

**SECTION 75 POLICY SCREENING FORM**

**Section 75 Statutory Equality Duties**

<http://www.equalityni.org/S75duties>

 The promotion of equality of opportunity entails more than the elimination of discrimination. It may also require proactive measures to be taken to maintain and secure equality of opportunity.

Section 75 (1) requires the University in carrying out its functions, powers and duties to have *due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity* between –

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, or sexual orientation

- men and women generally

- persons with a disability and persons without

- persons with dependants and persons without.

Without prejudice to the obligations set out above, the University is also required to:

1. have *regard to the desirability of promoting good relations* between persons of different
* religious belief
* political opinion; or
* racial group
1. meet legislative obligations under the Disability Discrimination Order.

**Policy?**

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland state in their guidance[[1]](#footnote-2) that the term ‘policy’ is used to denote any strategy, policy (proposed/amended/existing) or practice and/or decision, whether written or unwritten.

The University’s Equality Scheme reflects the Equality Commission’s definition of a policy and this should be applied in determining what needs to be screened.

If you are in doubt, please contact the Diversity and Inclusion Unit for advice. Equality screening guidance is also available at [Queen’s website](https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/DiversityandInclusionUnit/PoliciesandProcedures/Section75EqualityScreening/) or by contacting the Diversity and Inclusion Unit.

**Part 1. Policy scoping**

The first stage of the screening process involves scoping the policy under consideration. The purpose of policy scoping is to help prepare the background and context and set out the aims and objectives for the policy being screened. At this stage, scoping the policy will help identify potential constraints as well as opportunities and will help the policy maker work through the screening process on a step by step basis.

It should be remembered that the Section 75 statutory duties apply to internal policies (relating to people who work for the University), as well as external policies (relating to those who are, or could be, served by the University).

**A. Information about the policy**

|  |
| --- |
| **Name of the policy to be screened and description.**Formal Flexible Working Policy & Agile Working Guidance (Toolkit) Is this an existing, revised or a new policy? (please append policy to the screening form)* Revised policy (current policy under review)
* New guidance

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**What is it trying to achieve? (intended aims/outcomes)** * To update the Flexible Working policy to reflect legislative provisions and best practice.
* To create new guidance for staff and managers to promote informal flexibility in our working practices.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the policy?****If so, explain how.** All section 75 categories are expected to benefit from the policy which will be updated to reflect changes in legislation to provide all with the right to make a request for flexible working, irrespective of reasons. Alongside this the new guidance promotes informal flexibility in our work practices for all staff. The University recognises the benefits of flexible working to both the University and the individual and the revised policy goes beyond the statutory provision, enabling QUB staff to make formal flexible working requests from day one. **Who initiated or wrote the policy?** People and Culture\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**Directorate responsible for devising and delivering the policy?**People and Culture for devising the policy & guidance and all staff for its implementation.**Background to the Policy to be screened.**Include details of any pre- consultations/consultations which have been conducted and/or whether the policy has previously been tabled at the University’s Operating Board or the Standing Committee of the Senate. |

|  |
| --- |
| The review of our Flexible Working Policy and Practices was initiated by staff feedback from our 2019 Staff Survey. Extensive consultation has been conducted through a dedicated Working Group, our Staff Forum representatives who represent all staff and through our dedicated staff networks (PRISM (LGBT+)), iRise (BAMEI), QGI (Gender), Carers and Disability and Trade Unions. Leaders and managers in Professional Service roles were also invited to provide feedback, including the University Operating Board.The Labour Relations Agency and the Equality Commission have also both feedback on the policy and guidance. Feedback was provided from two institution wide surveys - QGI COVID Lockdown Survey with 1,300 respondents and the Staff Pulse Survey with 2,650 respondents. Feedback from both surveys have informed the review of the policy and development of the guidance. In particular, the overwhelming feedback from the majority of staff was a preference to maintain some of the flexibility in working practices that was introduced in response to the pandemic restrictions. This was shared by all staff, with increased flexibility considered a positive from a wellbeing and productivity perspective, as well as embedding a sense of trust and respect among staff. Between late August and early October 2021, 15 Schools and Directorates participated in a BETA trial (limited trial) of the Agile Working Guidance and process. Legal advice has also been sought.Feedback from all of the consultation has informed the final policy and guidance documents.  |

**B. Implementation factors**

Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy?

If yes, are they

financial?

X

legislative?

X

X

other?( please specify) Failure to implement the policy in line with the flexible working principles will detract from the intended outcome.

**C. Main stakeholders affected**

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the policy will impact upon?

 staff

x

x

service users

other public sector organisations

x

voluntary/community/trade unions

other, please specify ­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

##### D. [Other policies with a bearing on this policy](#Onefour)

What are they? (please list)

* Strategy 2030 (Queen’s)
* Future Workforce Future Workplace (People) Workstream (P&C)
* QUB Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (P&C)
* QUB Health and Safety Guidance on Working from Home (Estates)
* QUB Environmental Policy (Estates)
* QUB Trans Equality Policy (P&C)
* UN Sustainable Development Goals (External: United Nations)

**E. Available evidence**

**What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories.**

This means any data or information you currently hold in relation to the policy or have gathered during policy development. Evidence to inform the screening process may take many forms and should help you to decide who the policy might affect the most. It will also help ensure that your screening decision is informed by relevant data.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Section 75 category** | **Details of evidence/information** |
| Religious belief | **Internal Source Data****Staff Profile** This is the breakdown of our staff according to community background.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Community Background** | **Count** | **Percentage** |
| RC | 1711 | 39.09% |
| P | 1480 | 33.81% |
| ND | 1168 | 26.68% |
| Not Known | 18 | 0.41% |
| Total | 4377 | 100.00% |

This is the breakdown of our staff by community background and according to type of working (full time, part-time and job share).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | **N D** |  | **P**  |  | **RC** |  | **Total Count of Per No** | **Total %** |
| Ft Pt | **Count of Per No** | **%** | **Count of Per No** | **%** | **Count of Per No** | **%** |  |  |
| Full-time  | 1062 | 29.68% | 1146 | 32.03% | 1370 | 38.29% | 3578 | 100.00% |
| Job share  | 6 | 13.64% | 21 | 47.73% | 17 | 38.64% | 44 | 100.00% |
| Part-time  | 124 | 16.96% | 294 | 40.22% | 313 | 42.82% | 731 | 100.00% |
| Grand Total | 1192 | 27.38% | 1461 | 33.56% | 1700 | 39.05% | 4353 | 100.00% |

**External Source Data**We reviewed the ECNI [Model Flexible Working Policy](https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/Model%20policies/Flexible_Working_Policy.pdf) which provides advice to employers on matters for inclusion in a flexible working policy states that some employees make flexible working requests for reasons due to caring responsibilities (e.g. caring for a child or another dependant). However, other employees may make requests for other reasons, including, but not restricted to, they:• have a disability and, in relation to which, it will be necessary for us to consider our obligations under the “reasonable adjustment duty” of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1995* • are approaching retirement • wish to mark religious observances • wish to prioritise other aspects of their lives.The Model policy states that one of the principles that employers should bear in mind is that the policy and procedure will be applied consistently and fairly to all applicants and requests must not be rejected on the grounds of an applicant’s sex, religious belief, political opinion, race, sexual orientation, age or because he/she is disabled.We reviewed the ECNI [Unified Guide to Promoting Equal Opportunities](https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/Unifiedguidetopromotingequalopps2009.pdf). The Guide advises that Employers who operate inflexible working practices, such as requiring all employees to work to traditional “9 to 5” working patterns, may deny equality of opportunity to some employees, including for example where the employees’ particular cultural or religious needs conflict with the strict work patterns laid down by their employers. Such practices may even, depending on the particular circumstances of each case, amount to indirect religious discrimination.We reviewed [Unison’s Flexible Working Guide](https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2017/01/Flexible-Working-Guide-Jan-2017.pdf) published in 2017which states thatinsisting the employee works on days which clash with religious holidays or rest days may be indirect religious discrimination under equality legislation unless the employer can justify its actions. Less frequently, direct discrimination and victimisation law may apply. |
| Political opinion | We do not collect statistics on political opinion nor do we make assumptions based on community background.We reviewed the ECNI [Model Flexible Working Policy](https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/Model%20policies/Flexible_Working_Policy.pdf) which provides advice to employers on matters for inclusion in a flexible working policy states that some employees make flexible working requests for reasons due to caring responsibilities (e.g. caring for a child or another dependant). However, other employees may make requests for other reasons, including, but not restricted to, they:• have a disability and, in relation to which, it will be necessary for us to consider our obligations under the “reasonable adjustment duty” of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1995* • are approaching retirement • wish to mark religious observances • wish to prioritise other aspects of their lives.The Model policy states that one of the principles that employers should bear in mind is that the policy and procedure will be applied consistently and fairly to all applicants and requests must not be rejected on the grounds of an applicant’s sex, religious belief, political opinion, race, sexual orientation, age or because he/she is disabled. |
| Racial group | **Internal Source Data****Staff Profile**The following statistics relate to staff broken down by ethnicity, ethnic origin and nationality. **E****Ethnicity**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Ethnicity** | **Count** | **Percentage** |
| Minority Ethnic | 295 | 6.74% |
| White | 3841 | 87.75% |
| Not Known | 241 | 5.51% |
| Total | **4377** | **100.00%** |

**Ethnic origin**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Ethnic Origin | Count | Percentage |
| Irish Traveller | 1 | 0.02% |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean | 2 | 0.05% |
| Black or Black British - African | 24 | 0.55% |
| Other Black background | 6 | 0.14% |
| Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi | 4 | 0.09% |
| Asian or Asian British – Pakistani | 14 | 0.32% |
| Asian or Asian British – Indian | 66 | 1.51% |
| Other Asian background | 47 | 1.07% |
| Chinese | 84 | 1.92% |
| White – Irish | 1380 | 31.53% |
| White – British | 1991 | 45.49% |
| White - Other European | 301 | 6.88% |
| Other White Background | 169 | 3.86% |
| Other Mixed background | 29 | 0.66% |
| Other Ethnic background | 18 | 0.41% |
| Information refused | 23 | 0.53% |
| Prefer not to say | 39 | 0.89% |
| Not Known | 179 | 4.09% |
| Total | 4377 | 100.00% |

**Nationality**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Nationality | Count | Percentage |
| EU | 335 | 7.65% |
| International | 369 | 8.43% |
| ROI | 781 | 17.84% |
| UK | 2848 | 65.07% |
| Not Known | 44 | 1.01% |
| Total | 4377 | 100.00% |

These are the statistics of our staff by ethnicity and broad nationality and according to working type (full time, part-time and job share).**Ethnicity**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Broad Ethnic** | **Data** |  |  |  |   |   |   |
|  | **BAME** |  | **Not Known** |  | **White** |  | **Total Count of Per No** | **Total %** |
| Ft Pt | Count of Per No | % | Count of Per No | % | Count of Per No | % |   |   |
| Full-time  | 268 | 7.49% | 206 | 5.76% | 3104 | 86.75% | 3578 | 100.00% |
| Job share | 1 | 2.27% |   | 0.00% | 43 | 97.73% | 44 | 100.00% |
| Part-time  | 19 | 2.60% | 38 | 5.20% | 674 | 92.20% | 731 | 100.00% |
| **Grand Total** | **288** | **6.62%** | **244** | **5.61%** | **3821** | **87.78%** | **4353** | **100.00%** |

**Broad Nationality**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ft Pt** | **EU** | **Int** | **Not known** | **ROI** | **UK** | **Total** | **%** |
| **Ft Pt** | No. | % | No | % | No | % | No | % | No | % | **Total** | **%** |
| **FT** | 291 | 8.13 | 337 | 9.42 | 35 | .98 | 635 | 17.75 | 2280 | 63.72 | **3578** | **100** |
| **Job Share** | 1 | 2.27 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 13.64 | 37 | 84.09 | **44** | **100** |
| **PT** | 42 | 5.75 | 24 | 3.28 | 11 | 1.5 | 142 | 19.43 | 512 | 70.04 | **731** | **100** |
| **Total** | **334** | **7.67** | **361** | **8.29** | **46** | **1.06** | **783** | **17.99** | **2829** | **64.99** | **4353** | **100** |

**External Source Data** We reviewed the ECNI [Model Flexible Working Policy](https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/Model%20policies/Flexible_Working_Policy.pdf) which provides advice to employers on matters for inclusion in a flexible working policy states that some employees make flexible working requests for reasons due to caring responsibilities (e.g. caring for a child or another dependant). However, other employees may make requests for other reasons, including, but not restricted to, they:• have a disability and, in relation to which, it will be necessary for us to consider our obligations under the “reasonable adjustment duty” of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1995* • are approaching retirement • wish to mark religious observances • wish to prioritise other aspects of their lives.The Model policy states that one of the principles that employers should bear in mind is that the policy and procedure will be applied consistently and fairly to all applicants and requests must not be rejected on the grounds of an applicant’s sex, religious belief, political opinion, race, sexual orientation, age or because he/she is disabled.The Equality Commission and Labour Relations Agency Guidance on [The Right to Request Flexible Working: A Guide for Employers](https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/Flexible-Working-RightToRequest.pdf) states that a policy of rejecting all flexible working requests could be regarded as indirect discrimination on the grounds of race on the basis that certain racial or ethnic groups are more likely to require flexible working arrangements in order to practice their beliefs or avail of extended leave to visit family in other parts of the world.We reviewed the ECNI [Unified Guide to Promoting Equal Opportunities](https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/Unifiedguidetopromotingequalopps2009.pdf). The Guide advises that Employers who operate inflexible working practices, such as requiring all employees to work to traditional “ 9 to 5” working patterns, may deny equality of opportunity to some employees, including for example where the employees particular cultural or religious needs conflict with the strict work patterns laid down by their employers. Such practices may even, depending on the particular circumstances of each case, amount to indirect race discrimination.[Management Today](https://www.managementtoday.co.uk/long-term-consequences-working-home/food-for-thought/article/1697854?bulletin=inspiring-women-bulletin&utm_medium=EMAIL&utm_campaign=eNews%20Bulletin&utm_source=20201029&utm_content=Women%20in%20Business%20(99)::&email_hash=) reported that a majority of respondents who participated in research on workplace happiness reported that whilst remote working, they generally feel happier in their work - with a general score of 72 per cent compared to 64 per cent pre-COVID. However, Management Today also report that the increase in workplace happiness was not universal, reporting that respondents who are black are least likely to feel empowered. Black males in particular reported feeling less trusted, less happy and enjoy their work less compared to their peers.[Advance HE’s ‘Hybrid Higher: Hybrid working and leadership in higher education Leadership Intelligence Report’](https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/advance-he/AdvHE_Hybrid%20Higher_Leadership%20report_1626274044.pdf?X-Amz-Content-Sha256=UNSIGNED-PAYLOAD&X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIATYAYEYO3HUY745WI%2F20211007%2Feu-west-2%2Fs3%2Faws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20211007T080929Z&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Expires=604800&X-Amz-Signature=4535b84de8161e4d7a4a47ae4ef343f9b448567adba4029cc10c0bc753852e56), published July 2021 indicates that a hybrid working model does pose a challenge in terms of fairness and inclusion, warning that there is a need to avoid ‘in-groups’ and ‘out-groups’. It considers how visibility, exposure and networking are all crucial for progression and career development, and therefore we need to be intentional about avoiding unintended consequences of hybrid working that may disproportionately impact certain groups or individuals. However, this is balanced by the suggestion that moving to a hybrid working model provides an opportunity to address existing inequalities within the workplace, providing a voice for traditionally marginalised group and capitalising on the best parts of the working experience during the pandemic. Crucially, this research encourages all new working practices to be experimental, focusing on an initial trial period to test their effectiveness before evaluating and revising as required. The research warns against equating consistency with fairness, surmising that one size will not fit all and there is a need to allow for differentiated outcomes. **Internal data/feedback**An extensive consultation was undertaken throughout the development of the Agile Working Toolkit and revision of the Formal Flexible Working policy. One of the staff groups consulted was iRise, who represent BAMEI colleagues. This group did not raise any perceived concerns with the proposed changes and were supportive of the move to Agile Working and the changes to the Formal Flexible Working Policy.  |
| Age | **Internal Source Data****Staff Profile**The following statistics relate to staff by age.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Age** | **Count** | **Percentage** |
| Under 25 | 52 | 1.19% |
| 25-29 | 344 | 7.86% |
| 30-34 | 636 | 14.53% |
| 35-39 | 731 | 16.70% |
| 40-44 | 694 | 15.86% |
| 45-49 | 619 | 14.14% |
| 50-54 | 512 | 11.70% |
| 55-59 | 468 | 10.69% |
| 60-64 | 246 | 5.62% |
| 65+ | 75 | 1.71% |
| **Total** | **4377** | **100.00%** |

The following statistics are a breakdown of staff by age and according to working type (full time, part-time and job share)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **FT** | **JS** | **PT** | **Grand total** |
|  | No | % | No | % | No | % | No | % |
| Under 25 | 42 | 1.17 | 1 | 2.27 | 5 | 0.68 | 48 | 1.1 |
| 25-29 | 296 | 8.27 | 0 | 0 | 35 | 4.79 | 331 | 7.6 |
| 30-34 | 555 | 15.51 | 4 | 9.09 | 61 | 8.34 | 620 | 14.24 |
| 35-39 | 614 | 17.16 | 10 | 22.73 | 100 | 13.68 | 724 | 16.63 |
| 40-44 | 581 | 16.24 | 12 | 27.27 | 112 | 15.32 | 705 | 16.2 |
| 45-49 | 487 | 13.61 | 3 | 6.82 | 120 | 16.42 | 610 | 14.01 |
| 50-54 | 419 | 11.71 | 4 | 9.09 | 97 | 13.27 | 520 | 11.95 |
| 55-59 | 373 | 10.42 | 6 | 13.64 | 95 | 13 | 474 | 10.89 |
| 60-64 | 175 | 4.89 | 3 | 6.82 | 71 | 9.71 | 249 | 5.72 |
| 65+ | 36 | 1.01 | 1 | 2.27 | 35 | 4.79 | 72 | 1.65 |
| **Total** | **3578** | **100** | **44** | **100** | **731** | **100** | **4353** | **100** |

**External Source Data** We reviewed the ECNI [Model Flexible Working Policy](https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/Model%20policies/Flexible_Working_Policy.pdf) which provides advice to employers on matters for inclusion in a flexible working policy states that some employees make flexible working requests for reasons due to caring responsibilities (e.g. caring for a child or another dependant). However, other employees may make requests for other reasons, including, but not restricted to, they:• have a disability and, in relation to which, it will be necessary for us to consider our obligations under the “reasonable adjustment duty” of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1995* • are approaching retirement • wish to mark religious observances • wish to prioritise other aspects of their lives.The Model policy states that one of the principles that employers should bear in mind is that the policy and procedure will be applied consistently and fairly to all applicants and requests must not be rejected on the grounds of an applicant’s sex, religious belief, political opinion, race, sexual orientation, age or because he/she is disabled.We reviewed [Unison’s Flexible Working Guide](https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2017/01/Flexible-Working-Guide-Jan-2017.pdf) published in 2017 which advises that imposing unworkable flexi shifts on older workers (whether male or female) with obligations to care for older relatives or refusing to allow such workers to adjust their hours for caring purposes may be indirect age discrimination unless the employer can justify its actions.[CIPD](https://www.cipd.co.uk/news-views/viewpoint/age-diversity) also reports that a “lack of flexible working can also make it harder for older workers to remain in employment, particularly if they have caring responsibilities or have a disability or long-term health condition”A nationwide “[COVID-19 Remote Working Survey](https://workinmind.org/2020/05/12/majority-of-uks-workforce-does-not-want-to-go-back-to-the-office-full-time/)” commissioned by Esknezi PR examined general attitudes towards remote working. The survey found that 91% of the general working population would like to have the option of working from home. However, there was a distinction between age groups. The age group that most wanted to work at home were the 23-34 year old age group (93%), while those over 55 appeared more keen to go into the office (86%).The EHRC’s report on [How coronavirus has affected equality and human rights](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/equality_and_human_rights_commission_how_coronavirus_has_affected_equality_and_human_rights_2020.pdf) highlighted evidence that the main impact of coronavirus has been on hours of work, indicating increasing underemployment, rather than on employment or unemployment. The EHRC reported that the evidence on how coronavirus has impacted on work shows a greater impact on younger people than on older people. One of the EHRC recommendations included that the UK Government “should demonstrate its commitment to inclusive ways of working by extending the right to request flexible working to everyone from day one in all jobs, requiring employers to offer and advertise all jobs, including the most senior roles, on a flexible and part-time basis unless there is a genuine business reason that means this is not possible.”An article by [Management Today](https://www.managementtoday.co.uk/long-term-consequences-working-home/food-for-thought/article/1697854?bulletin=inspiring-women-bulletin&utm_medium=EMAIL&utm_campaign=eNews%20Bulletin&utm_source=20201029&utm_content=Women%20in%20Business%20(99)::&email_hash=) reported that a majority of respondents who participated in research on workplace happiness reported that whilst remote working, they generally feel happier in their work - with a general score of 72 per cent compared to 64 per cent pre-COVID. However, Management Today also reported that the increase in happiness was not universal, reporting that people aged between19-24 saw the lowest increase in happiness, possibly linked to the lack of social connection and perceived loss of development opportunities. Similarly commentators echoed such concerns in a report called [Will Hybrid Working Ever Work?](https://cached.offlinehbpl.hbpl.co.uk/NewsAttachments/OTM/Will-Hybrid-Working-Ever-Work-Mangement-Today-special-report-2020.pdf) Commentators suggested office working was important for younger workers in terms of career progress and building networks.Research findings from BCG in October 2020 on [What’s Next for How We Work in the UK?](https://www.bcg.com/en-gb/publications/2020/future-of-working-models-united-kingdom?utm_source=linkedin&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=none&utm_description=paid&utm_topic=none&utm_geo=lon&utm_content=fowm&li_fat_id=93794f77-5ce6-4b42-895e-d5e3f0783494) found that in the 18-24 age group, 48% of this cohort said they felt more valued by their employers now than they did before the pandemic—more than any other age group. They also had the most positive responses about receiving guidance from managers, gaining learning and development opportunities, and feeling connected to their organisations during lockdown. The research found that as ‘digital natives’, their comfort with virtual collaboration tools and online relationship building puts them at an advantage compared to older peers. However, the research also found that compared to the over 55 age group, younger people aged 18-34 were more likely to experience barriers in working remotely, such as inadequate space. The research found that age also influenced employees’ preferred working model, with younger workers between 18-24 years of age three to four times more likely to prefer a fully remote model than their colleagues aged 55 years or over. The authors concluded that no single model would suit an entire workforce and recommended that employers should think about the range of work models they could potentially offer, from fully face-to-face to fully remote, and different hybrid models in between. They should then break down the workforce into different ‘job families’, allowing them to consider more closely the nature of the work done by the various individuals and teams.[Advance HE’s ‘Hybrid Higher: Hybrid working and leadership in higher education Leadership Intelligence Report’](https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/advance-he/AdvHE_Hybrid%20Higher_Leadership%20report_1626274044.pdf?X-Amz-Content-Sha256=UNSIGNED-PAYLOAD&X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIATYAYEYO3HUY745WI%2F20211007%2Feu-west-2%2Fs3%2Faws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20211007T080929Z&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Expires=604800&X-Amz-Signature=4535b84de8161e4d7a4a47ae4ef343f9b448567adba4029cc10c0bc753852e56), published July 2021, suggests that the increase in Hybrid Working as we emerge from the Pandemic has impacted on the nature of certain job roles, with tasks and expectations changing. Equally, with a weakened divide between home and on-campus working, there is a need for greater humanity and empathy in our approach to those we manage and work with, and a recognition of how working in a more flexible, hybrid manner may support and alleviate home pressures. The report further indicates that a hybrid working model does pose a challenge in terms of fairness and inclusion, warning that there is a need to avoid ‘in groups’ and ‘out groups’. It considers how visibility, exposure and networking are all crucial for progression and career development, and therefore we need to be intentional about avoiding unintended consequences of hybrid working that may disproportionately impact certain groups or individuals. However, this is balanced by the suggestion that moving to a hybrid working model provides an opportunity to address existing inequalities within the workplace, providing a voice for traditionally marginalised group and capitalising on the best parts of the working experience during the pandemic. Crucially, this research encourages all new working practices to be experimental, focussing on an initial trial period to test their effectiveness before evaluating and revising as required. It is clear that. The research warns against equating consistency with fairness, surmising that one size will not fit all and there is a need to allow for differentiated outcomes.  |
| Marital status | **Internal source data****Staff Profile**The following statistics relate to staff broken down by marital status.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Marital Status** | **Count** | **Percentage** |
| **Widowed** | 24 | 0.55% |
| **Civil Partnership** | 40 | 0.91% |
| **Separated** | 66 | 1.51% |
| **Prefer not to say** | 89 | 2.03% |
| **Divorced** | 119 | 2.72% |
| **Single** | 1396 | 31.89% |
| **Married** | 2314 | 52.87% |
| **Other** | 150 | 3.43% |
| **Not Known** | 179 | 4.09% |
| **Total** | **4377** | **100.00%** |

The following statistics are a breakdown of staff according to marital status and working type (full time, part-time and job share).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **FT** |  | **JS** |  | **PT** |  | **Grand total** |
|  | No | % | No | % | No | % | **No** | **%** |
| Civil Partnership | 31 | 0.87 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 1.23 | **40** | **0.92** |
| Divorced | 97 | 2.71 | 0 | 0 | 20 | 2.74 | **117** | **2.69** |
| Married | 1802 | 50.36 | 36 | 81.82 | 466 | 63.75 | **2304** | **52.03** |
| Separated | 49 | 1.37 | 1 | 2.27 | 15 | 1.37 | **65** | **1.49** |
| Widowed | 17 | 0.48 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 1.09 | **25** | **0.57** |
| Single | 1229 | 34.35 | 4 | 9.09 | 151 | 20.66 | **1384** | **31.79** |
| Not Known | 151 | 4.22 | 1 | 2.27 | 32 | 4.38 | **184** | **4.23** |
| Prefer not to say | 76 | 2.12 | 1 | 2.27 | 10 | 1.37 | **87** | **2** |
| Other | 126 | 3.52 | 1 | 2.27 | 20 | 2.74 | **147** | **3.38** |
| Total | 3578 | 100 | 44 | 100 | 731 | 100 | **4353** | **100** |

**External Source Data**We reviewed the ECNI [Model Flexible Working Policy](https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/Model%20policies/Flexible_Working_Policy.pdf) which provides advice to employers on matters for inclusion in a flexible working policy states that some employees make flexible working requests for reasons due to caring responsibilities (e.g. caring for a child or another dependant). However, other employees may make requests for other reasons, including, but not restricted to, they:• have a disability and, in relation to which, it will be necessary for us to consider our obligations under the “reasonable adjustment duty” of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1995* • are approaching retirement • wish to mark religious observances • wish to prioritise other aspects of their lives.The Model policy states that one of the principles that employers should bear in mind is that the policy and procedure will be applied consistently and fairly to all applicants and requests must not be rejected on the grounds of an applicant’s sex, religious belief, political opinion, race, sexual orientation, age or because he/she is disabled.[Advance HE’s ‘Hybrid Higher: Hybrid working and leadership in higher education Leadership Intelligence Report’](https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/advance-he/AdvHE_Hybrid%20Higher_Leadership%20report_1626274044.pdf?X-Amz-Content-Sha256=UNSIGNED-PAYLOAD&X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIATYAYEYO3HUY745WI%2F20211007%2Feu-west-2%2Fs3%2Faws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20211007T080929Z&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Expires=604800&X-Amz-Signature=4535b84de8161e4d7a4a47ae4ef343f9b448567adba4029cc10c0bc753852e56), published July 2021, suggests that the increase in Hybrid Working as we emerge from the Pandemic has impacted on the nature of certain job roles, with tasks and expectations changing. Equally, with a weakened divide between home and on-campus working, there is greater need for greater humanity and empathy in our approach to those we manage and work with, and a recognition of how working in a more flexible, hybrid manner may support and alleviate home pressures. The report further indicates that a hybrid working model does pose a challenge in terms of fairness and inclusion, warning that there is a need to avoid ‘in groups’ and ‘out groups’. It considers how visibility, exposure and networking are all crucial for progression and career development, and therefore we need to be intentional about avoiding unintended consequences of hybrid working that may disproportionately impact certain groups or individuals. However, this is balanced by the suggestion that moving to a hybrid working model provides an opportunity to address existing inequalities within the workplace, providing a voice for traditionally marginalised group and capitalising on the best parts of the working experience during the pandemic. Crucially, this research encourages all new working practices to be experimental, focusing on an initial trial period to test their effectiveness before evaluating and revising as required. It is clear that. The research warns against equating consistency with fairness, surmising that one size will not fit all and there is a need to allow for differentiated outcomes.  |
| Sexual orientation | **Internal Source Data****Staff Profile**The following statistics relate to staff according to sexual orientation.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Sexual Orientation** | **Count** | **Percentage** |
| Of either sex | 44 | 1.01% |
| Of the same sex | 135 | 3.08% |
| I do not wish to answer | 487 | 11.13% |
| Of a different sex | 3109 | 71.03% |
| Not Known | 602 | 13.75% |
| **Total** | **4377** | **100.00%** |

The following statistics provide a breakdown of staff according to sexual orientation and working type (Full-time, part-time and job-share)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **FT** |  | **JS** |  | **PT** |  | **Grand total** |
|  | No | % | No | % | No | % | **No** | **%** |
| Of a different sex | 2560 | 71.55 | 27 | 61.36 | 511 | 69.9 | **3098** | **71.17** |
| Of either sex | 38 | 1.06 | 0 |  | 6 | 0.82 | **44** | **1.01** |
| Of the same sex  | 111 | 3.1 | 1 | 2.27 | 17 | 2.33 | **129** | **2.96** |
| I do not wish to answer | 392 | 10.96 | 8 | 18.18 | 78 | 10.67 | **478** | **10.98** |
| Not known | 477 | 13.33 | 8 | 18.18 | 119 | 16.28 | **604** | **13.88** |
| Total | **3578** | **100** | **44** | **100** | **731** | **100** | **4353** | **100** |

**External Source Data**We reviewed the ECNI [Model Flexible Working Policy](https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/Model%20policies/Flexible_Working_Policy.pdf) which provides advice to employers on matters for inclusion in a flexible working policy states that some employees make flexible working requests for reasons due to caring responsibilities (eg caring for a child or another dependant). However, other employees may make requests for other reasons, including, but not restricted to, they:• have a disability and, in relation to which, it will be necessary for us to consider our obligations under the “reasonable adjustment duty” of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1995* • are approaching retirement • wish to mark religious observances • wish to prioritise other aspects of their lives.The Model policy states that one of the principles that employers should bear in mind is that the policy and procedure will be applied consistently and fairly to all applicants and requests must not be rejected on the grounds of an applicant’s sex, religious belief, political opinion, race, sexual orientation, age or because he/she is disabled. The [ECNI Key Inequalities in Employment](https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Delivering%20Equality/Employment-KeyInequalitiesStatement.pdf) report highlighted that there is little information is available on the employment opportunities of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) individuals in Northern Ireland due to a lack of monitoring of this equality group in official statistics.A report by Accenture in 2020 called [Visible Growth; Invisible Fears](https://www.accenture.com/_acnmedia/PDF-127/Accenture-Getting-to-Equal-2020-Pride-Visible-Growth-Invisible-Fears.pdf#zoom=40) found that* Only 31% of LGBT+ employees are fully open about their gender identity/expression or sexual orientation at work.
* This figures falls to just 21% among those in senior leadership positions (“leaders”).
* More than half of employees (57%) believe that their gender identity/expression or their sexual orientation has slowed their progress at work.
* More than two-thirds (71%) of them say ‘seeing people like me’ in senior leadership positions is important to helping them thrive.

Accenture recommended that employers should address cultural issues to create a workplace where LGBT+ employees in particular can not only rise, but also feel supported, heard and understood. Accenture recommended that “Comprehensive action should be taken to ensure that flexible working arrangements are not only available, but properly supported and encouraged”.[Advance HE’s ‘Hybrid Higher: Hybrid working and leadership in higher education Leadership Intelligence Report’](https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/advance-he/AdvHE_Hybrid%20Higher_Leadership%20report_1626274044.pdf?X-Amz-Content-Sha256=UNSIGNED-PAYLOAD&X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIATYAYEYO3HUY745WI%2F20211007%2Feu-west-2%2Fs3%2Faws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20211007T080929Z&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Expires=604800&X-Amz-Signature=4535b84de8161e4d7a4a47ae4ef343f9b448567adba4029cc10c0bc753852e56), published July 2021, suggests that the increase in Hybrid Working as we emerge from the Pandemic has impacted on the nature of certain job roles, with tasks and expectations changing. Equally, with a weakened divide between home and on-campus working, there is greater need for greater humanity and empathy in our approach to those we manage and work with, and a recognition of how working in a more flexible, hybrid manner may support and alleviate home pressures. The report further indicates that a hybrid working model does pose a challenge in terms of fairness and inclusion, warning that there is a need to avoid ‘in-groups’ and ‘out-groups’. It considers how visibility, exposure and networking are all crucial for progression and career development, and therefore we need to be intentional about avoiding unintended consequences of hybrid working that may disproportionately impact certain groups or individuals. However, this is balanced by the suggestion that moving to a hybrid working model provides an opportunity to address existing inequalities within the workplace, providing a voice for traditionally marginalised group and capitalising on the best parts of the working experience during the pandemic. Crucially, this research encourages all new working practices to be experimental, focusing on an initial trial period to test their effectiveness before evaluating and revising as required. It is clear that. The research warns against equating consistency with fairness, surmising that one size will not fit all and there is a need to allow for differentiated outcomes. **Internal data/feedback**An extensive consultation was undertaken throughout the development of the Agile Working Toolkit and revision of the Formal Flexible Working policy. One of the staff groups consulted was Prism, which is the University’s LGBT+ staff network. This group did not raise any perceived concerns with the proposed changes.  |
| Men and women generally | **Internal Source Data****Staff Profile**The following statistics relate to staff broken down by gender.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Gender** | **Count** | **Percentage** |
| M | 2007 | 45.85% |
| F | 2370 | 54.15% |
| **Total** | **4377** | **100.00%** |

The following statistics provide a breakdown of staff according to gender and working type (Full-time, Part-time and Job-Share)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | Sex | Data |   |   |   |   |
|   | F |   | M |   | Total Count of Per No | Total % |
| Ft Pt | Count of Per No | % | Count of Per No | % |   |   |
| Full-time Total | 1777 | 49.66% | 1801 | 50.34% | 3578 | 100.00% |
| Job share Total | 43 | 97.73% | 1 | 2.27% | 44 | 100.00% |
| Part-time Total | 544 | 74.42% | 187 | 25.58% | 731 | 100.00% |
| **Grand Total** | **2364** | **54.31%** | **1989** | **45.69%** | **4353** | **100.00%** |

**External Source Data**We reviewed the ECNI [Unified Guide to Promoting Equal Opportunities](https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/Unifiedguidetopromotingequalopps2009.pdf). The Guide advises that Employers who operate inflexible working practices, such as requiring all employees to work to traditional “9 to 5” working patterns, may deny equality of opportunity to some employees, including for example where the employees particular personal, caring or family responsibilities conflict with the strict work patterns laid down by their employers. The persons who are most likely to suffer particular disadvantages compared to other people because of these conflicts include persons, particularly women, who require time off to attend to their parental and caring responsibilities. Such practices may even, depending on the particular circumstances of each case amount to indirect sex discrimination.We reviewed the ECNI [Model Flexible Working Policy](https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/Model%20policies/Flexible_Working_Policy.pdf) which provides advice to employers on matters for inclusion in a flexible working policy states that some employees make flexible working requests for reasons due to caring responsibilities (e.g. caring for a child or another dependant). However, other employees may make requests for other reasons, including, but not restricted to, they:• have a disability and, in relation to which, it will be necessary for us to consider our obligations under the “reasonable adjustment duty” of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1995* • are approaching retirement • wish to mark religious observances • wish to prioritise other aspects of their lives.The Model policy states that one of the principles that employers should bear in mind is that the policy and procedure will be applied consistently and fairly to all applicants and requests must not be rejected on the grounds of an applicant’s sex, religious belief, political opinion, race, sexual orientation, age or because he/she is disabled.The Equality Commission and Labour Relations Agency Guidance on [The Right to Request Flexible Working: A Guide for Employers](https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/Flexible-Working-RightToRequest.pdf) states that a policy of rejecting all flexible working requests could be regarded as indirect discrimination on the grounds of sex. Such a policy is more likely to unfairly disadvantage women than men on the basis that women still assume the bulk of family caring responsibilities and therefore are more likely to request flexible working arrangements than male employees. On the other hand, a policy of only granting the requests of female employees most probably based on the perception that only women will require time off in respect of caring responsibilities, is likely to be considered as direct discrimination on the grounds of sex, i.e. direct discrimination against male employees.This is echoed in [Unison’s Flexible Working Guide](https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2017/01/Flexible-Working-Guide-Jan-2017.pdf) which states that imposing flexible shifts on women with childcare or refusing to allow women to adjust their hours for childcare reasons will usually be indirect sex discrimination under equality legislation, unless the employer can justify its actions. Less frequently, direct discrimination and victimisation law may apply. According to Unison most flexible working cases rely on indirect sex discrimination law. But occasionally direct discrimination might apply. For example it is direct sex discrimination to refuse the member’s request because she is a woman (or, equally, because the member is a man). This can occur due to conscious or unconscious stereotypes in the employer’s mind about male and female roles and likely future behaviour, for example, an employer refuses to allow a male employee to work part-time for childcare reasons. The employer would have agreed if he was female.We reviewed a 2019 report conducted by King’s College London, commissioned by the Government Equalities Office on [Women’s Progression in the Workplace](https://www.kcl.ac.uk/giwl/assets/womens-progression-in-the-workplace.pdf). The report highlighted evidence that flexible and part time working can be associated with lack of commitment, professionalism or seriousness about one’s career which can have serious consequences for future career progression. The report concluded that although flexible and part time work are important factors in helping women maintain their place in the labour market following transition to parenthood, the evidence on whether arrangements help career progression is lacking. The authors also suggested that the policy focus should be on reforming organisational cultures away from norms of overwork and flexibility to be seen as the norm, rather than the exception, and as a way to support men to engage in care work, as much as it is for women to increase their labour market participation.Some of the recommendations included: * Work-life balance should be modelled from the top of the organisation. Promote and champion senior figures who work part-time and flexibly.
* Communication campaigns that promote the idea that work-life policies are for everyone, not just for parents, and which emphasise the positive effects of flexibility on productivity might also help to challenge flexibility stigma.
* Managers are key in ensuring access to flexible working policies and quality part-time work. When managers are inexperienced in dealing with these workers, alternative working time policies can lead to more work being done in less time, or the intrusion of work into other areas of life. Employers should provide training.
* Employers should be pro-active in reducing or reshaping workload to match a part-time or flexible working commitment, exploring different approaches to work and reviewing cultural processes and values that pull in the opposite direction. Similarly, employers should pro-actively review whether current models of career progression or access to development opportunities exclude part-time or flexible workers.
* Monitor uptake of flexible working policies to ensure that employees making use of them are not overlooked for promotion.
* Create clear criteria for progression and promotion focused on (realistically achievable) outputs rather than hours.

[Management Today](https://www.managementtoday.co.uk/long-term-consequences-working-home/food-for-thought/article/1697854?bulletin=inspiring-women-bulletin&utm_medium=EMAIL&utm_campaign=eNews%20Bulletin&utm_source=20201029&utm_content=Women%20in%20Business%20(99)::&email_hash=) reported that a majority of respondents who participated in research on workplace happiness reported that whilst remote working, they generally feel happier in their work - with a general score of 72 per cent compared to 64 per cent pre-COVID. However Management Today also report that the increase in happiness was not universal, highlighting that women have seen a lower increase in happiness compared to men.Research published by [Zurich](https://www.zurich.co.uk/en/about-us/media-centre/company-news/2020/zurich-sees-leap-in-women-applying-for-senior-roles-after-offering-all-jobs-as-flexible) in November 2020 reported a significant rise in the number of women applying for senior roles after offering all jobs as flexible. Zurich reported that last year they became the first company in the UK to advertise all vacancies with the option of part-time, full-time, job share or flexible working. They reported that advertising flexible working roles, along with the use of gender-neutral language in every job advertisement, this has ‘generated significant change’. Zurich has seen a 16% rise in women applying for jobs and a near 20% jump in female applications for management roles. In addition, the number of women hired for senior roles as a direct result of the initiative has leapt by 33%. This was a separate Zurich finding reported after the conclusion of the study, although it covered the same period.The Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1999 cover discrimination on the grounds of gender reassignment in the workplace. The ECNI have published [guidance](https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Individuals/guide-sex-discrim-gender-reassignment-regs.pdf) on the regulations. This guidance does not suggest how much absence should be given for gender reassignment treatment nor does it explicitly mention flexible working arrangements, however it emphasises that employers should try to allow some flexibility so that employees may undergo this treatment. We reviewed research from the Institute of Fiscal Studies and ACAS in 2017 on [Supporting Trans Employees in the Workplace](https://www.acas.org.uk/supporting-trans-employees-in-the-workplace/html#1.-executive-summary) which highlighted some of the barriers faced by Trans employees in the workplace. Employers, stakeholders and employees interviewed for this research emphasised the need for employment policies which specifically consider the needs of trans employees. These may relate to a workplace transition or to day-to-day life at work. The research suggested that effective management of workplace transitions should follow a flexible plan agreed between line and/or HR managers and the employee in question. A plan may cover a range of issues including absences from work or short-term changes to working arrangements. [Advance HE’s ‘Hybrid Higher: Hybrid working and leadership in higher education Leadership Intelligence Report’](https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/advance-he/AdvHE_Hybrid%20Higher_Leadership%20report_1626274044.pdf?X-Amz-Content-Sha256=UNSIGNED-PAYLOAD&X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIATYAYEYO3HUY745WI%2F20211007%2Feu-west-2%2Fs3%2Faws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20211007T080929Z&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Expires=604800&X-Amz-Signature=4535b84de8161e4d7a4a47ae4ef343f9b448567adba4029cc10c0bc753852e56), published July 2021, suggests that the increase in Hybrid Working as we emerge from the Pandemic has impacted on the nature of certain job roles, with tasks and expectations changing. Equally, with a weakened divide between home and on-campus working, there is greater need for greater humanity and empathy in our approach to those we manage and work with, and a recognition of how working in a more flexible, hybrid manner may support and alleviate home pressures. The report further indicates that a hybrid working model does pose a challenge in terms of fairness and inclusion, warning that there is a need to avoid ‘in-groups’ and ‘out-groups’. It considers how visibility, exposure and networking are all crucial for progression and career development, and therefore we need to be intentional about avoiding unintended consequences of hybrid working that may disproportionately impact certain groups or individuals. However, this is balanced by the suggestion that moving to a hybrid working model provides an opportunity to address existing inequalities within the workplace, providing a voice for traditionally marginalised group and capitalising on the best parts of the working experience during the pandemic. Crucially, this research encourages all new working practices to be experimental, focusing on an initial trial period to test their effectiveness before evaluating and revising as required. It is clear that. The research warns against equating consistency with fairness, surmising that one size will not fit all and there is a need to allow for differentiated outcomes.We have also reviewed the Equality Commission’s recent report, [Promoting Equality in Employment for women affected by the menopause.](https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/MenopauseInWorkplace.pdf) This report states that, “women make up nearly half of the working population in Northern Ireland and with the recent change in pension age, it is likely that more women will be working into later life. This changing demography, together with an employer’s duty of care to their employees and a greater openness in discussing the difficulties faced by those experiencing menopausal symptoms, helps explain why employers should ensure that they have the appropriate policies and procedures in place”. It is clear that one such appropriate policy and procedure relates to enhanced flexible working. By ensuring the employees can access greater flexibility in their working arrangements to support them while experiencing symptoms associated with the menopause, Queen’s can fulfil its obligation to be a responsible employer providing an adequate duty of care. To further understand the implications of this, we have reviewed the CIPD’s [Guide to Managing Menopause at Work](https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/line-manager-guide-to-menopause_tcm18-95174.pdf) which confirms that “menopausal women are the fastest growing demographic in the workplace”, and despite this, menopause is not generally talked about openly. CIPD recommend that one action that can be taken to support those experiencing menopausal symptoms is to consider a “change or adjustment to…work or working hours to enable [the employee/s] to perform to their full potential”. “Flexibility – of the kind that is responsive and based on individual need on a day-to-day basis – is seen as crucial to helping staff cope with unpredictable and fluctuating symptoms”. This suggests that the introduction of greater opportunities for flexible working will be advantageous to those experiencing the menopause.**Internal data/feedback**In late 2019, Queen’s Gender Initiative (QGI) issued a survey, ‘[The COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdown: Understanding the Issues and Engendering Solutions for Queen’s Staff’](https://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/QueensGenderInitiative/EngenderingSolutionsProject/). This survey focused on the impact of lockdown and working from home on workload and productivity; and considered lived-experience of increase in caring responsibilities or domestic work, burnout and career progression; and also looked at potential mitigations and future learnings about the way we work. The study clearly found that ‘women spent a larger proportion of their working day caregiving compared with men’, and that this trend was a continuation of pre-pandemic patterns. Therefore, it is clear that women do more caregiving then men. The survey also reported a greater impact on wellbeing among women who were more likely to report feeling tired or having difficulty sleeping. When asked for suggestions on how to mitigate against these issues, participants regularly cited flexible and remote working, indicating that both would impact positively on personal circumstances such a commute and caring roles. While this survey was specifically focussed on the working experience during the Pandemic, it is clear that many of the themes raised are equally valid outside of this context. Equally, it is clear that greater access to flexible working solutions would have a tangible positive impact for all, particularly women, given their greater role in providing care and completing domestic work in the home. Additionally, in January 2020, Queen’s issued an all staff Pulse Survey to gauge colleagues’ experiences of working, specifically during the Covid-19 Pandemic. There were no notable differences between male and female responses to the question regarding satisfaction with the wellbeing support provided by Queen’s. However, in the free text comments, the ability to work flexibly was the most commonly cited response from staff and had clear links to wellbeing, work-life balance and sense of trust. Access to flexible working would clearly enable staff to better balance caring responsibilities, and we know already that such responsibilities are more likely to be undertaken by women. The updates to the Formal Flexible Working Policy and addition of the Agile Working Toolkit are intended to introduce this access to flexibility and therefore will have a positive impact on all colleagues, particularly women. These findings are further reinforced by feedback from staff groups during the consultation period, most notably, the Carers Network who indicated that many carers are women and therefore the introduction of the Agile Working Toolkit will have a positive impact in providing greater access to flexible working opportunities.  |
| Disability | **Internal Source Data****Staff Profile**The following statistics provide a breakdown of staff according to disability.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Disability** | **Count** | **Percentage** |
| Yes | 318 | 7.27% |
| No | 2991 | 68.33% |
| Not Known | 1068 | 24.40% |
| **Total** | **4377** | **100.00%** |

The following statistics provide a breakdown of staff according to disability and working type

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | Broad Disability | Data |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|   | No |   | Not Known |   | Yes |   | Total Count of Per No | Total % |
| Ft Pt | Count of Per No | % | Count of Per No | % | Count of Per No | % |   |   |
| Full-time Total | 2428 | 67.86% | 903 | 25.24% | 247 | 6.90% | 3578 | 100.00% |
| Job share Total | 33 | 75.00% | 5 | 11.36% | 6 | 13.64% | 44 | 100.00% |
| Part-time Total | 506 | 69.22% | 152 | 20.79% | 73 | 9.99% | 731 | 100.00% |
| **Grand Total** | **2967** | **68.16%** | **1060** | **24.35%** | **326** | **7.49%** | **4353** | **100.00%** |

**External Source Data**We reviewed the ECNI [Unified Guide to Promoting Equal Opportunities](https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/Unifiedguidetopromotingequalopps2009.pdf). The Guide advises that Employers who operate inflexible working practices, such as requiring all employees to work to traditional “9 to 5” working patterns, may deny equality of opportunity to some employees. The persons who are most likely to suffer particular disadvantages compared to other people because of these conflicts include some disabled persons, for example if they need particular reasonable adjustments, such as time-off for rest periods or to attend for medical treatment. The ECNI advised that such practices may even, depending on the particular circumstances of each case, amount to unlawful disability discrimination.We reviewed the [ECNI Key Inequalities in Employment](https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Delivering%20Equality/Employment-KeyInequalitiesStatement.pdf) report. The report highlighted that there is a persistent gap between people with and without disabilities. People with a disability are more likely to be not working and not actively looking for work (economically inactive) than people without disabilities; consequently, they are much less likely to be in employment than people without disabilities. Disabled people are less likely to be working than non-disabled people with equivalent qualifications. People with disabilities, however, face wider barriers such as access to transport, the physical environment and limited support in employment, all of which can impact on their ability to participate in employmentWe reviewed the ECNI [Model Flexible Working Policy](https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/Model%20policies/Flexible_Working_Policy.pdf) which provides advice to employers on matters for inclusion in a flexible working policy states that some employees make flexible working requests for reasons due to caring responsibilities (e.g. caring for a child or another dependant). However, other employees may make requests for other reasons, including, but not restricted to, they:• have a disability and, in relation to which, it will be necessary for us to consider our obligations under the “reasonable adjustment duty” of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1995* • are approaching retirement • wish to mark religious observances • wish to prioritise other aspects of their lives.The Model policy states that one of the principles that employers should bear in mind is that the policy and procedure will be applied consistently and fairly to all applicants and requests must not be rejected on the grounds of an applicant’s sex, religious belief, political opinion, race, sexual orientation, age or because he/she is disabled.The Equality Commission and Labour Relations Agency Guidance on [The Right to Request Flexible Working: A Guide for Employers](https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/Flexible-Working-RightToRequest.pdf) states that a policy of rejecting all flexible working requests is likely to be considered as a contravention of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and its reasonable adjustment duty. The reasonable adjustment duty envisages that depending what is reasonable in the circumstances, that an employer might alter an employees working hours, place of work or allow him or her to take time off for relevant medical treatment. The ECNI [Disability Code of Practice in Employment](https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/DisabilityEmploymentCoPupdatedMay13.pdf) sets out some practical flexible working examples as to how employers might meet the reasonable adjustment duty, including, additional time off for rehabilitation, facilitating part time working, additional breaks to overcome fatigue as a result of a disability, adjusting hours, phased returns to work, working from home for a time or working less hours. The ECNI also recommend that an advertisement that specifies that flexible working is available may encourage more disabled applicants to apply.Guidance by the ECNI on [Supporting Employees Affected by Cancer](https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/EmployeesAffectedByCancer.pdf) advises employers to:* Be flexible, listen, understand and ask- An employee may remain at work throughout their treatment. During the treatment or when they return to work they will need responsive and flexible support;
* Ensure a smooth transition back to work for your employee. Be prepared to review and amend reasonable adjustments as the employees needs change.

We reviewed [Unison’s Flexible Working Guide](https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2017/01/Flexible-Working-Guide-Jan-2017.pdf) which states that where a disabled member has difficulty working certain hours or at a particular location or carrying out certain duties because of his/her disability, the employer must make reasonable adjustments. Unison highlight that reasonable adjustments can include for example, adjusting premises, providing information in accessible formats, acquiring or modifying equipment, adjusting hours, reallocating duties, allowing home-working, allowing some time off for medical treatment. Unison highlighted that the effect of the member’s disability may mean that s/he needs certain adjustments to his/her hours or to work partially at home. Unison’s Guide states that there is no duty to make adjustments to enable the member to care for someone else who is disabled. The duty to make reasonable adjustments applies only to making adjustments for the disabled person, not for someone else. We reviewed an article from [Personnel Today](https://www.personneltoday.com/hr/neurodiversity-post-lockdown-coronavirus-advice/) in July 2020 which considered how neurodivergent staff could be supported on the post COVID19 lockdown workplace. The article highlighted “Neurodivergent people are often significantly more productive and under less personal strain when distanced from workplace/commuting, sensory overload and non-essential social interactions.” The authors emphasised the need for employers to “accommodate individual working preferences as opposed to making staff adapt to a one-size-fits-all model.” A report by CIPD in September 2020 on [Embedding New Ways of Working: Implications for the Post Pandemic Workplace](https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/embedding-new-ways-working-post-pandemic_tcm18-83907.pdf) reported working from home on a regular basis is expected to rise to 37% of the workforce on average, roughly double the pre-crisis incidence average of 18%. The report highlighted a number of benefits, e.g. a better work–life balance (cited by 61%), followed by greater collaboration (43%), greater ability to focus with fewer distractions (38%), and IT upskilling (33%). Less widespread were enhanced health and wellbeing (20%), the ability to meet work targets (14%), and higher levels of motivation (13%). The report also highlighted the wide range of health and wellbeing concerns employees have as a result of the pandemic. The top two most commonly reported concerns by employees were fear and anxiety about themselves or their loved ones becoming ill and the negative impact of isolation and loneliness on their mental wellbeing. Concerns related to homeworking were commonly reported: 35% of employers say poor work–life balance due to homeworking, for example as a result of the difficulty of balancing work and childcare, is a commonly reported problem by staff. A further 26% of employers say that increased stress due to new demands or challenges of homeworking is a major cause of concern for staff. One of the report’s conclusions stated“While supportive of more homeworking, many employers acknowledge that some employees are keen to return to the workplace, due in part to poor homeworking environments and limited social interaction. In addition, some employers highlight other challenges with homeworking, such as reduced mental wellbeing, staff collaboration and line management – which they say would be overcome if workers were in the office at least some of the time. These findings may offer some explanation as to why employers are much more likely to predict a sharp rise in partial homeworking as opposed to those who expect full-time homeworking to increase in future.”The report also found that there was little indication that other forms of flexible working will be adopted with the same enthusiasm as homeworking following the crisis and concluded that their findings underlined the need to make the right to request flexible working a day-one right to boost the uptake of wider flexible working arrangements to help offset the risk of creating a two-tier workforce.[Advance HE’s ‘Hybrid Higher: Hybrid working and leadership in higher education Leadership Intelligence Report’](https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/advance-he/AdvHE_Hybrid%20Higher_Leadership%20report_1626274044.pdf?X-Amz-Content-Sha256=UNSIGNED-PAYLOAD&X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIATYAYEYO3HUY745WI%2F20211007%2Feu-west-2%2Fs3%2Faws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20211007T080929Z&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Expires=604800&X-Amz-Signature=4535b84de8161e4d7a4a47ae4ef343f9b448567adba4029cc10c0bc753852e56), published July 2021, suggests that the increase in Hybrid Working as we emerge from the Pandemic has impacted on the nature of certain job roles, with tasks and expectations changing. Equally, with a weakened divide between home and on-campus working, there is greater need for greater humanity and empathy in our approach to those we manage and work with, and a recognition of how working in a more flexible, hybrid manner may support and alleviate home pressures. The report further indicates that a hybrid working model does pose a challenge in terms of fairness and inclusion, warning that there is a need to avoid ‘in groups’ and ‘out groups’. It considers how visibility, exposure and networking are all crucial for progression and career development, and therefore we need to be intentional about avoiding unintended consequences of hybrid working that may disproportionately impact certain groups or individuals. However, this is balanced by the suggestion that moving to a hybrid working model provides an opportunity to address existing inequalities within the workplace, providing a voice for traditionally marginalised group and capitalising on the best parts of the working experience during the pandemic. Crucially, this research encourages all new working practices to be experimental, focussing on an initial trial period to test their effectiveness before evaluating and revising as required. It is clear that. The research warns against equating consistency with fairness, surmising that one size will not fit all and there is a need to allow for differentiated outcomes. ‘Hybrid Higher’ points out that the pandemic and associated mandated home working has been beneficial for some disadvantaged groups and it is important to take this good practice forward as we move into the post-pandemic period. In particular, the report highlights the need to ensure those with disabilities or special needs have reasonable adjustments in place when working from home.**Internal data/feedback**An extensive consultation was undertaken throughout the development of the Agile Working Toolkit and revision of the Formal Flexible Working policy. One of the staff groups consulted was the Staff Disability Support Network, which which represents the best interests of those with disabilities in Queen’s. This group did not raise any fundamental perceived concerns with the proposed changes or approach and all feedback provided has been considered and taken into account when producing the final Toolkit.  |
| Dependants | **Internal Source Data****Staff Profile**The following statistics provide a breakdown of staff according to whether they have dependants.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|   | **Count** | **Percentage** |
| Inserted picture RelID:1Not known | 431 | 9.85% |
| No | 1967 | 44.94% |
| Yes | 1979 | 45.21% |
| **Total** | **4377** | **100.00%** |

**Breakdown by Type of Dependants**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Count** | **Percentage** |
| Care of all three dependant groups | 14 | 0.71% |
| Care of both a dependant older person and disabled person(s) | 20 | 1.01% |
| Not Known | 35 | 1.77% |
| Care of both children and disabled person(s) | 45 | 2.27% |
| Care of a person/persons with a disability/disabilities | 52 | 2.63% |
| Care of both children and a dependant older person | 78 | 3.94% |
| Care of a dependant older person(s) | 109 | 5.51% |
| Care of a child/children | 1626 | 82.16% |
| **Total** | **1979** | **100.00%** |

These statistics provide a breakdown of staff according to dependants and working type.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Dependants** | **Data** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | **No** |  | **Not Known** |  | **Yes** |  | **Total Count of Per No** | **Total %** |
| **Ft Pt** | **Count of Per No** | **%** | **Count of Per No** | **%** | **Count of Per No** | **%** |  |  |
| Full-time Total | 1674 | 46.79% | 350 | 9.78% | 1554 | 43.43% | 3578 | 100.00% |
| Job share Total | 8 | 18.18% | 5 | 11.36% | 31 | 70.45% | 44 | 100.00% |
| Part-time Total | 234 | 32.01% | 73 | 9.99% | 424 | 58.00% | 731 | 100.00% |
| **Grand Total** | **1916** | **44.02%** | **428** | **9.83%** | **2009** | **46.15%** | **4353** | **100.00%** |

External Source DataWe reviewed the ECNI [Unified Guide to Promoting Equal Opportunities](https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/Unifiedguidetopromotingequalopps2009.pdf). The Guide advises that Employers who operate inflexible working practices, such as requiring all employees to work to traditional “9 to 5” working patterns, may deny equality of opportunity to some employees, including for example where the employees’ particular personal, caring or family responsibilities conflict with the strict work patterns laid down by their employers. The persons who are most likely to suffer particular disadvantages compared to other people because of these conflicts include persons, particularly women, who require time off to attend to their parental and caring responsibilities. Such practices may even, depending on the particular circumstances of each case amount to indirect sex discrimination.We reviewed the ECNI [Model Flexible Working Policy](https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/Model%20policies/Flexible_Working_Policy.pdf) which provides advice to employers on matters for inclusion in a flexible working policy states that some employees make flexible working requests for reasons due to caring responsibilities (e.g. caring for a child or another dependant). However, other employees may make requests for other reasons, including, but not restricted to, they:• have a disability and, in relation to which, it will be necessary for us to consider our obligations under the “reasonable adjustment duty” of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1995* • are approaching retirement • wish to mark religious observances • wish to prioritise other aspects of their lives.The Model policy states that one of the principles that employers should bear in mind is that the policy and procedure will be applied consistently and fairly to all applicants and requests must not be rejected on the grounds of an applicant’s sex, religious belief, political opinion, race, sexual orientation, age or because he/she is disabled.The Equality Commission and Labour Relations Agency Guidance on [The Right to Request Flexible Working: A Guide for Employers](https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/Flexible-Working-RightToRequest.pdf) states that a policy of rejecting all flexible working requests could be regarded as indirect discrimination on the grounds of sex. Such a policy is more likely to unfairly disadvantage women than men on the basis that women still assume the bulk of family caring responsibilities and therefore are more likely to request flexible working arrangements than male employees. On the other hand, a policy of only granting the requests of female employees most probably based on the perception that only women will require time off in respect of caring responsibilities, is likely to be considered as direct discrimination on the grounds of sex, i.e. direct discrimination against male employees.This is echoed in [Unison’s Flexible Working Guide](https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2017/01/Flexible-Working-Guide-Jan-2017.pdf) which states that imposing flexible shifts on women with childcare or refusing to allow women to adjust their hours for childcare reasons will usually be indirect sex discrimination under equality legislation, unless the employer can justify its actions. Less frequently, direct discrimination and victimisation law may apply. According to Unison most flexible working cases rely on indirect sex discrimination law. But occasionally direct discrimination might apply. For example it is direct sex discrimination to refuse the member’s request because she is a woman (or, equally, because the member is a man). This can occur due to conscious or unconscious stereotypes in the employer’s mind about male and female roles and likely future behaviour, for example, an employer refuses to allow a male employee to work part-time for childcare reasons but would have agreed if he was female.There has been a plethora of research and commentary highlighting the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on those with caring responsibilities. We reviewed the ECNI guidance on [The post-lockdown return to work and the impacts on employees with caring responsibilities](https://www.equalityni.org/ECNI/media/ECNI/Publications/Employers%20and%20Service%20Providers/CaringAfterLockdown.pdf). The ECNI noted that tensions between employment and caring may be a source of concern for employees of both sexes, but traditionally they have affected more women than men, for various reasons. According to the ECNI, these concerns are often identified as a potential cause of indirect sex discrimination against women, especially where they result in a woman with caring responsibilities being unable to obtain or remain in work unless its terms are modified, e.g. through the provision of reduced hours or changes to start or end times or to shift patterns. The ECNI stated that many employees may already have flexible working arrangements that continue to satisfactorily meet their caring needs when they return to work. However, for other employees, there may now be a need for new or modified flexible working arrangements due to changes in their circumstances, as a result of the pandemic.[Shoosmiths](https://www.shoosmiths.co.uk/insights/articles/covid19/covid-19-and-its-impact-on-women-at-work), a UK law firm highlighted that where women could continue in work, they were less likely to be able to do so (or dedicate the same amount of time to work) due to childcare responsibilities, highlighting that women may find it difficult to return to pre-pandemic work levels due to a potential recession and limited childcare provision. To mitigate these issues, Shoosmiths recommended that businesses should consider whether greater flexibility can be offered, for example, working from home more regularly or adjusting of working hours within a working day as needed. They emphasised that “a culture of trust will be imperative in businesses which are now working more flexibly, so that employees feel able, and supported, to get the job done in a way that works with their other responsibilities.”[People Management](https://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/news/articles/just-one-in-10-parents-want-to-return-to-the-office-full-time?utm_source=mc&utm_medium=email&utm_content=pm_daily_29062020.Just+one+in+10+parents+want+to+return+to+the+office+full+time%2c+survey+finds&utm_campaign=7295441&utm_term=4649655) from 29 June 2020 highlighted survey findings that only one in 10 parents want to return to the office full time after the COVID19 lockdown.[People Management](https://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/experts/legal/how-might-lockdown-improve-flexibility-for-working-fathers) reported on 14 Sep 2020 that in research conducted during lockdown, almost two-thirds of fathers would like to work flexibly in the future to spend more time with their family. The article states that employers can play an important part in creating options for fathers, including:* Challenging stigmas around flexible working and home working. This pandemic has shown us that remote working does not necessarily need to lead to a reduction in productivity. Managers need to have conversations about visibility and what that means where a person is not in the office all the time. Is there a need for ‘virtual visibility’?
* Identifying senior male flexible working role models and getting them to share their story. It is powerful to hear first-hand from a leader that they have made a success out of remote working and they see this as a way forward.
* Moving away from a culture of presenteeism and focusing on output.
* Considering whether roles can be offered on a flexible basis, and investing in other paid leave policies to support working fathers.

[CIPD](https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/relations/flexible-working/during-COVID-19-and-beyond) highlighted in November 2020 that many employers choose to enhance their flexible working policies to go above and beyond the statutory minimum requirements, including allowing employees to request flexible working from day one of employment.In February 2021 CIPD launched a campaign as the shift to home working has exposed lack of flexible working opportunities for all and risks divisions in how employees feel they are treated. Workers in Britain are facing inequality due to a stark difference in employers’ approaches to flexible working, with nearly half (46%) of employees saying they do not have flexible working arrangements - such as flexi-time, part-time working, compressed hours or job shares - in their current role. This is according to research from the CIPD, the professional body for HR and people development. In response, and to promote fairness and inclusion at work, the CIPD is launching a new campaign, #FlexFrom1st, encouraging employers to support flexible working for all and the right to request flexible working from day one of employment. To reinforce these principles, the CIPD is also calling for a change in law to make the right to request flexible working a day-one right for all employees.In June 2021 shadow children’s minister Tulip Siddiq introduced the Flexible Working Bill, aimed at giving workers a right to flexible working arrangements. Siddiq said the Bill, introduced through the Ten Minute Rule, would “give workers the right to flexible working from the first day of employment, except in exceptional circumstances” and “require employers to offer flexible working arrangements in employment contracts and advertise the available types of such flexibility in vacancy notices.” The Bill will have its second reading on Friday 19 November where it may be debated and will then be voted on. If successful, the bill will move onto the committee stage, where each clause and any changes will be further debated.[Advance HE’s ‘Hybrid Higher: Hybrid working and leadership in higher education Leadership Intelligence Report’](https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/assets.creode.advancehe-document-manager/documents/advance-he/AdvHE_Hybrid%20Higher_Leadership%20report_1626274044.pdf?X-Amz-Content-Sha256=UNSIGNED-PAYLOAD&X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIATYAYEYO3HUY745WI%2F20211007%2Feu-west-2%2Fs3%2Faws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20211007T080929Z&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Expires=604800&X-Amz-Signature=4535b84de8161e4d7a4a47ae4ef343f9b448567adba4029cc10c0bc753852e56), published July 2021, suggests that the increase in Hybrid Working as we emerge from the Pandemic has impacted on the nature of certain job roles, with tasks and expectations changing. Equally, with a weakened divide between home and on-campus working, there is greater need for greater humanity and empathy in our approach to those we manage and work with, and a recognition of how working in a more flexible, hybrid manner may support and alleviate home pressures. The report further indicates that a hybrid working model does pose a challenge in terms of fairness and inclusion, warning that there is a need to avoid ‘in groups’ and ‘out groups’. It considers how visibility, exposure and networking are all crucial for progression and career development, and therefore we need to be intentional about avoiding unintended consequences of hybrid working that may disproportionately impact certain groups or individuals. However, this is balanced by the suggestion that moving to a hybrid working model provides an opportunity to address existing inequalities within the workplace, providing a voice for traditionally marginalised group and capitalising on the best parts of the working experience during the pandemic. Crucially, this research encourages all new working practices to be experimental, focussing on an initial trial period to test their effectiveness before evaluating and revising as required. It is clear that. The research warns against equating consistency with fairness, surmising that one size will not fit all and there is a need to allow for differentiated outcomes. ‘Hybrid Higher’ points out that the pandemic and associated mandated home working has been beneficial for some disadvantaged groups and it is important to take this good practice forward as we move into the post-pandemic period.**Internal data/feedback**An extensive consultation was undertaken throughout the development of the Agile Working Toolkit and revision of the Formal Flexible Working policy. One of the staff groups consulted was the Carers’ Network, which enables those with caring responsibilities who work at Queen’s to meet to discuss relevant issues. This group did not raise any fundamental perceived concerns with the proposed changes or approach. Some feedback highlighted the need for greater clarity about how agile working practices can be best used to support working carers, particularly around attendance at appointments. This feedback, along with all that provided by the Network, has been taken into account when producing the final Toolkit. The all Staff Pulse Survey, conducted early 2020, did not indicate specific differences in responses to the quantitative questions asked, including that concerning provision of staff wellbeing. However, caring was clearly cited as a common reason for relying on flexible working practices, indicating that the introduction of Agile Working would benefit those with caring responsibilitiesIn late 2019, Queen’s Gender Initiative (QGI) issued a survey, ‘[The COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdown: Understanding the Issues and Engendering Solutions for Queen’s Staff’](https://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/QueensGenderInitiative/EngenderingSolutionsProject/). This survey focused on the impact of lockdown and working from home on workload and productivity; and considered lived-experience of increase in caring responsibilities or domestic work, burnout and career progression; and also looked at potential mitigations and future learnings about the way we work. The study clearly found that ‘women spent a larger proportion of their working day caregiving compared with men’, and that this trend was a continuation of pre-pandemic patterns. Therefore, it is clear that women do more caregiving then men. The survey also reported a greater impact on wellbeing among women who were more likely to report feeling tired or having difficulty sleeping. When asked for suggestions on how to mitigate against these issues, participants regularly cited flexible and remote working, indicating that both would impact positively on personal circumstances such a commute and caring roles. While this survey was specifically focussed on the working experience during the Pandemic, it is clear that many of the themes raised are equally valid outside of this context. Equally, it is clear that greater access to flexible working solutions would have a tangible positive impact for those with caring responsibilities.  |

**F. Needs, experiences and priorities**

Having looked at the data/information you have collected in the question above, what does this tell you are the needs, experiences and priorities for the people who fall into the groups below, in relation to your policy[[2]](#footnote-3)? And what is the actual or likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by the policy. **(See appendix 1 for information on levels of impact).**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Section 75 category** | **Details of needs/experiences/priorities and details of policy impact** | **Level of Impact** |
| Religious belief | Having reviewed at the data, the revised policy and guidance will provide equality of opportunity to all staff and will not adversely impact on the needs, experiences and priorities of this Section 75 Group. The policy and guidance should therefore have a positive impact on this Section 75 Group. | Minor and positive  |
| Political opinion | Having reviewed at the data, the revised policy and guidance will provide equality of opportunity to all staff and will not adversely impact on the needs, experiences and priorities of this Section 75 Group. The policy and guidance should therefore have a positive impact on this Section 75 Group. | Minor and positive  |
| Racial group | Having reviewed at the data, the revised policy and guidance will provide equality of opportunity to all staff and will not adversely impact on the needs, experiences and priorities of this Section 75 Group. The policy and guidance should therefore have a positive impact on this Section 75 Group. | Minor and positive  |
| Age | Having reviewed at the data, the revised policy and guidance will provide equality of opportunity to all staff and will not adversely impact on the needs, experiences and priorities of this Section 75 Group. The policy and guidance should therefore have a positive impact on this Section 75 Group. | Minor and positive  |
| Marital status | Having reviewed at the data, the revised policy and guidance will provide equality of opportunity to all staff and will not adversely impact on the needs, experiences and priorities of this Section 75 Group. The policy and guidance should therefore have a positive impact on this Section 75 Group. | Minor and positive  |
| Sexual orientation | Having reviewed at the data, the revised policy and guidance will provide equality of opportunity to all staff and will not adversely impact on the needs, experiences and priorities of this Section 75 Group. The policy and guidance should therefore have a positive impact on this Section 75 Group. | Minor and positive  |
| Men and women generally | It is clear from the data review and feedback gathered that introducing greater opportunities for Agile Working will be of benefit to both men and women. However, in light of the evidence that women tend to have greater degree of caring and childcare responsibilities than men, this new approach to how we work at Queen’s will be of particular benefit to women in this position (although not at the expense of men). For example, the Agile Working Toolkit explicitly provides examples of working practices that support those juggling caring or childcare responsibilities. Types of working practices such as Hybrid working, self-rostering, shift swapping and staggered start and finish times are also included to support those with childcare drop offs and pick ups. Having reviewed at the data, the revised policy and guidance will provide equality of opportunity to all staff and will not adversely impact on the needs, experiences and priorities of this Section 75 Group. The policy and guidance should therefore have a positive impact on this Section 75 Group. | Minor and positive  |
| Disability | Feedback gathered throughout this consultation – namely from the staff Disability Network – indicates that those with a disability may benefit from some of the agile working practices set out in the Toolkit, for example, greater access to hybrid working, staggered start and finish times and the ability to attend appointments during working hours with prior agreement that any time lost will be made up elsewhere. Therefore, it is clear that the introduction of the Agile Working approach will be of benefit to this particular staff group. The guidance specifically references equipment and technology provision for those staff with a disability to facilitate homeworking and/or hybrid working. It also references the need to complete DSE assessments when working from home. Having reviewed at the data, the revised policy and guidance will provide equality of opportunity to all staff and will not adversely impact on the needs, experiences and priorities of this Section 75 Group. The policy and guidance should therefore have a positive impact on this Section 75 Group. | Minor and positive  |
| Dependants | It is clear from the feedback gathered that those with dependents will particularly benefit from the introduction of the Agile Working approach. The Toolkit makes repeated reference to the need to consider the requirements of those with dependents when devising Team Standards. It also uses multiple examples of situations involving staff members with dependents when describing the types of flexible working opportunities that may be available. The Toolkit also addresses the question around how agile working can support childcare or caring responsibilities and provides a clear description of the provisions in place to do so but also the limitations of this, signposting as appropriate, to other related support policies such as Dependents Leave. Having reviewed at the data, the revised policy and guidance will provide equality of opportunity to all staff and will not adversely impact on the needs, experiences and priorities of this Section 75 Group. The policy and guidance should therefore have a positive impact on this Section 75 Group. | Minor and positive  |

**Part 2** **Screening questions**

|  |
| --- |
| **1 What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories?** |
| **Section 75 category**  | **Issue** | **Minor/major/none?** |
| Religious belief | The revised policy reflects the legislative framework which provides that all eligible staff have the statutory right, irrespective of reasons to have the right to request flexible working. The revised policy provides in section 1.1 that “As an Equal Opportunities employer, Queen’s University recognises and values flexibility within our workforce and understands the importance of helping our staff to balance their work and personal life, as well as helping to attract and retain the best global talent.” In addition, an equality and diversity statement is included in section 9.To complement the revised policy, an Agile Working Toolkit has been developed. The guidance promotes and provides support for managers and staff when putting in place informal flexible working arrangements. The University’s [Flexible Working Guiding Principles](https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/annual-family-other-leave/work-life-balance-policies/) also aim to support managers in dealing with flexible working requests.The revised policy and new Agile Working Toolkit are likely to have a positive impact including on the grounds of religious belief. | Minor and positive  |
| Political opinion  | The revised policy reflects the legislative framework which provides that all eligible staff have the statutory right to have the right to request flexible working, irrespective of reasons. The revised policy provides in section 1.1 that “As an Equal Opportunities employer, Queen’s University recognises the potential benefits that flexible working and a better work-life balance can bring to our employees and our organisation as well as helping to attract and retain the best global talent.” In addition, an equality and diversity statement is included in section 9.To complement the revised policy, an Agile Working Toolkit has been developed.. The guidance promotes and provides support for managers and staff when putting in place informal flexible working arrangements. The University’s [Flexible Working Guiding Principles](https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/annual-family-other-leave/work-life-balance-policies/) also aim to support managers in dealing with flexible working requests. The revised policy and new Agile Working Toolkit are likely to have a positive impact regardless of political opinion. | Minor and positive  |
| Racial group  | The revised policy reflects the legislative framework which provides that all eligible staff have the statutory right, to have the right to request flexible working irrespective of reasons. The revised policy provides in section 1.1 that “As an Equal Opportunities employer, Queen’s University recognises the potential benefits that flexible working and a better work-life balance can bring to our employees and our organisation as well as helping to attract and retain the best global talent.” In addition, an equality and diversity statement is included in section 9.To complement the revised policy, an Agile Working Toolkit has been developed. The guidance promotes and provides support for managers and staff when putting in place informal flexible working arrangements. The University’s [Flexible Working Guiding Principles](https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/annual-family-other-leave/work-life-balance-policies/) also aim to support managers in dealing with flexible working requests. tThe revised policy and new Agile Working Toolkit are likely to have a positive impact, regardless of racial opinion.The Formal Flexible Working policy has been updated based on feedback to ensure that all staff members have a Day One right to request a formal flexible working arrangement. The Formal Flexible Working application form has been updated based on feedback to ensure even applications that are rejected initially are returned to the HR Hub for reporting. This will enable a record to be kept of rejected applications and allow any trends to be identified and investigated if required. | Minor and positive  |
| Age | The revised policy reflects the legislative framework which provides that all eligible staff have the statutory right, irrespective of reasons to have the right to request flexible working. The revised policy provides in section 1.1 that “As an Equal Opportunities employer, Queen’s University recognises the potential benefits that flexible working and a better work-life balance can bring to our employees and our organisation, as well as helping to attract and retain the best global talent.” In addition, an equality and diversity statement is included in section 9.To complement the revised policy, an Agile Working Toolkit has been developed. The guidance promotes and provides support for managers and staff when putting in place informal flexible working arrangements. The University’s [Flexible Working Guiding Principles](https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/annual-family-other-leave/work-life-balance-policies/) also aim to support managers in dealing with flexible working requests.The revised policy and new Agile Working Toolkit are likely to have a positive impact, regardless of age.The Formal Flexible Working policy has been updated based on feedback to ensure that all staff members have a Day One right to request a formal flexible working arrangement. The Formal Flexible Working application form has been updated based on feedback to ensure even applications that are rejected initially are returned to the HR Hub for reporting. This will enable a record to be kept of rejected applications and allow any trends to be identified and investigated if required. | Minor and positive |
| Marital status  | The revised policy reflects the legislative framework which provides that all eligible staff have the statutory right, irrespective of reasons to have the right to request flexible working. The revised policy provides in section 1.1 that “As an Equal Opportunities employer, Queen’s University recognises the potential benefits that flexible working and a better work-life balance can bring to our employees and our organisation, as well as helping to attract and retain the best global talent.” In addition, an equality and diversity statement is included in section 9.To complement the revised policy, an Agile Working Toolkit has been developed. The guidance promotes and provides support for managers and staff when putting in place informal flexible working arrangements. The University’s [Flexible Working Guiding Principles](https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/annual-family-other-leave/work-life-balance-policies/) also aim to support managers in dealing with flexible working requests.The revised policy and new Agile Working Toolkit are likely to have a positive impact, regardless of marital status.The Formal Flexible Working policy has been updated based on feedback to ensure that all staff members have a Day One right to request a formal flexible working arrangement. The Formal Flexible Working application form has been updated based on feedback to ensure even applications that are rejected initially are returned to the HR Hub for reporting. This will enable a record to be kept of rejected applications and allow any trends to be identified and investigated if required. | Minor and positive  |
| Sexual orientation | The revised policy reflects the legislative framework which provides that all eligible staff have the statutory right, irrespective of reasons to have the right to request flexible working. The revised policy provides in section 1.1 that “As an Equal Opportunities employer, Queen’s University recognises the potential benefits that flexible working and a better work-life balance can bring to our employees and our organisation , as well as helping to attract and retain the best global talent.” In addition, an equality and diversity statement is included in section 9.To complement the revised policy, an Agile Working Toolkit has been developed. The guidance promotes and provides support for managers and staff when putting in place informal flexible working arrangements. The University’s [Flexible Working Guiding Principles](https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/annual-family-other-leave/work-life-balance-policies/) also aim to support managers in dealing with flexible working requests.The revised policy and new Agile Working Toolkit are likely to have a positive impact, regardless of sexual orientation.The Formal Flexible Working policy has been updated based on feedback to ensure that all staff members have a Day One right to request a formal flexible working arrangement. The Formal Flexible Working application form has been updated based on feedback to ensure even applications that are rejected initially are returned to the HR Hub for reporting. This will enable a record to be kept of rejected applications and allow any trends to be identified and investigated if required. | Minor and positive  |
| Men and women generally  | The revised policy reflects the legislative framework which provides that all eligible staff have the statutory right, irrespective of reasons to have the right to request flexible working. The revised policy provides in section 1.1 that “As an Equal Opportunities employer, Queen’s University recognises the potential benefits that flexible working and a better work-life balance can bring to our employees and our organisation , as well as helping to attract and retain the best global talent.” In addition, an equality and diversity statement is included in section 9.To complement the revised policy, an Agile Working Toolkit has been developed. The guidance promotes and provides support for managers and staff when putting in place informal flexible working arrangements. The University’s [Flexible Working Guiding Principles](https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/annual-family-other-leave/work-life-balance-policies/) also aim to support managers in dealing with flexible working requests.The revised policy and new Agile Working Toolkit are likely to have a positive impact, including on the grounds of gender.  | Minor and positive  |
| Disability | The revised policy reflects the legislative framework which provides that all eligible staff have the statutory right, irrespective of reasons to have the right to request flexible working. The revised policy provides in section 1.1 that “As an Equal Opportunities employer, Queen’s University recognises the potential benefits that flexible working and a better work-life balance can bring to our employees and our organisation , as well as helping to attract and retain the best global talent.” In addition, an equality and diversity statement is included in section 9.To complement the revised policy, an Agile Working Toolkit has been developed. The guidance promotes and provides support for managers and staff when putting in place informal flexible working arrangements. The guide states that “when considering requests from disabled employees in relation to disability-related requests for flexible working, remember that we owe a duty to make reasonable adjustments to those employees and that a failure to comply with the duty is unlawful disability discrimination.”The University’s [Flexible Working Guiding Principles](https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/annual-family-other-leave/work-life-balance-policies/) also aim to support managers in dealing with flexible working requests. The revised policy and new Agile Working Toolkit are likely to have a positive impact, on the grounds of disability. | Minor and positive |
| Dependants  | The revised policy reflects the legislative framework which provides that all eligible staff have the statutory right, irrespective of reasons to have the right to request flexible working. The revised policy provides in section 1.1 that “As an Equal Opportunities employer, Queen’s University recognises the potential benefits that flexible working and a better work-life balance can bring to our employees and our organisation, as well as helping to attract and retain the best global talent.” In addition, an equality and diversity statement is included in section 9.To complement the revised policy, an Agile Working Toolkit, has been developed. The guidance promotes and provides support for managers and staff when putting in place informal flexible working arrangements. The University’s [Flexible Working Guiding Principles](https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/annual-family-other-leave/work-life-balance-policies/) also aim to support managers in dealing with flexible working requests.The revised policy and new Agile Working Toolkit are likely to have a positive impact impact, for those with and without dependants. |  |

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| --- |
| **2 Are there any actions which could be taken to reduce any adverse impact which has been identified or opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity?** |
| Section 75 category  | Issue | Mitigating Measure |
| Religious belief | Whilst no adverse impacts have been identified, there are a number of further opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity. The policy has been revised to enable all staff members to make flexible working requests after 26 weeks service and the policy has been supplemented by the new informal flexibility working guidance, which is available to all staff**,** further demonstrating the University’s commitment as an equal opportunities employer. The Formal Flexible Working application form has been updated based on feedback to ensure even applications that are rejected initially are returned to the HR Hub for reporting. This will enable a record to be kept of rejected applications and allow any trends to be identified and investigated if requiredThe revised policy and Toolkit will be promoted to all staff there will be significant support in place including: * Briefing and Information Sessions – held weekly for the month following the launch and thereafter as required. Open to all staff and intended to inform and equip staff to understand the agile working opportunities that may be open to them
* Agile Working Manager Sessions aimed at improving the skills of line mangers responsible for managing within an agile working environment
* Regular monthly Drop-in clinics – open to all staff to ask questions, raise concerns or provide any other feedback
* Monthly Manager Support Network – due to launch in January 2022 and aimed at creating a support network to ensure managers are empowered to make a smooth transition to an agile working workplace. These will be semi-structured and facilitated, with different topical themes each month, e.g. childcare, equipment and technology etc.

Case studies are included within the Toolkit as examples of best practice in agile working and there is a range of resources to support manager and staff as they consider agile working arrangements including a Template for Team Standards. Ongoing reviews and monitoring of agile working will be put in place to ensure that the policy and guidance are being implemented in line with our equal opportunities commitment. | Minor and positive  |
| Political opinion  | Whilst no adverse impacts have been identified, there are a number of further opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity. The policy has been revised to enable all staff members to make flexible working requests after 26 weeks service and the policy has been supplemented by the new informal flexibility working guidance, which is available to all staff**,** further demonstrating the University’s commitment as an equal opportunities employer. The Formal Flexible Working application form has been updated based on feedback to ensure even applications that are rejected initially are returned to the HR Hub for reporting. This will enable a record to be kept of rejected applications and allow any trends to be identified and investigated if requiredThe revised policy and Toolkit will be promoted to all staff there will be significant support in place including: * Briefing and Information Sessions – held weekly for the month following the launch and thereafter as required. Open to all staff and intended to inform and equip staff to understand the agile working opportunities that may be open to them
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| Racial group  | Whilst no adverse impacts have been identified, there are a number of further opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity. The policy has been revised to enable all staff members to make flexible working requests after 26 weeks service and the policy has been supplemented by the new informal flexibility working guidance, which is available to all staff**,** further demonstrating the University’s commitment as an equal opportunities employer. The Formal Flexible Working application form has been updated based on feedback to ensure even applications that are rejected initially are returned to the HR Hub for reporting. This will enable a record to be kept of rejected applications and allow any trends to be identified and investigated if requiredThe revised policy and Toolkit will be promoted to all staff there will be significant support in place including: * Briefing and Information Sessions – held weekly for the month following the launch and thereafter as required. Open to all staff and intended to inform and equip staff to understand the agile working opportunities that may be open to them
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| Age | Whilst no adverse impacts have been identified, there are a number of further opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity. The policy has been revised to enable all staff members to make flexible working requests after 26 weeks service and the policy has been supplemented by the new informal flexibility working guidance, which is available to all staff**,** further demonstrating the University’s commitment as an equal opportunities employer. The Formal Flexible Working application form has been updated based on feedback to ensure even applications that are rejected initially are returned to the HR Hub for reporting. This will enable a record to be kept of rejected applications and allow any trends to be identified and investigated if requiredThe revised policy and Toolkit will be promoted to all staff there will be significant support in place including: * Briefing and Information Sessions – held weekly for the month following the launch and thereafter as required. Open to all staff and intended to inform and equip staff to understand the agile working opportunities that may be open to them
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| Marital status  | Whilst no adverse impacts have been identified, there are a number of further opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity. The policy has been revised to enable all staff members to make flexible working requests after 26 weeks service and the policy has been supplemented by the new informal flexibility working guidance, which is available to all staff**,** further demonstrating the University’s commitment as an equal opportunities employer. The Formal Flexible Working application form has been updated based on feedback to ensure even applications that are rejected initially are returned to the HR Hub for reporting. This will enable a record to be kept of rejected applications and allow any trends to be identified and investigated if requiredThe revised policy and Toolkit will be promoted to all staff there will be significant support in place including: * Briefing and Information Sessions – held weekly for the month following the launch and thereafter as required. Open to all staff and intended to inform and equip staff to understand the agile working opportunities that may be open to them
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| Sexual orientation | Whilst no adverse impacts have been identified, there are a number of further opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity. The policy has been revised to enable all staff members to make flexible working requests after 26 weeks service and the policy has been supplemented by the new informal flexibility working guidance, which is available to all staff**,** further demonstrating the University’s commitment as an equal opportunities employer. The Formal Flexible Working application form has been updated based on feedback to ensure even applications that are rejected initially are returned to the HR Hub for reporting. This will enable a record to be kept of rejected applications and allow any trends to be identified and investigated if requiredThe revised policy and Toolkit will be promoted to all staff there will be significant support in place including: * Briefing and Information Sessions – held weekly for the month following the launch and thereafter as required. Open to all staff and intended to inform and equip staff to understand the agile working opportunities that may be open to them
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| Men and women generally  | Whilst no adverse impacts have been identified, there are a number of further opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity. The policy has been revised to enable all staff members to make flexible working requests after 26 weeks service and the policy has been supplemented by the new informal flexibility working guidance, which is available to all staff**,** further demonstrating the University’s commitment as an equal opportunities employer. The Formal Flexible Working application form has been updated based on feedback to ensure even applications that are rejected initially are returned to the HR Hub for reporting. This will enable a record to be kept of rejected applications and allow any trends to be identified and investigated if requiredThe revised policy and Toolkit will be promoted to all staff there will be significant support in place including: * Briefing and Information Sessions – held weekly for the month following the launch and thereafter as required. Open to all staff and intended to inform and equip staff to understand the agile working opportunities that may be open to them
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| Disability | Whilst no adverse impacts have been identified, there are a number of further opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity. The policy has been revised to enable all staff members to make flexible working requests after 26 weeks service and the policy has been supplemented by the new informal flexibility working guidance, which is available to all staff**,** further demonstrating the University’s commitment as an equal opportunities employer. The Formal Flexible Working application form has been updated based on feedback to ensure even applications that are rejected initially are returned to the HR Hub for reporting. This will enable a record to be kept of rejected applications and allow any trends to be identified and investigated if requiredThe revised policy and Toolkit will be promoted to all staff there will be significant support in place including: * Briefing and Information Sessions – held weekly for the month following the launch and thereafter as required. Open to all staff and intended to inform and equip staff to understand the agile working opportunities that may be open to them
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| Dependants  | Whilst no adverse impacts have been identified, there are a number of further opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity. The policy has been revised to enable all staff members to make flexible working requests after 26 weeks service and the policy has been supplemented by the new informal flexibility working guidance, which is available to all staff**,** further demonstrating the University’s commitment as an equal opportunities employer. The Formal Flexible Working application form has been updated based on feedback to ensure even applications that are rejected initially are returned to the HR Hub for reporting. This will enable a record to be kept of rejected applications and allow any trends to be identified and investigated if requiredThe revised policy and Toolkit will be promoted to all staff there will be significant support in place including: * Briefing and Information Sessions – held weekly for the month following the launch and thereafter as required. Open to all staff and intended to inform and equip staff to understand the agile working opportunities that may be open to them
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| **3** To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?  |
| Good relations category  | Details of policy impact  | Level of impact minor/major/none  |
| Religious belief | N/A | None  |
| Political opinion  | N/A  | None  |
| Racial group | N/A  | None  |

|  |
| --- |
| **4** Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? |
| Good relations category | If **Yes**, provide details  | If **No**, provide reasons |
| Religious belief |  | N/A |
| Political opinion  |  | N/A |
| Racial group  |  | N/A |

**E Multiple identity**

Generally speaking, people can fall into more than one Section 75 category. Taking this into consideration, are there any potential impacts of the policy/decision on people with multiple identities?

(*For example; disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; and young lesbians, gay and bisexual people).*

Provide details of data on the impact of the policy on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

We do not hold data on flexible working by multiple identities and this would require further analysis.

**F Disability Duties**

|  |
| --- |
| **Disability Duties** |
| Consider whether the policy:1. Discourages disabled people from participating in public life and fails to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.

 No. Queen’s University is an Equal Opportunities employer. The Agile Working Toolkit has been developed to support managers and staff in dealing with flexible working requests. The guidance explicitly states that employees may make flexible working requests for a variety of reasons, including on the grounds of disability.1. Provides an opportunity to better positive attitudes towards disabled people or encourages their participation in public life.

Yes, see above. |

**Part 3. Screening decision**

Through screening, an assessment is made of the likely impacts, either major, minor or none, of the policy on equality of opportunity and/or good relations for the relevant categories. Completion of screening should lead to one of the following three outcomes; please mark an x in the appropriate box:

[ ]  ‘**Screened out’** i.e. the likely impact is none and no further action is required

[x]  ‘**Screened out’ with mitigation** i.e. the likely impact is minor and measures will be taken to mitigate the impact or an alternative policy will be proposed

[ ]  ‘**Screened in’ for an equality impact assessment (EQIA)** i.e. the likely impact is major and the policy will now be subject to an EQIA

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

|  |
| --- |
| Whilst no adverse impacts have been identified, there are a number of further opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity. The policy has been revised to enable all staff members to make flexible working requests after 26 weeks service and the policy has been supplemented by the new informal flexibility working guidance, which is available to all staff**,** further demonstrating the University’s commitment as an equal opportunities employer. Other opportunities to promote equality of opportunity have been identified and include: (add in here after decided e.g. advertising roles flexibly, identifying senior role models, communication campaign etc- add in list when decided.)* Promote and champion senior figures who work part-time and flexibly e.g. male leaders etc.
* Communication campaigns that promote the idea that work-life policies are for everyone, not just for parents, and which emphasise the positive effects of flexibility on productivity might also help to challenge flexibility stigma.
* Build on our core values and behaviours creating a culture of flexibility, this will be evidenced by trust, performance judged on outcomes, range of flexible options, supportive senior leaders, consistent application of the policy, an understanding across the institution of the benefits of flexible working.
* Provide training to line managers on flexible working, both formal and informal processes, how to manage flexible workers with topics to include - workshops on managing a hybrid team (motivation, performance, communication etc), challenging conversations, managing with emotional intelligence and managing change. This will be further supported by online resources including articles and courses via LinkedIn Learning.
* Review whether current models of career progression or access to development opportunities exclude part-time or flexible workers.
* Monitor uptake of flexible working policies to ensure that employees making use of them are not overlooked for promotion.
 |

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment, but the policy has minor equality impacts, please provide details of the reasons for this decision and of any proposed mitigating measures or proposed alternative policy.

|  |
| --- |
| See above |

If the decision is to subject the policy to an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

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|   |

**D Timetabling and prioritising**

If the policy has been **‘screened in’** for equality impact assessment answer the following questions to determine its priority for timetabling the equality impact assessment.

On a scale of 1-3, with 1 being the lowest priority and 3 being the highest, assess the policy in terms of its priority for equality impact assessment.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Priority criterion** | **Rating (1-3)** |
| Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations  | Click |
| Social need | Click |
| Effect on people’s daily lives | Click |
| Relevance to the University’s functions | Click |

**E** Is the policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities?

If yes, please provide details

**Part 4. Monitoring**

N/A

Effective monitoring will help the University identify any future adverse impact arising from the policy which may lead the University to conduct an equality impact assessment, as well as help with future planning and policy development.

**Please detail how you will monitor the effect of the policy?**

As per section 8 of the University’s Flexible Working Guiding Principles, it is recommended that Schools and Directorates monitor flexible working within their areas and identify any barriers experienced by employees seeking a flexible working arrangement.

**What data is required in the future to ensure effective monitoring of the policy?**

As above on the grounds of protected characteristics

**Part 5 - Data Protection**

If applicable, has legal advice been given due consideration?

Yes [x]  No [ ]  N/A [ ]

Has due consideration been given to information security in relation to this policy?

Yes [x]  No [ ]

**Part 6 - Approval and authorisation**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Screened by:**  | **Position/Job Title**  | **Date** |
| Amy Miscampbell | Staff Engagement Manager | 29.10.21 |
| **Approved by:** |  |  |
| **Laura Lynch** | Head of Organisational Development | 29.10.21 |
|  |  |  |

A copy of the screening form, for each policy screened, should be ‘signed off’ and approved by the senior manager responsible for the policy

In instances where a screening decision concludes that an EQIA is required then the screening form should be countersigned by a Director.

There may at times be policy issues which fall within the scope of being novel, contentious or politically sensitive and could only be taken forward following consultation with the University’s Operating Board and/or Standing Committee of the Senate.  Where a policy screening highlights such issues the screening form must be signed off by the Director prior to proceeding to the University’s Operating Board and/or the Standing Committee of the Senate.

Following ratification, a copy of the approved screening form, and associated policy must be forwarded to the Diversity and Inclusion Unit for publication on the University’s website.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO INFORM THE ANNUAL EQUALITY PROGRESS REPORT TO THE EQUALITY COMMISSION**

1. Please provide details of any measures taken to enhance the level of engagement with individuals and representative groups as part of screening.

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| --- |
| Trade Unions and staff groups were widely consulted throughout the review of the Formal Flexible Working Policy and the development of the Agile Working Toolkit.  |

1. In developing this policy were any changes made as a result of equality issues raised during :

(a) pre-consultation / engagement;
(b) formal consultation;
(c) the screening process; and/or
(d) monitoring / research findings.

If so, please provide a brief summary including how the issue was identified, what changes were made, and what will be the expected outcomes / impacts for those affected.

|  |
| --- |
| Yes, minor feedback raised by those with childcare or other caring responsibilities regarding the ability to use agile working practices to support their personal circumstances. Feedback specifically indicated that clarity was needed to ensure equity of access to agile working practices and to avoid manager discretion being used in a way that was unfair. This has been considered and the Toolkit has been updated to ensure it is clear in the support that agile working can offer for those with caring responsibilities as well as the limits of this provision. As such, the scope for misinterpretation of the agile working practices available is reduced. Further feedback raised regarding access to provision of duplicate equipment required for those with disabilities to enable those individuals to avail of working from home opportunities in the same way as other colleagues without disabilities. The Toolkit has been updated to clarify this and indicate that duplicate equipment would be provided in such circumstances, which will ensure equity of access to agile working opportunities.  |

1. Does this policy / decision include any measure(s) to improve access to services including the provision of information in accessible formats? If so please provide a short summary.

|  |
| --- |
| No |

**Appendix 1**

**Levels of Impact** (Questions 6-9)

**Introduction**

In making a decision as to whether or not there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment, you should consider the answers provided to the questions above.

In addition, the **screening questions** above further assist you in assessing your policy and must be completed. Some of these questions require you to assess the level of impact of the proposed policy on “equality of opportunity” and “good relations”. The scale used when assessing this impact is either “None”, “Minor” or “Major”. The following paragraphs set out what each of these terms mean.

If your conclusion is **none** in respect of all of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then you may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is ‘screened out’ as having no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations, you should give details of the reasons for the decision taken.

If your conclusion is **major** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then consideration should be given to subjecting the policy to the equality impact assessment procedure.

If your conclusion is **minor** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality categories and/or good relations categories, then consideration should still be given to proceeding with an equality impact assessment, or to introduce:

* measures to mitigate the adverse impact; or
* an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

**In favour of a ‘major’ impact**

1. The policy is significant in terms of its strategic importance;
2. Potential equality impacts are unknown, because, for example, there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment or because they are complex, and it would be appropriate to conduct an equality impact assessment in order to better assess them;
3. Potential equality and/or good relations impacts are likely to be adverse or are likely to be experienced disproportionately by groups of people including those who are marginalised or disadvantaged;
4. Further assessment offers a valuable way to examine the evidence and develop recommendations in respect of a policy about which there are concerns amongst affected individuals and representative groups, for example in respect of multiple identities;
5. The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;
6. The policy is significant in terms of expenditure.

**In favour of ‘minor’ impact**

1. The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;
2. The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures;
3. Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people;
4. By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

**In favour of none**

1. The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations.

The policy is purely technical in nature and will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.

1. ‘Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, A Guide for Public Authorities’ (April 2010), page 30. A policy may include planning decisions, service changes, corporate strategies, policy development, practices, guidelines, procedures and protocols; board papers [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. If you do not have enough data to tell you about potential or actual impacts you may need to generate more data to distinguish what groups are potentially affected by your policy. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)