

Equality Impact Assessment

Date of the assessment

22 June 2023

Name of policy or procedure

Invitation to tender for a new Occupational Health supplier

What does this policy or procedure aim to achieve?

It is good practice to consider an equality impact assessment when completing an invitation to tender exercise.

Our commitment to audit excellence and being a great place to work includes our wellbeing agenda since we see employee wellness (both physical and mental) as a key element in support of world-class organisational performance. Our approach focuses upon proactive, preventative health & lifestyle initiatives starting at the recruitment stage and progressing through to every element of working with Audit Scotland.

Audit Scotland expects the services from a new occupational health and wellbeing provider will help us in being informed in making decisions across several activities including:

- making suitable adjustments in the workplace.
- ensuring a more inclusive environment i.e., provide disability guidance and support as appropriate.
- ensure that a holistic approach is taken towards employee wellbeing to deliver a positive, long-term sustainable improvement in individual employee health and organisational performance.
- helping tie our commitment to wellbeing tightly into our organisational values.
- helping our employees to take individual responsibility for any changes needed.
- linking to the learning and development strategy that we undertake for team members, managers and leaders so that they are all more confident in the field of workplace wellbeing.
- strengthening our total employee reward proposition that marks us out as a unique employer in our market of audit and accountancy here in Scotland - thereby improving our employer brand, making recruitment easier and retaining our people for longer in our employment.

Looking at our mainstreaming equalities outcomes, this supplier and service will have an impact against outcomes 2 and 3.

Outcome 2: We will increase the diversity of people into Audit Scotland and their progression through every level of our organisation.

Outcome 3: We will broaden our culture of diversity and inclusion, so all employees feel valued, engaged and contribute.

Evidence considered and potential impact identified:

Data relating to the composition of Audit Scotland's workforce can be found [here](#).

Protected characteristic	Please summarise the evidence you considered	What is the potential impact (positive, neutral and negative) on people who share the characteristic?
Age	<p>Feedback was gathered from each equality network group, members of our people focus group, equality human rights and steering group and the PCS.</p> <p>Per the 2021/22 annual Diversity Report, 5.8% of Audit Scotland's workforce were aged 16-24; 64% were aged between 25-49; and 29% were aged 50-64. The balance of those aged 65 and over was not disclosed.</p> <p>Around 3 in 5 carers (61%) included in the Carers Census in 2021/22 were working age (18–64-year-olds) adults. Adults aged 65 and over accounted for a quarter of carers identified (25%) while young carers (carers aged under 18) made up 13% of the individual carers identified in 2021/22. This proportion is higher than the previous estimates in the Scotland's Carers - Update Release concerning the total carer population, which suggested that young carers account for less than 5% of unpaid carers. This may</p>	<p>Positive</p> <p>It would be a benefit if the new supplier can provide access to occupational health / medical specialists who are aware of issues around perimenopause, menopause and post-menopause.</p> <p>Post-menopausal specifically, a time when many women can begin to experience new and long-term health conditions. An atmosphere of trust and openness is needed, particularly in the pre-recruitment stage from a new supplier.</p> <p>It would be a benefit if the new supplier could provide support to Audit Scotland as we develop practices and policies around improved menopause support for example, training for menopause champions, HR colleagues and line managers.</p> <p>It would be a benefit if the new supplier could ensure there is recognition of the potential effects of caring responsibilities on colleagues' work/life balance and overall health.</p> <p>Negative</p> <p>With relation to age and neurodiversity, younger people have grown up more used to having issues out in the open, older people who have not been diagnosed may struggle admitting they have any issues due to less awareness and understanding.</p>

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	<p>indicate that carer support services are reaching a greater proportion of young carers than adult carers.</p>	
<p>Disability</p>	<p>Feedback was gathered from each equality network group, members of our people focus group, equality human rights and steering group and the PCS.</p> <p>Per the 2021/22 annual Diversity Report, 4.9% of Audit Scotland's workforce disclosed they had a disability. 75.2% preferred not to disclose or did not state if they had a disability, while 19.9% of Audit Scotland's workforce stated they did not have a disability.</p>	<p>Positive</p> <p>Services should be offered through both online means and in person means where possible. Some may be unable to go in person, although an option of transport could be offered by Audit Scotland if needed to ensure that everyone feels they can access this without feeling anxious about public transportation. The option of attending in person or remotely may also support individuals with a trauma-related mental health condition.</p> <p>A good occupational health service could be beneficial for employees with disabilities to enable them to get advice on adjustments that could allow them to remain in their role.</p> <p>When an employee is certified as fit for their substantive role with no adjustments, but they may still have a health condition which may require a health and safety risk assessment, this should be flagged in the pre-employment checks to the HR team.</p> <p>Neutral</p> <p>Not all disabilities are declared, and in some cases the colleague may not have had an official diagnosis, however it does not diminish the issue.</p> <p>It is worth noting that pre-employment checks may be an area that particularly impacts differently on potential employees with disabilities / struggles they face.</p> <p>Employees with disabilities may be more likely to have contact with occupational health than employees without, so the quality of the provider and services provided may have more of impact on them.</p> <p>Negative</p> <p>Neurodiverse individuals may struggle to have open dialogue in a new, unfamiliar</p>

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		<p>setting, issues with change and unfamiliar surroundings may create barriers.</p> <p>Neurodiverse individuals may not participate in the services offered in the belief that nothing useful would arise from a referral or a health check. This may just be down to learned coping/masking strategies, so it should be made clear that this is available for anyone who may be having issues.</p> <p>As not all colleagues are aware of what an occupational health referral entails and is used for, many wouldn't ask for one even if they might benefit. This may place those with a disability who could positively benefit from this at a disadvantage. Therefore, more information could be provided to allow a better understanding of what is involved.</p>
<p>Gender reassignment</p>	<p>Feedback was gathered from each equality network group, members of our people focus group, equality human rights and steering group and the PCS.</p> <p>There are no agreed figures, however, it is <u>estimated</u> there are between 200,000-500,000 trans people in the UK.</p>	<p>Neutral</p> <p>We do acknowledge that this is currently the subject of sensitive and emotive debate, and it's important that we recognise that colleagues who may wish to pursue reassignment, in particular, may feel more vulnerable and require support.</p>
<p>Marriage and civil partnership</p>	<p>Feedback was gathered from each equality network group, members of our people focus group, equality human rights and steering group and the PCS.</p> <p>Per the 2021/22 annual Diversity Report, 50.8% of Audit Scotland employees were married; 34.9% were single; 14.4% stated their relationship status as other.</p>	<p>Neutral</p> <p>No feedback was provided relating to marriage and civil partnership status.</p>

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Pregnancy and maternity	<p>Feedback was gathered from each equality network group, members of our people focus group, equality human rights and steering group and the PCS.</p> <p>Per the 2021/22 annual Diversity Report, 12 women took a period of maternity leave.</p>	<p>Positive</p> <p>A good occupational health provider will be able to support with occupational health advice if any pregnancy related health issues develop. They may also be able to support the line manager and HR team with a risk assessment.</p> <p>Neutral</p> <p>No other feedback was provided feedback relating to pregnancy and maternity status.</p>
Race	<p>Feedback was gathered from each equality network group, members of our people focus group, equality human rights and steering group and the PCS.</p> <p>Per the 2021/22 annual Diversity Report, 89.0% of Audit Scotland's workforce were white; 7.0% were BAME; while 4.0% chose not to disclose this information.</p>	<p>Neutral</p> <p>No feedback was provided relating to race status.</p>
Religion or belief	<p>Feedback was gathered from each equality network group, members of our people focus group, equality human rights and steering group and the PCS.</p> <p>Our 2021/22 annual Diversity Report provides detailed analysis of the range of religions and beliefs held by colleagues at Audit Scotland.</p>	<p>Neutral</p> <p>No feedback was provided relating to religion or belief.</p>
Sex* (*The Equality Act 2010 relates to sex as a protected characteristic while the term	<p>Feedback was gathered from each equality network group, members of our people focus group, equality human</p>	<p>Positive</p> <p>Please see above remarks regarding age and perimenopausal and menopausal women.</p>

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<p>gender has been referenced in the annual Diversity Report; it is acknowledged such terms may not always be interchangeable).</p>	<p>rights and steering group and the PCS.</p> <p>Per the 2021/22 annual Diversity Report, 56.9% of Audit Scotland's workforce were female and 43.1% were male.</p> <p>Around three-quarters of carers in the 2021-22 Carers Census (73%) were female. This proportion is higher than that seen in the Scotland's Carers report, which was based on the total carer population and suggested that closer to 60% of unpaid carers were female. This difference might suggest that female carers are more likely to seek out support from services than male carers.</p> <p>There are more female carers than male carers in every age group, but the difference is most pronounced in the working age carer group. Figure 1 shows that 79% of working age carers identified in the Carers Census were female in 2021-22. This is consistent with previous findings based on the total carer population which suggested that females of working age are more likely to provide unpaid care than working age males. The data indicates that the gender gap is narrowest for young carers, with females accounting for 58% of young carers</p>	<p>It may also be a benefit if the new supplier can provide guidance and support for women and menstrual conditions and symptoms.</p> <p>Negative</p> <p>Women are far less likely to receive an official diagnosis of being on the Neurodiversity spectrum and learn how to mask conditions to cope with everyday events. Therefore, women may need more positive encouragement to become engaged with the services a new supplier offers.</p>

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	and males accounting for 42%.	
Sexual orientation	<p>Feedback was gathered from each equality network group, members of our people focus group, equality human rights and steering group and the PCS.</p> <p>Per the 2021/22 annual Diversity Report, 84.1% of Audit Scotland employees identified as heterosexual; 3.7% identified as LGBO; 12.2% chose not to provide information regarding their sexual orientation.</p>	<p>Neutral</p> <p>No feedback was provided relating to sexual orientation.</p>
Socio-economic disadvantage	<p>Feedback was gathered from each equality network group, members of our people focus group, equality human rights and steering group and the PCS.</p> <p>In Scotland, 240,000 children (24.3%) remain in poverty. Deprived and post-industrial areas have the worst education and employment outcomes.</p> <p>Although the proportion of professional jobs has increased, creating space for mobility, 58% of those from a professional background occupy such jobs in contrast to 36% of postholders from a</p>	<p>Positive</p> <p>The counselling service offered by Audit Scotland and an occupational health supplier will support those who might not routinely have access or means to afford a private counselling service when a need arises during employment.</p> <p>Access to occupational health advice may also support those who have less immediate access to good GP or health services in their area.</p>

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working-class background.

Did you need to obtain further information? If yes, how did you do that?

N/A

Action plan

What recommended steps should we take to improve the policy or procedure and monitor its equality impact?

Capture any action we plan to take to reduce negative impacts and maximise positive impacts. The policy owner should prioritise actions based on their expected impact on helping us deliver the general equality duty and their contribution to our equality outcomes. The EHRSG and People Focus Group can advise on this.

When developing the action plan, policy owners should consider how to maximise the positive impact of the policy or procedure on all people who share the protected characteristics, with the requirement to maximise the core outcomes of the policy or procedure. Actions should be strategic and proportionate.

The action plan should also include ways of monitoring the ongoing impact of the policy or procedure.

Action	Responsibility	Timeline
Ensuring that referral waiting times and service level agreements are speedy. Quick access and appropriate support for both mental and physical conditions in place will have a beneficial impact on all groups.	Tender evaluation team	July 2023
This will be monitored by the HR team on an ongoing basis too.	HR team	Ongoing
Ensuring that the service provides advice on short term and longer-term reasonable adjustments that could be made to facilitate a return to work. This should include, but not be limited to, physical needs. Having this in place will have a beneficial impact on groups.	Tender evaluation team	July 2023

Ensuring that the new supplier can provide services in person and virtually to support those who require the choice for accessibility.	Tender evaluation team	July 2023
Raise awareness internally around occupational health referrals and why these can be helpful for colleagues and line managers. This should include information on how any information shared with occupational health is used.	HR team	August 2023
When a new supplier is awarded, it is proposed that a full needs assessment would be undertaken. This will ensure that they complement our culture and values and understand the diversity of our workforce. Not fully understanding the needs of all our employees, especially those in protected groups, could have a negative impact.	HR & new supplier	October – November 2023
Development of our health and wellbeing strategy. A good level of health promotion, resilience and wellbeing services provided to support colleagues and help avoid absences and support those experiencing health issues will have a beneficial impact on all groups.	Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee	TBC

Approval

Date of approval by Executive Team

18 July 2023