



<b>Service area</b>	Internal Service Area/Priority 3 of HDC Corporate Plan 2023-2028
<b>Date of assessment</b>	28 May 2024
<b>Name of policy/service to be assessed</b>	The Renewal of HDC Workforce Strategy
<b>Is this a new or existing policy/service?</b>	Existing Policy to be updated
<b>Name of manager responsible for new or amended policy/service</b>	Nicki Bane - Strategic HR Manager
<b>Names of people conducting the assessment</b>	Nic Harpham – HR Manager, Projects
<b>Step 1 – Description of new or amended policy/service</b>	
<p>Describe the aims; objectives and purpose of the new or amended policy/service (include how it fits into wider aims or strategic objectives).</p> <p><b>Resources referenced:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Direct discrimination - Discrimination at work - Acas</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">About Workplace Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion - Employers Network for Equality &amp; Inclusion (enei.org.uk)</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Terms used in the Equality Act   EHRC (equalityhumanrights.com)</a></li> </ul>	<p>The primary aim of renewing the council's workforce strategy is to ensure the organisation's policies, practices, and procedures related to workforce management are equitable, inclusive, and aligned with the council's values (iCare values) and strategic objectives (HDC's Corporate plan 2023 - 2028).</p> <p>The purpose of renewing the Workforce Strategy is to set out how the council will equip and develop its workforce so that it meets the needs of Huntingdonshire's residents.</p> <p>The key objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To review and update the existing workforce strategy to reflect changes in legislation, best practices, and the council's evolving priorities.</li> </ul>



- To identify and address any potential barriers or disparities in recruitment, attraction and retention, development, and progression of employees from diverse backgrounds.
- To foster a workforce culture that promotes equal opportunities, values diversity, and supports the well-being and professional growth of all employees.
- To ensure the council's workforce is representative of the local community it serves and can effectively meet the needs of residents.
- To embed principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion throughout the council's human resource management processes and workforce planning.
- The updated workforce strategy will provide a comprehensive framework to guide the council's approach to managing its workforce, with the ultimate purpose of creating a fair, inclusive, and high-performing organisation that delivers excellent services to the community.

Cultivating an organisational culture that celebrates diversity, supports employee wellness, and enables professional development will increase employee engagement, morale, and retention. This demonstrates the council's commitment to fairness and support for all employees, which can foster higher levels of trust, job satisfaction, and engagement.



<p>The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, the Council also needs to demonstrate its compliance with the Equality Duty. The Council, therefore, needs to understand how its decisions and activities impact on different people. An Equality Impact Assessment is the current method by which the Council can assess and keep a record of the impact of new or amended strategies, policies, functions, or services. The council retains these duties even when outsourcing services or providing shared services.</p> <p><i>Definition of Adverse Impact - occurs when a decision, practice, or Policy has a disproportionately negative effect on a protected group. Adverse Impact may be unintentional.</i></p>	
<p>Are there any (existing) equality objectives of the new/amended policy/service</p>	<p>Previous data not available.</p>
<p>Who is intended to benefit from the new/amended policy/service and in what way?</p>	<p>The renewed council's workforce strategy is intended to benefit the local community, its workforce, and the economy in several ways:</p> <p><b>Residents:</b> The strategy aims to improve employment opportunities and job training for local residents. This can help increase incomes, reduce unemployment, and enhance the overall economic well-being of the community.</p> <p><b>Businesses:</b> The strategy seeks to attract and retain businesses in the area by developing a skilled and reliable workforce. This can lead to more job creation, economic growth, and investment in the local economy.</p> <p><b>Public Services:</b> A well-trained and capable workforce can also improve the delivery of public services, such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure maintenance. This can enhance the</p>



	<p>quality of life for residents and make the community more attractive to potential residents and businesses.</p> <p><b>Underrepresented Groups:</b> The strategy will include inclusive initiatives to support the employment and career advancement of underrepresented groups, such as minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities. This can promote greater equity and inclusion in the local job market.</p> <p><b>HDC Workforce:</b> The comprehensive framework provided by the renewed workforce strategy will guide the council’s approach to managing its workforce, to create a high-performing organisation that delivers excellent services to the community. This will translate into increased job satisfaction, morale, and engagement among the workforce, as they will feel their contributions are valued and that the council is invested in their professional growth and well-being.</p> <p>The ultimate goal of the updated workforce strategy is to create a thriving, diverse, and sustainable local economy that benefits all members of the community. By focusing on workforce development, HDC aims to improve economic opportunities, strengthen businesses, and enhance their residents' overall quality of life.</p>
<p>What are the intended outcomes of this new/amended policy/service?</p>	<p>The council's updated workforce strategy aims to achieve the following key outcomes:</p>



	<p><b>Attract and Retain Top Talent:</b> The strategy focuses on improving the council's ability to attract, develop, and retain highly skilled and motivated employees across all departments. This includes competitive compensation, better benefits, and enhanced professional development opportunities.</p> <p><b>Enhance Workforce Diversity and Inclusion:</b> The strategy establishes clear diversity and inclusion targets, intending to create a workforce that better reflects the diversity of the local community. This includes initiatives to improve recruitment, mentorship, and leadership opportunities for underrepresented groups.</p> <p><b>Develop Future-Ready Skills:</b> The strategy invests in upskilling and reskilling programs to ensure the council's workforce has the digital, analytical, and problem-solving capabilities needed to adapt to evolving service delivery requirements and technological changes.</p> <p><b>Promote Employee Well-being and Engagement:</b> The strategy introduces a wellness framework with inclusive accessible wellness programs, continued flexible work arrangements, and better promotion of mental health support to improve overall employee satisfaction, productivity, and work-life balance.</p> <p><b>Streamline Workforce Planning:</b> The strategy improves workforce planning processes to better anticipate future staffing needs, identify</p>
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	<p>skills gaps, and proactively address workforce challenges through data-driven decision-making.</p> <p><b>Foster a Culture of Innovation:</b> The strategy encourages a more entrepreneurial and innovative mindset among employees, intending to develop new service delivery models, optimise internal processes, and drive continuous improvement.</p> <p>Overall, the updated workforce strategy aims to position the council as an employer of choice, enhance organisational agility and resilience, and ensure the workforce is equipped to meet the evolving needs of the community.</p>
<p><b>Step 2 – Data</b></p>	
<p>What baseline <b>quantitative data (statistics)</b> do you have about the function relating to equalities groups (e.g., monitoring data on proportions of service users compared to proportions in the population), relevant to this new/amended policy/service?  <a href="#">Huntingdonshire Statistics</a></p>	<p><b>Internal Quantitative data (statistics)</b>                  Data on the demographic composition of its current workforce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attainable Monthly Headcount statistics to ascertain employee engagement through staff participation in project activities, delivery, and implementation of the workforce strategy.</li> <li>• Monthly absence reporting will work with attainable monthly headcount to identify employee engagement measures.</li> <li>• Recruitment, applicant pools, hiring and promotion rates, and retention patterns.</li> <li>• Statistics on grades broken down by age and gender to ensure diverse participation, impact, and results among staff.</li> </ul>



- Statistics on different work arrangements including part-time, job share, term-time, variable hours, annualised hours, full-time, homeworkers, and compressed hours to support inclusivity and participation in pre- and post-project delivery.
- Workforce Disability declaration status for 2023

No	64.62%
Yes	10.50%
Not Known	1.29%
Not Declared	23.59%

**External Quantitative data (statistics)**

This data can be compared to census information and other reliable sources to identify any gaps or disparities in representation compared to the UK labour market population for benchmarking:

- Office for National Statistics (ONS)
- GOV.UK
- CIPD (Labour Market Outlook Reports)
- 2021 Census Topic Summary Highlights Presentation

What **qualitative data (opinions etc)** do you have on different groups (e.g., comments from previous consumer satisfaction surveys/consultation, feedback exercises, or evidence from other authorities undertaking similar work), relevant to this new/amended policy/service?

**Internal Qualitative Data**

- Project Board Group set-up and regular collaboration with the Project Manager (includes CEO, HR SME – Strategic HR Manager, Project Sponsor - Chief Operating Officer - COO Division)



- Collaboration and input from HDC HR team (total of 14 HR SMEs - includes HR, Talent, L&D, and Payroll expertise).
- Employee Representative group and UNISON's interaction and feedback have been incorporated into the project delivery.
- Regular engagement with a number of staff who act as our Workforce Strategy Champions within the council.
- Active participation in the Employment Committee to stay well-informed.
- Test-piloting pre- and post-project activity to ensure communication, information is accessible and inclusive to all staff.
- Testing our initial thoughts with staff on the content of the workforce strategy and conducting interactive staff workshops throughout the council, spread across the three pillars that will help shape the recommendations in the renewal of the strategy.
  - Pillar One: Attraction & Retention
  - Pillar Two: Engagement
  - Pillar Three: Well-being
- HR maintain an up-to-date case management system of information regarding performance.
- HR routinely review Exit Questionnaires to highlight leavers who may have raised or been involved in employee-related issues.





**External Qualitative Data**

This data can be compared to census information and other reliable sources to identify any gaps or disparities in representation compared to the UK labour market population regarding collecting comparative organisational and staff feedback.

- Office for National Statistics (ONS)
- GOV.UK
- CIPD (Labour Market Outlook Reports)

**External Networking and Webinar Attendance**

Integrating qualitative data and insights from external SMEs, the council can develop a more holistic, community-centred workforce strategy that addresses the unique barriers faced by underrepresented groups. This collaborative approach will lead to more sustainable and impactful outcomes for the council's workforce and the Huntingdonshire community as a whole.

- Local Government Association (LGA)
- EEGLA
- Neighbouring Councils
- Operational/HR SMEs

The project will invest the necessary time and resources into this data collection and assessment phase to ensure the renewed strategy is truly informed by the needs and experiences of all members of the council.



<p><b>Age</b> – this refers to the protected characteristic of age. A person belonging to a particular age (for example 32-year-olds) or range of ages (for example 18- to 30-year-olds).</p> <p>Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic?</p> <p>Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic?</p> <p>For some services, this should include consideration of impact in terms of safeguarding young people.</p> <p>What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The policy or service changes could have a differential impact on individuals of certain age groups, such as younger workers (e.g., 18-30 years old) or older workers (e.g., 50+ years old). For example, new training or development opportunities may be more geared towards younger or middle-aged workers, potentially excluding or disadvantaging older workers.</li> </ul> <p><b>Concerns</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognising those entering employment for the first time, e.g., apprentices may require additional support to adapt to workplace culture, particularly post-COVID working.</li> <li>• Workforce planning and succession strategies may focus more on recruiting and retaining younger workers, potentially making it more difficult for older workers to find new roles or progress within the organisation.</li> <li>• Changes to pension policies, retirement age, or other benefits could disproportionately impact older workers nearing retirement.</li> <li>• Certain job roles or responsibilities may be seen as more suitable for particular age groups, leading to indirect discrimination.</li> <li>• N/A. The council incorporates a Disclosure Barring Service (DBS check) to its policies and procedures to safeguard young people.</li> </ul> <p><b>Evidence</b></p>
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**Resources referenced:**

- [Understanding older workers | CIPD](#)
- [Age diversity | CIPD](#)
- [Strategic workforce planning: Guide for people professionals | CIPD](#)
- [Age-inclusive recruitment toolkit | CIPD](#)

- Review of workforce demographics and age distribution within the organisation, including trends over time.
- Feedback from the employee engagement groups, highlighting age-related concerns, or issues.
- Benchmarking data from similar organisations on age-related workforce policies and their impacts.
- Analysis of talent management, training, and succession planning data has identified age-related disparities in the operational areas of the council.
- Engagement with ERG group, UNSION, and other stakeholders regarding potential age-related concerns during pre-project delivery work.

**Conclusion:** Based on the potential concerns and available evidence, it will be important to carefully consider the potential age-related impacts to any new policy/service amendments of the proposed workforce strategy changes.

The outcome of the action plan will help mitigate and identify the policy or service does not inadvertently disadvantage or exclude individuals based on their age. The regular monitoring, review and evaluation of the strategy's implementation and outcomes will be crucial to identify and address any emerging age-related issues.

Continual review of relevant legislation, guidance, and good practice around age discrimination and equality in the workplace will be imminent.



<p><b>Disability</b> – this refers to the protected characteristic of disability. A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.</p> <p>Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic?</p> <p>Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic?</p>	<p>Overall, the key concerns are around ensuring those with disabilities are able to meet job requirements, and that the council is proactive in providing reasonable accommodations as needed.</p> <p><b>Concerns</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The assessment highlights that an employee with a disability may not be able to meet the required standards for a job, which could present as a 'capability issue.' This suggests a potential barrier for those with disabilities in meeting job requirements.</li><li>• The council recognises its duty to consider making reasonable adjustments to support staff with disabilities. In such circumstances, consideration will be given to extending the performance review/monitoring period to allow sufficient time for the employee to meet the standards, and advice be sought from Occupational Health to see if any reasonable adjustments may be needed in either the workplace or the duties of the role to assist the employee to meet the required standards. This is a positive step to mitigate potential different actual impacts.</li><li>• HDC provides comprehensive mental health services and programs to support the well-being of local communities and its workforce. Through these varied programs, HDC plays a vital role in fostering positive mental health outcomes and building resilient, mentally healthy communities. With further planned expansions and enhancements to mental health</li></ul>
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<p>What evidence do you have for your answer?</p> <p><b>Resources referenced:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Disability at work   CIPD</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">How to support disability at work   Acas</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">FSB   Business Without Barriers</a></li> </ul>	<p>initiatives, this important work will only continue to grow and have an even greater impact.</p> <p><b>Need for Specific Evidence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thorough data collection and analysis on the experiences of disabled employees would be important to assess and address any issues properly.</li> </ul> <p>According to local census data, 6.1% of residents report having a disability that significantly limits their day-to-day activities. This presents an opportunity for HDC to further diversify their workforce in order to better represent the community it serves. HDC’s Equality Action Plan for 2023/24, as detailed in the Workforce Equality Profile Report confirms that this work is underway and will be presented at Employment Committee 26 June 2024.</p> <p><b>Conclusion:</b> Careful monitoring and inclusive engagement with disabled employees will be important to identify and address any differential impacts from the updated workforce strategy with ongoing evaluation of outcomes for disabled staff would be prudent.</p>
<p><b>Gender reassignment</b> – gender reassignment discrimination occurs when a person is treated differently because they are trans*.</p>	<p>The council should be alert to any instances where the updated workforce strategy could lead to trans employees being treated differently or unfairly compared to their cisgender colleagues.</p>



Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic?

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**Concerns**

- **UK employment law:** Must keep abreast of changes in the legal considerations and the protected characteristic of gender reassignment under the UK Equality Act.
- **Need for Inclusive Policies and Practices:** To avoid potential differential impacts, the council should ensure its updated workforce strategy, as well as related HR policies and procedures, are fully inclusive and supportive of employees undergoing gender reassignment. This could include things like clear guidelines on name/pronoun changes, leave policies, and workplace accommodations.
- **Workplace culture:** Creating safe and equal workplaces where everyone can thrive.
- **Employee lifecycle:** Ensuring inclusivity throughout employee tenure including recruitment, onboarding, and progression.
- **Inclusive language:** Encouraging employers to think 'additively' when referring to typically gendered areas of policy. Adding people in rather than taking anyone out.
- **Managing different views:** Recognising the right for people to hold and express different beliefs while drawing boundaries between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.
- **Supporting a transition:** Changes on how to support a colleague through their individual journey.
- **Managing performance:** Due to pre and post-op transgender reassignment could affect performance and is



<p>What evidence do you have for your answer?          *Although the term gender reassignment and transsexual are in the Equality Act 2010, it is accepted that the preferred term is trans.</p> <p><b>Resources referenced:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="http://cipd.org">Inclusion at work: Perspectives on LGBT+ working lives (cipd.org)</a></li> </ul>	<p>currently covered by the council’s <u>transgender and gender reassignment statement and guidance</u>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Absence:</b> Relating to gender reassignment may require specific expertise and support over and above standard procedures, recommendations would be to involve and refer to Occupational Health.</li> <li>• <b>Data management:</b> Ensuring privacy is paramount and that personal data is not shared unless there is explicit agreement or instruction.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Need for Specific Evidence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The assessment does not provide concrete data or feedback from trans employees on their experiences under the current or previous workforce strategies. Gathering this type of evidence would be important to properly assess if there are any differential impacts upon the implementation and delivery of the renewed workforce strategy.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Marriage and civil partnership</b> in the workplace; this refers to the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership which is a union between a man and a woman or between a same-sex couple. Civil partnership is between partners of the same sex. Discrimination is when a person is treated differently at work because a person is married or in a civil partnership.</p> <p>Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic?</p>	<p>Several key steps will need to be taken to ensure the policy development process continues to proactively consider the needs of married and civil partnered employees.</p> <p><b>Concerns</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Renewal of compensation reward and benefit packages:</b> Identify any potential disparities in areas like compensation,</li> </ul>



<p>Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic?</p> <p>What evidence do you have for your answer?</p> <p><b>Resources referenced:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/marriage-civil-partnership-discrimination">Marriage and civil partnership discrimination   EHRC (equalityhumanrights.com)</a></li> </ul>	<p>career progression, or workplace benefits that may be linked to marital/partnership status.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Policy changes:</b> Systematically evaluate the proposed policy changes to identify any potential differential impacts on married and civil partnered employees.</li> <li>● <b>Flexible working:</b> Continue to provide flexibility and accommodations to support the needs of married and civil partnered employees (e.g., family leave, workplace benefits).</li> <li>● <b>Language:</b> Ensure policy language is neutral and inclusive, avoiding assumptions about marital/partnership status.</li> <li>● <b>Communicate and train:</b> Embed into the workforce action plan for managers and staff who are in leadership/ supportive roles on recognising and preventing discrimination.</li> </ul> <p><b>Evidence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There are established mechanisms to track relevant metrics (e.g., recruitment, retention, promotion) by marital/partnership status and employee declaration in place.</li> <li>● Input and regular review of the policy’s implementation and impact by ERG, UNISON, and members take place at Employment Committee.</li> </ul> <p><b>Conclusion:</b> By proactively integrating reviews on external and internal workplace data that capture information about the marital/partnership status of the workforce can help identify the relative proportions of married, civil partnered, and single employees who may be affected.</p>
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<p>Are there concerns that the function could have a differential impact in terms of <b>pregnancy and maternity</b> in the workplace (e.g., pregnant, or breast-feeding women). Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.</p> <p>Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic?</p> <p>Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic?</p> <p>What evidence do you have for your answer?  <b>Resources referenced:</b></p>	<p>There are a few potential concerns regarding the impact of the council’s workforce strategy renewal and update on individuals with the protected characteristic of pregnancy and maternity.</p> <p><b>Concerns</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Performance issues:</b> May arise as a result of a member of staff who is pregnant. Appropriate risk assessments and plans are in place to support pregnant members of staff. Managers must pay due regard to the Equality Act 2010 and manage risks/actions on an individual basis. Support for managers is available from HR and O/H.</li> <li>• <b>Breastfeeding accommodations:</b> The council should ensure that appropriate facilities and accommodations are made available for breastfeeding employees, such as private lactation rooms and break times.</li> <li>• <b>Lack of awareness:</b> Regarding breastfeeding support in the workplace could lead to difficulties for new mothers and potentially discourage them from continuing to breastfeed.</li> </ul> <p><b>Evidence</b></p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Holidays, time off, sick leave, maternity and paternity leave - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Maternity, Paternity &amp; Adoption Rights   Factsheets   CIPD</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Incorporation of specific provisions and safeguarding is in place to protect the rights and support needs of employees with the protected characteristics of pregnancy and maternity, (e.g., these provisions consider the needs of employees taking maternity leave and support their continual smooth transition back to work with the flexible work arrangements, and protection against unfavourable treatment).</li> <li>● There are established mechanisms to track relevant metrics (e.g., recruitment, retention, promotion) by status and employee declaration in place.</li> <li>● Input and regular review of the policy’s implementation and impact by ERG, UNISON, and members take place at Employment Committee.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Race</b> – this refers to the protected characteristic of race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins. Gypsy/Travellers are a distinct group within this category.</p> <p>Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic.</p> <p>Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic?</p>	<p>The renewal of the workforce strategy is designed to continually eliminate discrimination and ensure fair and consistent treatment of all employees with the process.</p> <p><b>No impact identified.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Identification levels of ethnic diversity:</b> Is in place by using HR data and using this benchmark to explore and identify any structural and cultural barriers that are maintaining workplace inequalities.</li> </ul> <p><b>No impact identified.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Review of people processes:</b> To retain black and ethnic minority people are continual to identify barriers in career</li> </ul>



<p>What evidence do you have for your answer?</p> <p><b>Resources referenced:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Race Inclusion Reports: how organisations can support employees   CIPD</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Race inclusion report: Equality of career progression   CIPD</a></li> </ul>	<p>progression and ‘cliff edges’ where employees leave, to address these. Consideration of race equality through an intersectional lens is in place taking into account the combined effects of discrimination based on race, gender, or disability to tailor interventions that address multiple barriers and disadvantages.</p> <p><b>Evidence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Workforce Strategy delivery is set out to increase diversity and inclusion in terms of attracting a wider, more diverse talent pool and boosting innovation and customer service by developing a workforce that is more reflective of the organisation’s customer base and wider society.</li> <li>• Statistics are recorded to ensure no discrimination is occurring in particular groups.</li> <li>• All employees have access to the grievance procedure. This is additionally referred to, and documented in the employee induction, mandatory training, and HDC Staff Handbook.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Religion and Belief</b> in the Workplace - refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief.</p> <p>Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic.</p>	<p>The updated workforce strategy has considered the diverse religious and philosophical beliefs of council employees, including those who do not hold any religious beliefs.</p> <p><b>Concerns</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Specific religious practices:</b> Such as observance of Ramadan and fasting could impact the participation and outcomes of employees under the renewed workforce</li> </ul>



Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic?

What evidence do you have for your answer?

**Resources referenced:**

- ACAS (2018) [Religion or belief discrimination](#)
- EHRC (2016) [Religion or belief: a guide to the law](#)

strategy. This will need to be continuously assessed and proactively addressed.

- **Any changes to work hours, leave policies, dress codes, dietary requirements, or other aspects:** Could have a disproportionate impact on employees with certain religious or philosophical beliefs. Amendments to the policy should be carefully reviewed to ensure they do not inadvertently disadvantage or exclude employees based on their religion or beliefs.

**Evidence**

- Available demographic data on the religious/belief diversity of the council's workforce policies and procedures (includes the monitoring and review of the council's recruitment practices).
- Feedback and consultation with ERG and UNISON.
- Analysis of any complaints, grievances, or legal changes related to religion/belief discrimination in the council's past workforce policies.
- Available prayer/meditation rooms and time for religious observances.
- Work events are inclusive, (e.g., the provision of non-alcoholic drinks, range of foods, and the mindfulness of offsite locations) to ensure every employee enjoys the events.

**Recommendations:**

- Review of similar policies and assessments from other organisations to identify potential issues and best practices.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate training for new and existing managers to be aware of scheduling (adjusting work schedules) and leave (bereavement) for religious observances and available prayer/meditation facilities.</li> <li>• Consideration to the annual wellness calendar can incorporate religious holidays to support religious diversity at work.</li> <li>• Ensure employees are aware of how to report instances of bullying, harassment, or discrimination on the basis of religion or belief, <u>and feel able to do so</u> (this can be worked in partnership and championed by ERG and UNISON).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sex</b> - this refers to the protected characteristic of sex which can mean either male or female, or a group of people like men or boys, or women or girls.</p> <p>Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic.</p> <p>Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic?</p>	<p>Thorough data collection, stakeholder engagement and external benchmarking is incorporated into the pre project delivery plan to help build a robust evidence base action plan for the workforce strategy renewal, addressing the needs of all employees regardless of their sex or gender identity.</p> <p><b>Concerns</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Internal Communication:</b> Around the council’s training and development opportunities that may not be equally accessible. A large proportion of operational staff with limited/no IT access are male.</li> <li>• <b>Careful evaluation:</b> Of seemingly neutral adjustments will be required to ensure no exacerbation of existing disparities or the creation of new ones if the needs and experiences of diverse sexes and genders are not fully considered.</li> </ul>



<p>What evidence do you have for your answer?</p> <p><b>Resources referenced:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Sex discrimination   EHRC (equalityhumanrights.com)</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Gender equality at work   CIPD</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Gender pay gap reporting: UK employment law   CIPD</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>Evidence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Available workforce demographic data including representation, hiring, retention and advancement by sex and gender, (review, monitor, and reporting of Gender Pay Gaps).</li> <li>• Benchmarking against industry organisation data on workforce equity indicators (incorporated in the pre/post-delivery project stage in each of the pillars).</li> <li>• Capturing employee satisfaction survey, focus groups, and staff feedback experiences of different sexes and genders in the pre/post-delivery renewal stage of the workforce strategy.</li> <li>• Comms Communication planning incorporated into the workforce strategy project plan to promote accessibility and inclusivity.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sexual orientation</b> – this relates to whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.</p> <p>Are there concerns that the new policy/service could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic.</p> <p>Are there any concerns that the policy/service amendments could have a differential impact on individuals with this protected characteristic?</p>	<p>Updating the workforce strategy takes a neutral, equitable approach to workforce management. There is no indication that the renewed workforce strategy will deviate from these established principles.</p> <p><b>No impact identified.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The renewed workforce strategy does not have a differential negative impact on individuals based on their sexual orientation. The updated strategy focuses on workforce planning, training and development which should be equitably applied regardless of sexual orientation.</li> </ul> <p><b>No impact identified.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amendments to the workforce strategy focus on updating processes and procedures rather than introducing new</li> </ul>



What evidence do you have for your answer?

**Resources referenced:**

- [Stonewall \(2018\) LGBT in Britain – Work Report](#)
- GEO and Mordaunt, P. (2018) [LGBT Action Plan 2018: Improving the lives of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people](#)

elements that could disproportionately affect LGBTQ+ employees.

- The updated policy is designed to be inclusive and supportive of all employees.

**Evidence**

- The review of the proposed amendments did not identify changes that would uniquely impact employees based on their sexual orientation.
- Continual review and strengthening of anti-discrimination policies will continue to apply whereby the updated strategy has clear, unambiguous language prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.
- Management training will provide allyship and LGBTQ+ awareness, (will include coaching on unintended biases around recruitment/hiring practices) equipping managers to ensure they implement and lead people management practices compassionately and fairly and understand how to support and champion trans staff equality and inclusion.

**Recommendation**

- Form and work with LGBT+ staff networks in a positive and active way, ensuring a two-way dialogue. Utilise staff insight and expertise to evaluate and integrate LGBT+ equality, diversity and inclusion change into people policies, processes, performance management and organisation culture.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within the wellness framework incorporate a well-resourced education campaign to raise awareness.</li> </ul>
<p>Are there concerns that the function could have a differential impact on <b>part-time/full-time</b> employees?</p> <p>What evidence do you have for your answer?</p> <p><b>Resources referenced:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Part-time workers' rights - Part-time workers - Acas</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>Concerns</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Gender representation in part-time work:</b> We recognise that more female employees work part-time than male employees.</li> <li>• <b>Potential for poorer outcomes for part-time workers:</b> Further analysis may need to be undertaken to find out if there is a tendency for those working part time achieve poorer outcomes than those who work full-time.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Need for further Evidence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyse performance metrics, career progression, and other relevant outcomes for part-time vs. full-time employees, disaggregated by gender.</li> <li>• Conduct employee surveys/focus groups to understand the experiences and perceptions of part-time workers regarding the council's policies and support.</li> <li>• Consult with ERG and UNISON to gather insights on the challenges faced by part-time workers.</li> </ul>
<p>Are there concerns that the function could have a differential impact in terms of specific characteristics of Huntingdonshire e.g., <b>Rural isolation.</b></p>	<p>Huntingdonshire is a predominantly rural district, with a significant portion of the population living in small villages and towns outside the main urban centres. This rural isolation can present some unique challenges that may need to be considered in the updated workforce strategy:</p>





- **Recruitment and retention:** The council may face challenges in recruiting and retaining skilled staff in rural locations, as there may be a smaller pool of qualified candidates and fewer amenities, or career progression opportunities compared to urban areas.
- **Digital connectivity:** Rural areas in Huntingdonshire may have poor access to high-speed internet and digital infrastructure, which could hinder the council's ability to implement digital/remote working initiatives or provide online training and development opportunities.
- **Access to services:** Residents in rural areas may have limited access to public transportation making it difficult for them to commute to jobs, access training and development opportunities, or utilise support services provided by the council. This could disproportionately impact certain demographic groups, such as the elderly, low-income individuals, or those without access to private vehicles.
- **Specialised services:** Certain specialised services or functions may be more challenging to deliver equitably across rural areas, potentially leading to a differential impact on residents in these locations.

**Resources referenced:**

- [Health and wellbeing in rural areas \(local.gov.uk\)](http://local.gov.uk)

**Evidence**

To address these concerns, the council's pre project delivery activities in each pillar will be able to:

- **Assess** the specific needs and challenges faced by employees and residents in rural parts of Huntingdonshire.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Implement</b> targeted recruitment, training, and retention efforts to attract and support staff in rural locations.</li> <li>• <b>Invest</b> in improving digital connectivity and infrastructure to enable remote/hybrid working and access to online services.</li> </ul> <p><b>Conclusion</b> By taking a nuanced, place-based approach, it will help ensure that the updated workforce strategy does not inadvertently disadvantage or overlook the needs of rural residents in Huntingdonshire.</p>
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### Findings

The Equality Impact Assessment was conducted to evaluate the potential impacts, both positive and negative, that the proposed updates to the council’s workforce strategy could have on individuals and groups with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. The assessment looked at areas such as recruitment, retention, career development, and workforce diversity.

### Key Findings

- The strategy aims to increase diversity and representation at all levels of the council. This is a positive step towards addressing any historical underrepresentation of certain groups.
- Engage and invite input from staff with lived experience to support the effectiveness of renewed policies and procedures and implementation of the updated strategy, improving the terminology/language used within the workplace, role modelling and accountability at all levels championing HDC’s iCare Values.
- Proposed internal communication enhancement regarding available training and development opportunities to help ensure equal access to career progression for employees from diverse backgrounds.
- The strategy’s focus on flexible and hybrid working in an evolving post-COVID climate, factoring the needs of employees with disabilities or caring responsibilities.



- Suggestions to strengthen monitoring data and data collection, to better understand the experiences and outcomes for employees with protected characteristics.

The pre and post project delivery will help ensure that the updated workforce strategy supports a diverse and representative workforce, reflective of the community the council serves and that all staff have the ability to develop their skills and talents, work in a safe and inclusive environment, be fairly rewarded for their work, and have a voice within the organisation.

### **Recommendations**

- Incorporate clear diversity targets and accountabilities into the strategy, with progress reported regularly, e.g., continue to monitor and report statistics to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Members at Employment Committee and staff when comparing key metrics retention rates/engagement scores to baseline data and measuring success to evaluate updated strategy effectiveness.
- Engage, seek input and feedback from employees to ensure the renewed workforce strategy has fully embedded inclusive design principles.
- Encourage staff to be involved in the implementation and delivery of the updated strategy to embed staff ownership.
- Provide unconscious bias training for all managers equipping them to lead their teams, follow policy, and follow fair and inclusive hiring processes to mitigate potential discrimination.
- Expand on data collection and analysis to better understand the experiences of underrepresented groups in the workforce.
- Reflecting HDC Community: Aligning HDC's Workforce with Local Demographics. Proactively analyse workforce data and compare it to local population statics allowing HDC to identify any areas requiring more attention to targeted recruitment efforts. This transparency and commitment to workforce diversity can demonstrate HDC's dedication to equitable practices and better serving the mental health needs of all community members.
- Incorporate external networking to collaborate on and benchmark the review of similar policies and assessments from other organisations to identify potential issues and best practices.

Overall, the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) found that the proposed workforce strategy had the potential to deliver positive outcomes for workforce diversity and inclusion setting out how the council will equip and develop its workforce, so that it meets the needs of Huntingdonshire's residents, but recommended some key actions to further strengthen the strategy's equality considerations.