</b>	<b>Opportunity to promote equality, inclusion and/or good relations between different groups</b>
	<p>Apply to all contract types</p> <p>Geographical location – expensive areas could mean fewer workers</p> <p>Move people to cheaper places? Is this a business decision about where we want to employ people? Be honest about decisions or potential decisions</p> <p>Bullet in philosophy to say it's NOT moving anywhere you like</p> <p>Decisions in recruitment on geographical locations? Recruitment panel bias – job can locate anywhere but in process it gets back to local/cost</p>	
<p>British Council values</p> <p>Open and committed</p> <p>Expert and inclusive</p> <p>Optimistic and bold</p>		

#### 4. Action Identified by Panel

## Equality Screening and Impact Assessment

Action identified by Panel	Agreed by Policy Owner (Yes/No)	Justification if not agreed	Date to be implemented	Confirmation of implementation
<p><b><u>Should this document be a framework or a more rigorous policy?</u></b></p> <p>The original idea was a framework, with regions operationalising it according to local context. However, if left to regions/units, the personality of the leader/unit will have an impact on what happens. It will be greatly influenced by the Country Director and their perspective.</p>	<p><b>This will need to be discussed and determined by HRLT</b></p>		<p><b>End of May 2021</b></p>	
<p><b><u>Making assessment of flexibility within roles more objective</u></b></p> <p>Job Index evaluation/agility Index can be helpful tool and used by trained professionals (HR) to determine what this is.</p> <p>Add job role index 'score' to job profiles.</p>	<p><b>Further discussion required</b></p> <p>Further work to understand how a process can be established (advice from Global Estates) and engagement with leaders in the Network to better understand how this would work in practice</p>		<p><b>End of May 2021</b></p>	
<p><b><u>Making assessment of flexibility within roles more objective</u></b></p>	<p><b>Further discussion required</b></p>		<p><b>Anticipate this as ongoing, updating</b></p>	

## Equality Screening and Impact Assessment

Add job role agility 'score' to job profiles.	(related to the above)		<b>job profiles as and when they are written or amended</b>	
<b><u>Language of the document</u></b>  The language in the document can be more explicit and clearer around some areas e.g. clear that actions will be operationalised regionally/at a country level; that this links to other HR policies as well as things like finance, global estates etc...	<b>Agreed</b>		<b>End of May 2021</b>	
<b><u>Equality Screening of other associated policies</u></b>  The success of flexible working will depend on how a number of other policies adapted accordingly. Therefore, all these policies should also be equality screened	<b>Agreed</b>		<b>Ongoing as this will depend on when policies are reviewed and changes identified</b>	
<b><u>Core Hours</u></b>  Should be removed as a global standard. In the context of the current situation with many roles being global, it does not make sense to stipulate standard working hours.	<b>Further discussion required</b>  Core time is part of our current flexitime policy. It will have a policy owner in the CoE, and any proposal to change/amend would need to be consulted on with PCS.		<b>This will likely take a few months to facilitate</b>	
<b><u>Length of service</u></b>				



## Equality Screening and Impact Assessment

Employees with longer tenure may need help with new ways of working and this will need to be managed sensitively	<b>Agreed</b>		<b>End of May 2021</b>	
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### 5. Sign off by policy owner

I confirm that the policy has been amended as identified in the **Agreed actions** table above.

If the policy has an impact on people or functions in Northern Ireland, I confirm Annex A has also been completed.

Lisa Paniccia-Brown (Name)      Global Director Organisational Effectiveness and People Insight (Role)      29 April 2021 (Date)

### 6. Record keeping

The Policy Owner (or their agent) must email the completed ESIA form to [ESIA@britishcouncil.org](mailto:ESIA@britishcouncil.org).

# Equality Screening and Impact Assessment

## ANNEX A

### POLICIES WITH AN IMPACT IN NORTHERN IRELAND

In accordance with the Guide for Public Authorities, policies which have a MAJOR impact on equality will share some of the following factors:

- they are deemed to be significant in terms of strategic importance;
- the potential equality impacts are unknown;
- the potential equality and/or good relations impacts are likely to be adverse or experienced disproportionately by groups who are marginalised or disadvantaged;
- the policy is likely to be challenged by a judicial review;
- the policy is significant in terms of expenditure.

Policies which have a MINOR impact on equality will share some of the following factors:

- they are not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential differential impact is judged to be negligible;
- aspects of the policy are potentially unlawfully discriminatory but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making the changes identified in the action points at Section 4;
- any differential equality impact is intentional because the policy has been designed specifically to promote equality for particular groups of disadvantaged people;
- by amending the policy there are opportunities to better promote equality, inclusion and/or good relations.

Policies which have NO impact on equality will share some of the following factors:

- they have no relevance to equality, inclusion or good relations;
- they are purely technical in nature and have no bearing in terms of the impact on equality, inclusion or good relations for people in different equality groups.

For policies impacting on people or functions in Northern Ireland, you must identify whether any of the issues identified by the EIA panel in the table at Section 3 are likely to have a MAJOR, MINOR or NO impact on equality. This consideration must be given to all the items listed in the table at section 3 whether they have potential for negative impact or the opportunity to promote equality, inclusion and good relations.

Equality categories	Negative/Positive impact on equality, inclusion or good relations		
	NO	MINOR	MAJOR
Age		X	
Dependants		X	
Disability		X	
Ethnicity		X	
Gender		X	
Marital status		X	
Political opinion		X	
Religious belief		X	
Sexual orientation		X	

If the answer to the above questions is NO, no further action is needed.

# Equality Screening and Impact Assessment

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If MINOR impact is identified and the actions listed at Section 4 will address this, no further action is needed. Where the actions listed at Section 4 will not sufficiently address the impact, additional measures that might mitigate the policy impact as well as alternative policies that might better achieve the promotion of equality of opportunity and/or good relations should be considered. If mitigating measures and/or an alternative approach cannot be taken then the policy should be subject to full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) aligned to Northern Ireland's equality legislation.

If a MAJOR impact is identified in any of the answers above then the policy should be subject to full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) aligned to Northern Ireland's equality legislation.

*For guidance on completing full EQIA aligned to Northern Ireland's equality legislation, see <http://www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/S75GuideforPublicAuthoritiesApril2010.pdf>.*

A member of the Diversity Unit should be involved in any EQIAs that take place.

**RECORD OF DECISION AND SIGN OFF BY POLICY OWNER:** *(please delete 2 of the following statements)*

I confirm that a full EQIA is not needed, providing all the Agreed actions at Section 4 and/or other noted mitigating actions are carried out.

**Signed by:**

<u>Lisa Paniccia-Brown</u> (Name)	<u>Global Director Organisational Effectiveness and People Insight</u>
(Role)	<u>29 April 2021</u> (Date)

## RECORD KEEPING

The Policy Owner (or their agent) must email the completed ESIA form to [ESIA@britishcouncil.org](mailto:ESIA@britishcouncil.org).