

Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EIA please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer or www.somerset.gov.uk/impactassessment

Organisation prepared for (mark as appropriate)	 Somerset Council	x	 NHS Somerset		 NHS Somerset NHS Foundation Trust	
Version	V 4		Date Completed	06.02.2025		
Description of what is being impact assessed						

Like many other councils, Somerset Council is facing an extremely challenging financial position with the cost of delivering services increasing significantly faster than the income received and the increase on demand for public sector services such as social care.

The Council aims to reduce its pay-bill by between £34m - £40m to help close the 25/26 budget gap whilst minimising the need for compulsory redundancies. This impact assessment will consider the equality impacts of the workforce transformation programme on employees.

Initial structures proposed by Service Directors were considered by the Design Authority Panel. Through discussions, blueprints of future proposed structures as of 1st April 2025 were formalised ready for consultation. Several principles to support this process were implemented by the Design Authority Panel in finalising proposed structures and to inform the people impact mapping.

Key objectives of the restructuring are outlined below.

1. Organisational design principle referred to as 6 x 6 rule was implemented to support in creating optimal structures and reduce hierarchy and management layers and increase spans of control (direct reports)
2. Managers having capacity to focus on people management and engage and lead their teams.

3. A shift towards digitalising services, increased use of AI, digital automation etc.
4. The restructure will involve a workforce reduction and there is not the expectation of staff to relocate.

People impact mapping

The people impact mapping used the following principles to determine proposed slots and ring-fencing.

- Work and/or role that the employee has been doing since vesting day.
- Work and/or role that the employee was/has been doing since pre-vesting day.
- Current salary and/or grade of the employee.
- Qualifications held by the employee and required for the post.
- Knowledge, skills, and experience required for the post and held by the employee.

This impact assessment considers the equality impacts of the restructuring on employees.

As at the time of initial staff consultation the total number of employees impacted by the proposed restructure across the Council was 641.

Staff consultation has informed a number of changes to proposed service structures, impacts of which are outlined in detail within service-level workforce Equality Impact Assessments. The Council is now in a position to confirm the final structure of the workforce which will be effective from 1st April 2025.

The total number of staff across the Council that will be impacted by this change is 388.

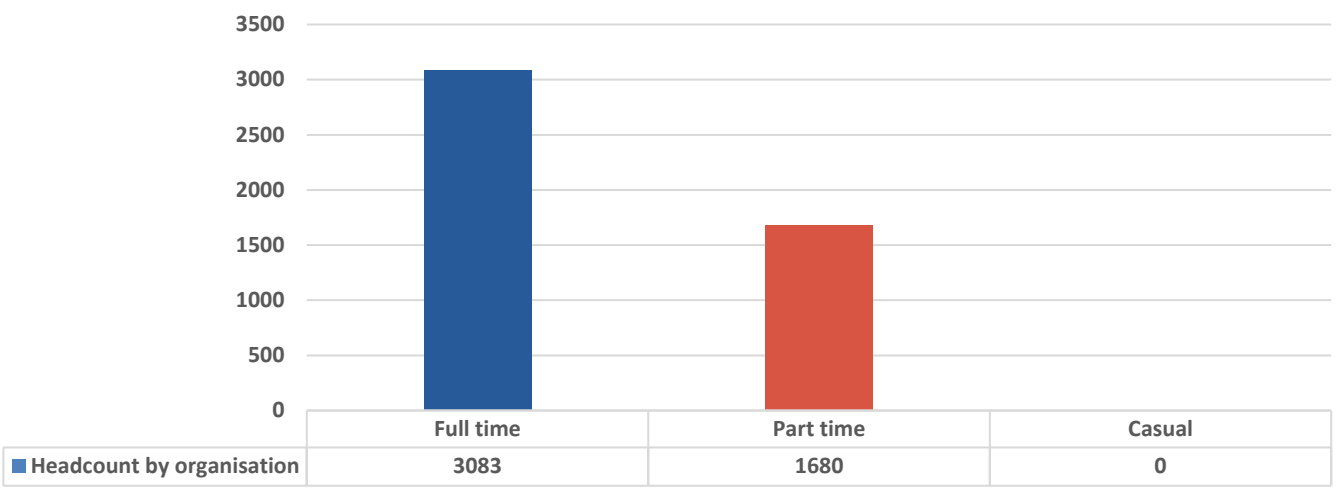
However, impacted staff numbers will be less due to opportunities in new structure and number of vacancies.

Evidence

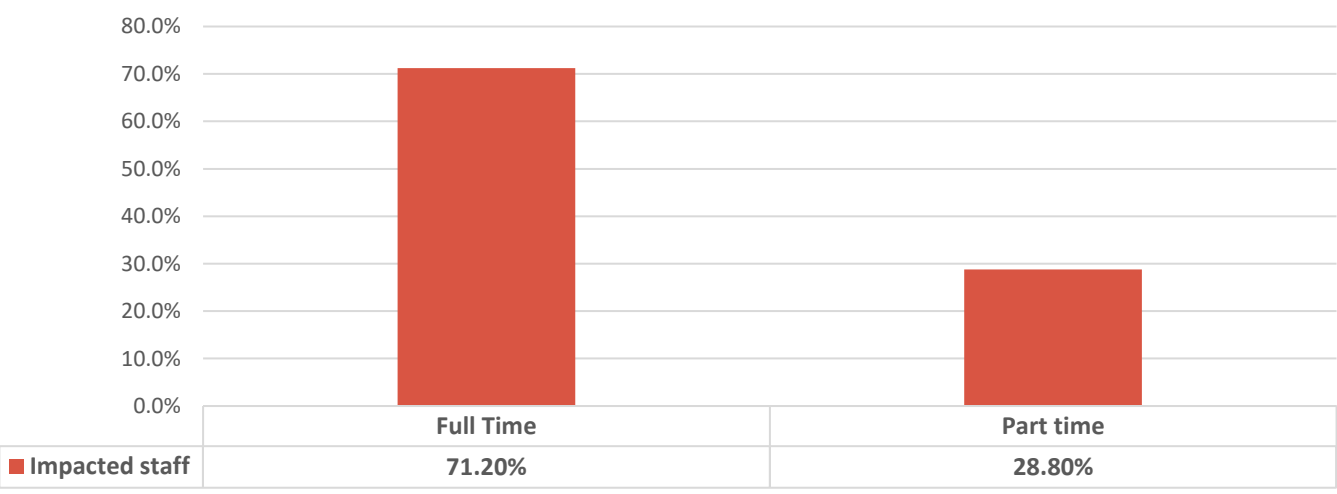
What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups?

Sources such as the [Office of National Statistics](#), [Somerset Intelligence Partnership](#), [Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis \(JSNA\)](#), Staff and/ or [area profiles](#), should be detailed here

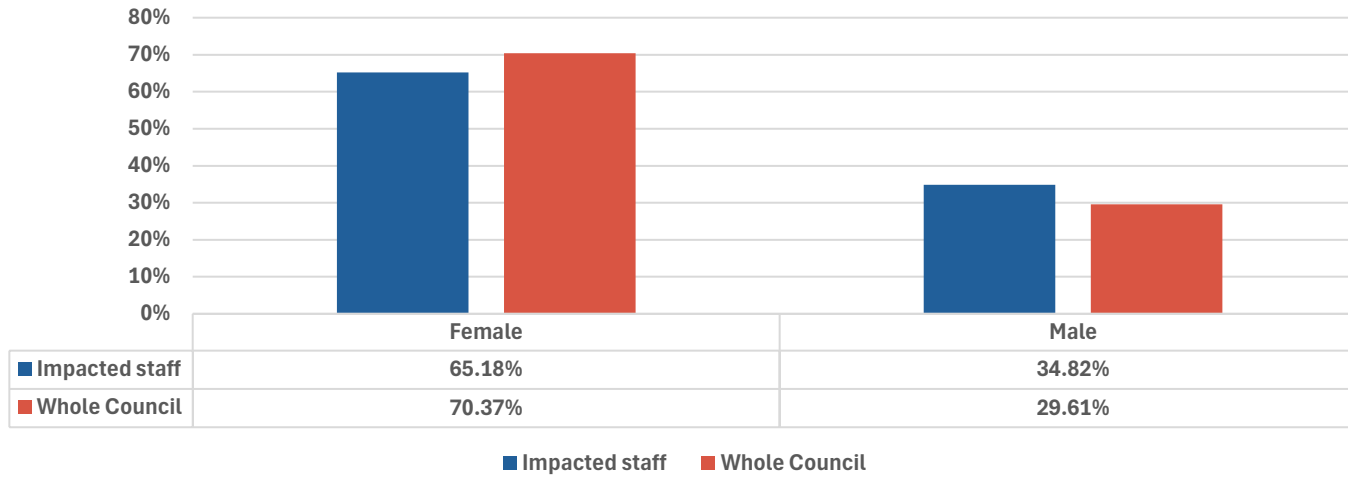
Headcount by Organisation



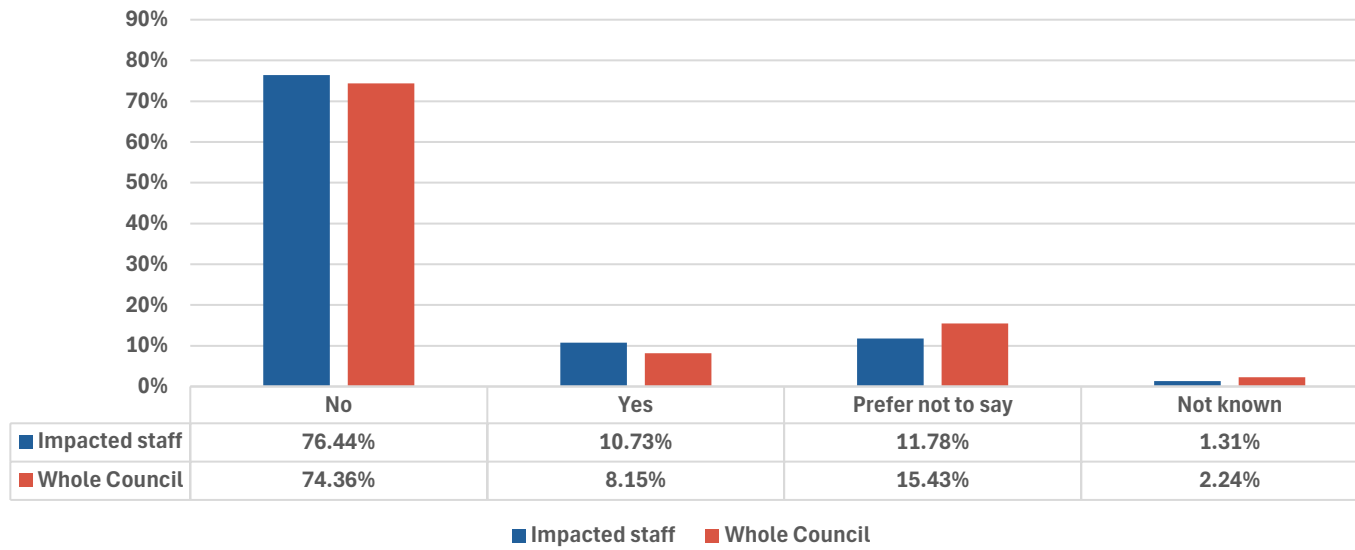
Impacted staff



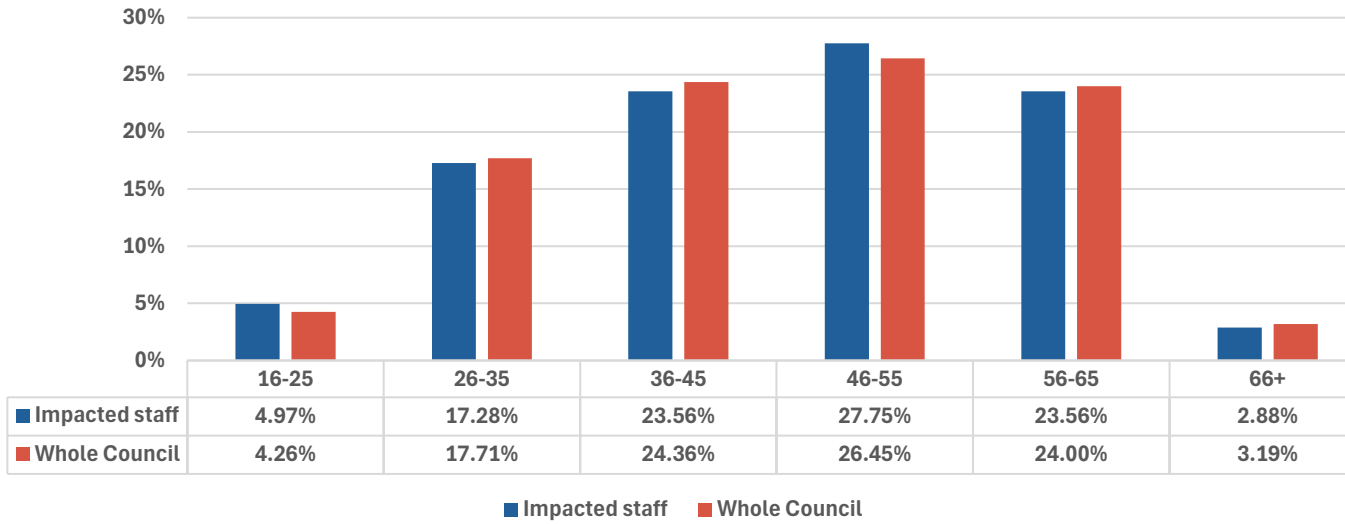
Sex



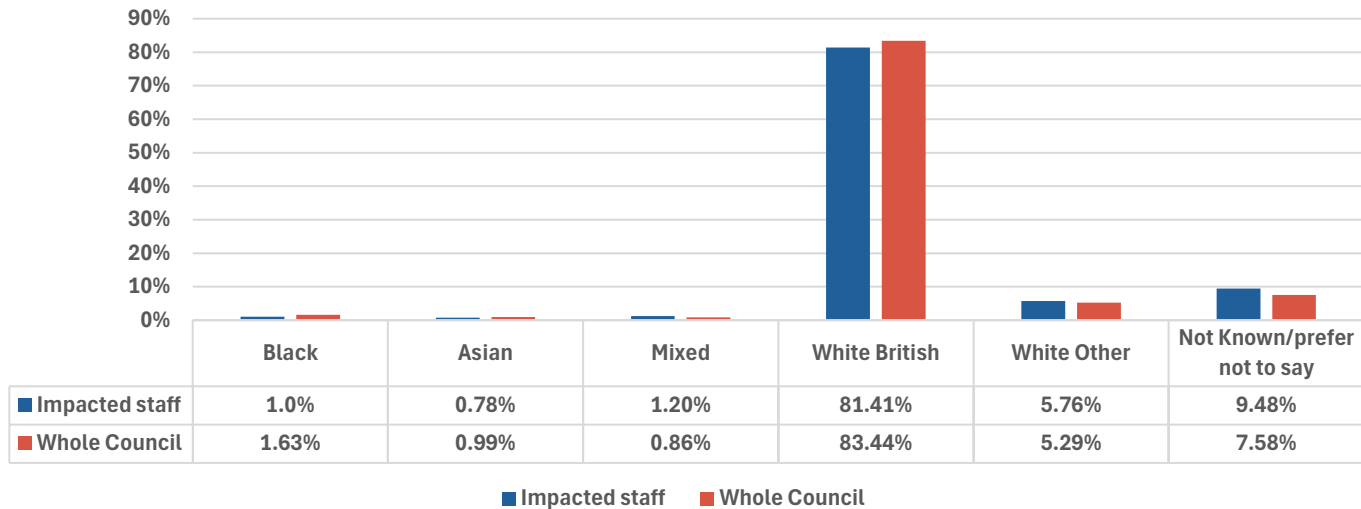
Disability



Age

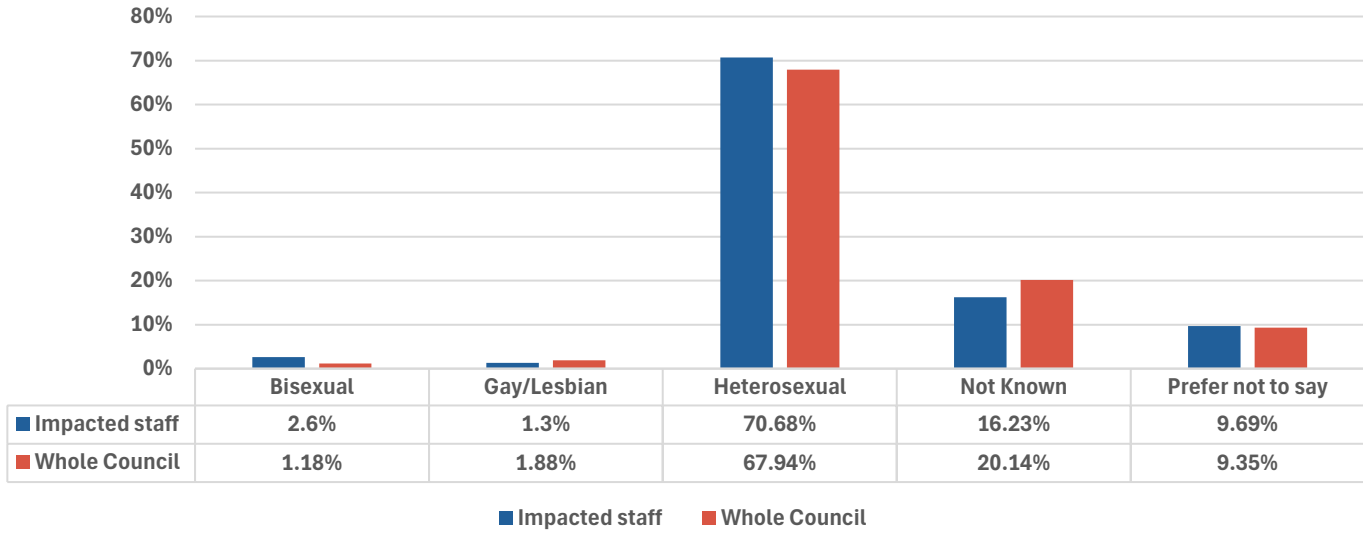


Ethnicity

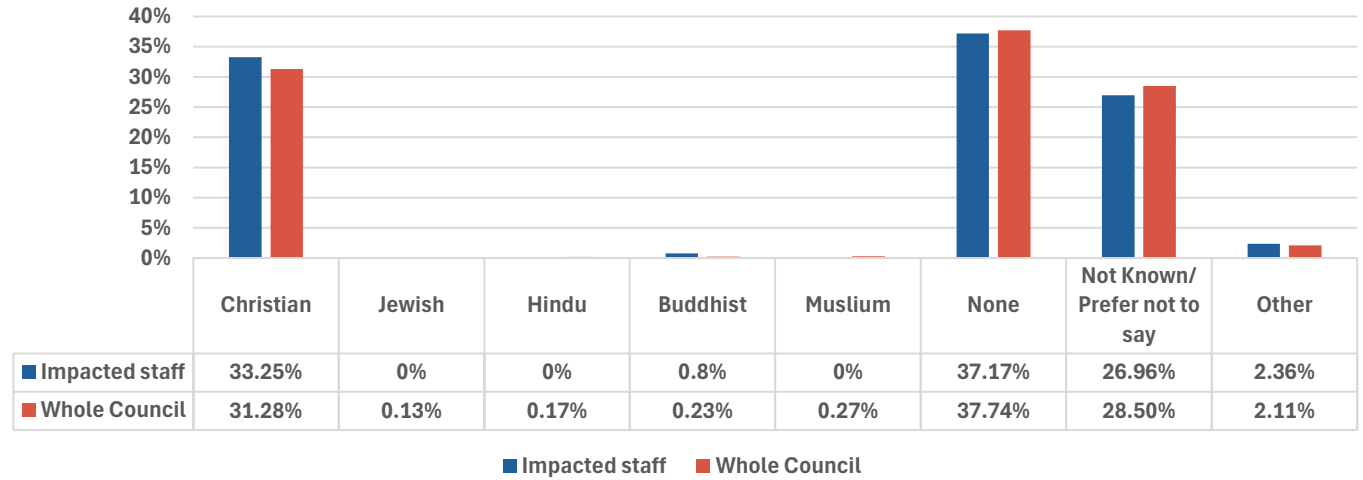


- Please note, 'prefer not to say' – 8.38% & unknown is 1.05%

Sexual Orientation



Religion



The data shows that the equality profile of those impacted is broadly in line with the workforce profile. Whole workforce data is as at December 2024. Impacted staff data is as at 20th January 2025.

Key points:

- 388 people impacted in total.
- Proportionately more employees who declared a disability are impacted when compared to whole workforce data.
- Proportionately fewer part-time employees (28.8%) are impacted when compared to whole workforce data (35.7%).
- The equalities data for impacted employees is broadly in line with the whole workforce equality data.
- No impacted staff declared themselves as identifying as transgender although 7.6% 'prefer not to say', 16.4% 'unknown' & 76% 'no'
- 2.39% of impacted staff declared being a Veteran or Reservist.

Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups and what have they told you? If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?

- Individual employees whose role may be placed at risk by the proposals were informed during the informal engagement stage that ran from 2 – 23 October 2024 (inclusive) and ahead of wider staff briefings/ team meetings.
- A 45-day formal consultation period commenced on 24th October 2024 & ended on Saturday 14th December following a 1-week extension.
- An additional period of consultation took place between 13 – 20 January for those adversely impacted by changes made following mid-point and end of consultation reviews of consultation feedback

- Trade union representatives were provided with a copy of the Overarching Business Case and the individual Service Business Cases on 17 October 2024. This was followed up by a formal consultation meeting with trade union representatives on 23 October 2024 to formally launch consultation. The 45-day consultation period began on 24 October 2024.
- Further meetings and updates with trade unions have taken place during the consultation period through the existing arrangements - Joint Consultative Forum, fortnightly People and Trade Union engagement meetings and the Joint Consultative Committees (JCC) that are in place for Children’s and Adults. There has also been a minimum of one meeting set up for each of the Directorates that did not have a JCC in place.
- Supporting people through change – HR/OD have consulted with all staff networks around required support during this period of change. Networks have requested timely, accessible communication and expressed their concerns around change & uncertainty.
- Design Authority Panel have consulted with the Equality Leads within the Council around staff and service impacts.

Analysis of impact on protected groups

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some employees who are older may have less recent experience of recruitment processes and feel disadvantaged/anxious by this prospect. 	☒	☐	☐

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some employees who are older and who face redundancy may be more anxious around finding new employment due to possible age discrimination. • Some employees who are older may have long public sector service and feel particularly anxious at the prospect of working outside of this sector. • Younger employees who are at the beginning of their careers have less experience of recruitment processes and may feel disadvantaged/anxious by this prospect. • Younger employees may feel particularly anxious and are likely to have never experienced a similar change process. • Some older employees may be less familiar with new IT packages such as artificial intelligence and may feel anxious surrounding this and may require additional training/support in upskilling/adapting to change. • Younger workers may feel more vulnerable due to the cost of their redundancy being lower. • If cost is used as a criterion to agree Voluntary Redundancies in ring-fence situations this could potentially disadvantage older workers as they would be more likely to have a higher redundancy cost. 			
<p>Disability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacted employees with disabilities are likely to feel more vulnerable and anxious at the prospect of finding new employment and potential disability discrimination from new employers. • Some employees with disabilities may require reasonable adjustments to take part in recruitment processes. • Employees with disabilities recruited through Pathways to Employment schemes e.g. Discovery, Mencap etc. may be unable to participate in traditional recruitment processes and require significant reasonable adjustments. This may include the support of an external coach. • Many employees who are neuro-diverse are very likely to struggle with the change process and the pace of the 	<p>⊗</p>	<p>□</p>	<p>□</p>

	<p>change. They are also likely to struggle to process the information they receive about the restructure process which may impair their ability to make informed decisions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More people with disabilities are impacted by the proposed changes. • Some people with some disabilities may be disadvantaged by the removal of grade 15 roles. The duties of grade 15 roles are sometimes more suited to some people with some disabilities such as learning disabilities. This particularly relates to those recruited through schemes such as Pathways to Employment, Discovery and Mencap. • The removal of any part time vacancies may discriminate against those with disabilities who require part-time work to support them as a reasonable adjustment. • Some employees with disabilities may experience greater anxiety about increased workloads because of the restructuring, which in some cases may be perceived and in other cases a reality. • Stress is known to exacerbate some health conditions which may affect some employees with disabilities. • Some employees with long-term health conditions and/or disabilities may be off on long-term sickness and may not receive information about the restructure proposals in a timely manner. 			
<p>Gender reassignment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees who are transgender and who face redundancy may be more anxious around finding new employment due to possible discrimination. • Employees who are going through gender reassignment and/or identify as transgender may experience increased anxiety/stress in a recruitment process due to needing to communicate with or being interviewed by people they may not know. The prospect of working with new managers and colleagues may also cause additional anxiety. 	<p>□</p>	<p>□</p>	<p>□</p>

Marriage and civil partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a large employer the Council has a number of employees who have civil partners or spouses who are also employed by the Council. These employees are likely to experience significant stress and/or anxiety particularly if both partners find themselves at risk of redundancy. 	□	□	□
Pregnancy and maternity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees who are pregnant or on family leave may feel more anxious surrounding the change process. Employees who are on family leave may not receive the relevant information or communication at the same time as other employees. There may be employees who we do not know are pregnant and therefore have not been afforded the protections that employment law provides. By using a service-by-service approach in the HR people impact mapping it is possible that family leave employees will not be afforded the protections that employment law provides as we may not identify opportunities for suitable alternative employment outside the employees' service. Employees who face redundancy may be more anxious around finding new employment due to possible discrimination 	☒	□	□
Race and ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees who have English as a 2nd language may find some communications challenging to understand due to use of technical or complex terminology. Employees who are new to the UK are likely to be less familiar with organisational restructuring in this country and may require additional support in understanding the processes involved. Employees who are new to the UK may be living alone and maybe more likely to have less family/friend support outside of work. 	☒	□	□

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some employees who are ethnically diverse and who face redundancy may be more anxious around finding new employment due to possible race discrimination 			
Religion or belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should any recruitment processes take place in March, employees observing Ramadam could be disadvantaged due to religious Observance. 	☒	☐	☐
Sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any removal of part time vacancies may discriminate against women who are more likely to be primary carers and work part-time. More women than men are impacted by this process. 	☒	☐	☐
Sexual orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees who face redundancy may be more anxious around finding new employment due to possible discrimination. 	☐	☐	☐
Armed Forces (including serving personnel, families and veterans)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The characteristic of armed forces has been considered and no impact has been identified. 	☐	☐	☐
Other, e.g. carers, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any removal of part time vacancies may discriminate against carers as they are more likely to work part-time hours or need the option to do so. Employees who live in low-income households will be significantly adversely impacted by redundancy. Impacted employees who live in low-income households are likely to experience significant stress. 	☒	☐	☐

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There could be a delayed financial impact on employees who are matched to lower graded jobs and who receive salary protection for a limited period. • Employees who are in low-income households and who may be in financial difficulty may be at risk of making decisions to deal with their immediate financial situation without fully considering the long-term implications. 			
--	--	--	--	--

Negative outcomes action plan
 Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

Action taken/to be taken	Date	Person responsible	How will it be monitored?	Action complete
<p>The creation of a 'Supporting Employees Through Change' sub-workstream. This includes several initiatives e.g. out-placement support & Planning Your Future roadshows. A sharepoint site has been set-up for employees and alternative communication formats have been sent to employees without IT access. The sharepoint site also includes information and signposting to support/resources around interview skills, completing application forms and updating CVs. All employees have received personal log-ons to access this range of support online and/or via a mobile app. Regular reminders of this resource will continue to be included in all communications.</p>	Ongoing	Clive Mallon/Comms Team	Ongoing through regular reviews	<input type="checkbox"/>

<p>To widen the review of suitable alternative roles across all service areas for employees protected under family leave employment law. This will identify redeployment opportunities at the earliest time.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>HR Service</p>	<p>Ongoing through regular reviews during the consultation process</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>To ensure all employees have opportunities to request and are provided with reasonable adjustments throughout the restructure process and as part of any potential recruitment and selection processes. Reasonable adjustments may include providing additional individual support to ensure employees are able to fully understand the change process and make informed decisions. Managers/Recruitment team to seek specialist ED&I advice from the Business Partner Workforce ED&I.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Line Managers/Recruitment Team</p>	<p>Regular reviews in workforce transformation meetings</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>To ensure all information and communications produced as part of the Workforce Transformation Programme are accessible, in plain English, use the corporate font and are delivered in a timely manner.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>HR/OD & Comms Team</p>	<p>Regular reviews of communications distributed & actioning feedback</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>To ensure all employees are aware of support available to them beyond that offered by the 'Supporting Employees Through Change' sub-</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>HR/OD & Comms Team</p>	<p>Monitoring of sickness absence, feedback and through regular workforce</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>

workstream. This would include Care First internal peer support and financial wellbeing webinars. This will be included in business cases and on the dedicated sharepoint site. This information will continue to be circulated in all communications and included in all Q&As.			transformation meetings	
Ensure any vacancies are considered for part-time and job-share arrangements.	Ongoing	Recruiting Managers	Through reviewing flexible working requests, applications for job-share/part-time hours & through feedback from staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
To consider appropriate training for employees seeking to upskill their IT knowledge/skills.	Ongoing	IT & HR/OD	Workforce Transformation regular meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>
To review and agree criteria for Voluntary Redundancy in ring fence situations where there may be more applications than can be accepted.	Ongoing	HR	Workforce Transformation regular meetings & in conjunction with recognised Trade Unions	<input type="checkbox"/>
Managers need to check in on the wellbeing of their teams, particularly those with known disabilities which may be exacerbated by the stress/anxiety caused by the restructuring. Managers should ensure they check in on the wellbeing of all staff as it	Ongoing	Managers	Through 1-2-1s, My Conversations and team check-ins	<input type="checkbox"/>

should be recognised that we may not be aware of all protected characteristics such as low-income or those with a partner or spouse impacted in a different service area.				
Ensure employees who are on long term absence, including sickness absence, family leave etc. are communicated with appropriately and in a timely manner.	Ongoing	Managers	Through HR/Manager regular discussions as part of the transformation programme	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff who are redeployed to lower graded posts and whose salary is protected for a limited period, will have clear communication surrounding when their salary protection will end.	Ongoing	HR/HRAP	This is already in place	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Reminding staff of peer support available through Employee Staff Networks.	Ongoing	HR/OD & Comms Team	Regular reviews of communications distributed & actioning feedback	
To ensure all members of recruiting panels attend an ED&I Recruitment Training session between 04/02/25 – 14/02/25.	February '25	HR/OD	Communication to all relevant staff, attendance will be monitored by the Business Partner - Workforce ED&I	
Where reasonable adjustments are considered to meet staffs' religious observance.	Ongoing	Managers	Ongoing through regular reviews	

If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.

It is acknowledged that for many employees included within the above protected characteristics the mitigation in place may not be sufficient to remove the additional stress and/or anxiety that significant change can bring. We will continue to review and adapt support as necessary throughout the delivery of the Workforce Transformation Programme.

Completed by:	Michelle Anderson
Date	06.02.2025
Signed off by:	Dawn Bettridge
Date	06.02.2025
Equality Lead sign off name:	Michelle Anderson
Equality Lead sign off date:	06.02.2025
To be reviewed by: (officer name)	Dawn Bettridge
Review date:	06.02.2025