

HDC Due Regard (Equality Analysis)

Due Regard (Equality Analysis) is an on-going proactive process which requires us to consider the effect our decisions are likely to have on local communities, service users and employees, particularly those most vulnerable and at risk of disadvantage.

This template has been designed to assist in the collation of information and evidence required to support the ‘Due Regard’ process when introducing new policies/procedures/functions and services or reviewing existing ones.

Name of policy/procedure/function/service being analysed: Maternity and Adoption Policy

Department and section: Human Resources

Name of lead officer: Ailie Rowlands / Elaine Griffin

Other people involved (assisting or reviewing – including any service users or stakeholder groups etc.): Rebecca Jenner

Date assessment completed: November 2021

Step 1: Defining the policy/procedure/function/service

Is this a new, amended, or reviewed policy? What are the aims, objectives and purpose and how will they be achieved? What are the main activities and which communities are likely to be affected by these activities? What are the expected outcomes?

The maternity and adoption policy is intended to clearly set out the rights, benefits, and options available to expectant and new mothers and those adopting children and to:

- comply with National Conditions of Service and employment legislation
- provide transparent information regarding benefits, rights, and procedures
- ensure consistency across the Authority
- ensure compliance with Health & Safety requirements

The policy is an internal policy for use by expectant and new mothers and those employees adopting children.

Step 2: Data collection & evidence

What relevant evidence, research, data, and other information do you have and is there any further research, data, or evidence you need to fill any gaps in your understanding of the potential or known effects of the policy on different communities? Include quantitative data as well as qualitative intelligence such as community input and advice.

Up until now equality monitoring in respect of the impacts of employment policies has been based on staff being sent a link to a survey monkey questionnaire when they have invoked a policy, or they were subject to the formal stages of a policy. Completion of the survey is voluntary and therefore the completion rate has been inconsistent. Unfortunately, this has resulted in little useable data, due to the limited number of responses received, and therefore the accuracy of analysis being flawed. To try and address this, the Human Resources team will now start monitoring policy use against the equality data held on the recently introduced iTrent system. The Human Resources team

will continue to encourage the use of the system for recording of equality data and seek for improvements in the recording and monitoring of equality data, particularly, using the iTrent system.

The policy applies to all permanent Council employees and temporary employees who have been employed on successive temporary contracts for more than 12 months, we currently have a total of 209 employees. The total number of staff who have been subject to the Maternity and Adoption Policy over the last few years are: 2018/19 - 7 2019/20 - 5 2020/21 – 4.

The breakdown of our current workforce can be found in our latest [workforce comparison report](#). Currently, no data is available specifically relating to the breakdown of characteristics of those staff who are/have been subject to this policy.

The employment of this policy is connected to the eligibility of the employee in respect of maternity and adoption, notification, and service. The maternity policy is primarily used by women of childbearing age and the adoption policy is used by employees of all characteristics.

It is essential that Harborough District Council continues to keep its staff up to date with changes in legislation and benefits and continues to ensure that staff can understand the information that is published for this purpose. Informal feedback will continue to be gathered at one-to-one meetings, with those staff intending to utilise this policy, and this feedback should continue to inform changes to the policy where clarification is needed.

Step 3: Consultation and involvement

Have you consulted and if so, outline what you did and who you consulted with and why?

Unison, Human Resources Team, Equality and Diversity Officer

Step 4: Potential impact

Considering the evidence from the data collection and feedback from consultation, which communities will be affected and what barriers may these individuals or groups face in relation to Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Other groups e.g. rural isolation, deprivation, health inequality, carers, asylum seeker and refugee communities, looked after children, current and ex-armed forces personnel (Veterans), deprived or disadvantaged communities and also the potential impact on Community Cohesion. Remember people have multiple characteristics so the impact of a policy on a particular community may impact people within the community differently. Where possible include numbers likely to be affected.

We have no current organisational data to help us to identify potential impacts, however we have aimed to address this by making sure that our policy considers all characteristics. We believe that there are distinct benefits to maintaining a diverse workforce and it is important that all characteristics are represented within our organisation. The aim of the policy is to ensure that all employees are clear

with regards to their entitlements under this policy and that if an employee has a particular need due to a relevant protected characteristic, then adjustments will be made accordingly to ensure that they are not disadvantaged and do not miss out.

Age and gender – whilst the section of this policy focused on maternity will predominantly be used by female employees of childbearing age the remaining sections can be utilised by all other employees. Workforce statistics show that approximately two thirds of our employees are women and 40% of employees are aged 25-44 years. The average age for mothers in 2019 was 30.7 years (ONS data). Therefore, these employees are most likely to make use of this part of the policy. With regards to adoption, anyone over the age of 21 years can apply to adopt a child. There is no upper age limit. Only 6% of our employees are aged under 24 (we do not have a breakdown of those under 21) so the adoption part of the policy could be utilised by the vast majority of our employees.

Disability - Due to the complex nature of the policy we appreciate that it can be difficult to understand, and this may be more difficult for any employees with a learning disability, dyslexia etc. For this reason, as part of the policy, all individuals are invited to make an appointment with the Human Resources Department to discuss their options and intentions. The Human Resources Department also continue to work with the ICT and Communications Departments and the Equality and Diversity Officer in order to improve the online accessibility and readability of the policy and procedure. The policy is published on the intranet in an accessible format. This will also positively impact those employees who use English as a second language.

There are several policies which support this Maternity and Adoption Policy, and these include our Paternity Leave and Shared Parental Leave Policies. All of these policies are written on a gender-neutral basis which ensures that people are not disadvantaged due to their gender, gender reassignment or sexual orientation. This includes maternity leave which can also now be shared with a partner, regardless of sexual orientation.

There appear to be no direct impacts of race and religion or belief with regards to the policy, but this will need to be looked into further following analysis of the new monitoring usage measures and any feedback received by employees.

No employee data is kept regarding the socio-economic status of employees but as Harborough District Council's commitment to equality will be observed during the implementation of the policy all employees should be treated fairly and reasonable additional support offered if required. The Maternity and Adoption policy is designed to be fair to the employee.

Step 5: Mitigating and assessing the impact

If you consider there to be actual or potential adverse impact or discrimination, please outline this below. State whether it is justifiable or legitimate and give reasons. If you have identified adverse impact or discrimination that is illegal, you are required to take action to remedy this immediately. If you have identified adverse impact or discrimination that is justifiable or legitimate, you will need to consider

what actions can be taken to mitigate its effect on those groups of people. Consider what barriers you can remove, whether reasonable adjustments may be necessary and how any unmet needs have identified can be addressed.

We do not feel that there is any actual or potential adverse impacts of this policy, but we will use any information from feedback or monitoring to address any concerns which may arise. We also have a robust appeals and grievance structure which should help to highlight any potential disadvantage and bring it to our attention if necessary.

Step 6: Making a decision

Summarise your findings and give an overview of whether the policy will meet Harborough District Council’s responsibilities in relation to equality, diversity, and human rights. Does it contribute to the achievement of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty – eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations?

We have tried to ensure that the policy is easy to follow, fair and consistent with the aim that if followed correctly no employee will be treated more or less favourably than another unless there is justification for doing so. Therefore, we feel that this policy will help us to show due regard.

Step 7: Monitoring, evaluation & review of your policy/procedure/service change

What monitoring systems will you put in place to promote equality of opportunity, monitor impact and effectiveness, and make positive improvements? How frequently will monitoring take place and who will be responsible?

The Human Resources team will monitor policy use against the equality data held on the recently introduced iTrent system. They will continue to encourage the use of the system for recording of equality data and continue to look for improvements in the recording and monitoring of equality data, particularly through the use of the iTrent system.

Equality Improvement Plan

Equality Objective :

Action: The Human Resources team will monitor policy use against the equality data held on the recently introduced iTrent system. The Human Resources team will continue to encourage the use of the system for recording of equality data and continue to look for improvements in the recording and monitoring of equality data, particularly through the use of the iTrent system.

Officer Responsible: Elaine Griffin

By when: November 2023

Equality Objective :

Action:

Officer Responsible:

By when:

Signed off by: Rebecca Jenner – HR Manager



Date: 10th January 2022

Once signed off, please forward a copy for publication to Julie Clarke, Equality and Diversity Officer
e-mail: j.clarke@harborough.gov.uk , telephone: 01858 821070.