

■ **Step 1 – Introductory information**

Title of the policy	Covid-19 Employees Returning to Work
Name of lead officer and others undertaking this assessment	Sally Dobrowolska – Human Resources Advisor
Date EIA started	June 2020
Date EIA completed	July 2020

■ **Step 2 – Overview of policy/function being assessed:**

Outline: What is the purpose of this policy? (Specify aims and objectives)
<p>The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted all employees of Charnwood Borough Council. The Council needs to understand the impact of its decisions on employees of the Council, in particular those from clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable groups and those with protected characteristics.</p> <p>In considering any implications the Council has taken into account a review which suggests that people of Black, Asian and other minority ethnic groups may be more exposed to COVID-19, and therefore are more likely to be diagnosed. This could be due to factors associated with ethnicity such as occupation, population density, use of public transport, household composition and housing conditions.</p> <p>The Equality Impact Assessment is being undertaken to consider any risks associated with employees returning to work where there is no option to work from home, taking into account the factors highlighted above.</p>
What specific group/s is the policy designed to affect/impact and what is the intended change or outcome for them?
The decisions taken by the Council impact all employees. The Covid-19 pandemic has required the Council to look at decisions in relation to the health, safety and welfare of its employees whilst ensuring provision of services.
Which groups have been consulted as part of the creation or review of the policy?
The Council has set up various working groups to address the pandemic and the needs of its employees. Those groups involve representatives from the Senior Leadership Team, Corporate Leadership Team and specific professional representatives. Trade Unions have also been consulted as necessary.

■ **Step 3 – What we already know and where there are gaps**

List any existing information/data do you have/monitor about different diverse groups in relation to this policy? Such as in relation to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation etc.

Data/information such as:

- Consultation
- Previous Equality Impact Assessments
- Demographic information
- Anecdotal and other evidence

The Council has a wide range of data on its employees including those employees in the clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable categories, BAME employees, workplace data such as those working at home, unable to work at home, undertaking work role and undertaking work role with restrictions.

In relation to the EIA the Council has reviewed employees within the clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable groups. There are 14 employees in the clinically extremely vulnerable category and 96 in the clinically vulnerable category.

Within the clinically extremely vulnerable and clinically vulnerable categories, ten employees are from a BAME group. In total there are 67 BAME employees within the Council.

What does this information / data tell you about diverse group? If you do not hold or have access to any data/information on diverse groups, what do you need to begin collating / monitoring? (Please list)

This information will assist us in completing relevant risk assessments for employees within these groups.

The majority of employees have been able to undertake their duties working from home. Where this has not been possible, measures have been put in place such as undertaking the job role with restrictions, redeployment etc.

■ **Step 4 – Do we need to seek the views of others? If so, who?**

In light of the answers you have given in Step 2, do you need to consult with specific groups to identify needs / issues? If not please explain why.

The Council will continue to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic through its working parties. This includes consultation with trade unions as necessary.

■ **Step 5 – Assessing the impact**

In light of any data/consultation/information and your own knowledge and awareness, please identify whether the policy has a positive or negative impact on the individuals or community groups (including what barriers these individuals or groups may face) who identify with any 'protected characteristics' and provide an explanation for your decision (please refer to the general duties on the front page).

	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Age</b>	<p><b>Potential Adverse Impact:</b> Employees at higher risk of complications from Covid – 19 include those over 70 and those under 70 with a specific underlying medical condition. Consideration has been given to all employees within these groups and adjustments to working practices have been made. Risk assessments have also been implemented to look at those employees in these categories. It is acknowledged that employees over 70 are unlikely to return to the workplace for some time and so alternative</p>

	<p>provision/ reasonable adjustments will need to be made to support these staff members during this time. The Council currently has 5 employees over 70, 4 of which are in the clinically vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable categories.</p>
<p><b>Disability</b> (Physical, visual, hearing, learning disabilities, mental health)</p>	<p><b>Potential Adverse Impact:</b> Employees at higher risk of complications from Covid – 19 include those with specific underlying medical conditions and/ or disabilities. Consideration has been given to individuals with disabilities, who either fall within the COVID vulnerable categories or do not, and adjustments to working practices have been made where appropriate. For instance, in the manager FAQs we are aware that people may struggle with their mental health during this time and support, such as AMICA, has been highlighted as being available to those employees.</p> <p>Risk assessments have also been implemented to look at those employees in these categories.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that employees at higher risk of complications from Covid – 19 due to specific underlying medical conditions and/ or disabilities are unlikely to return to the workplace for some time and so alternative provision/ reasonable adjustments will need to be made to support these staff members during this time. The Council currently has 27 employees who have declared a disability, 11 of which are in the clinically vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable categories.</p>
<p><b>Gender Reassignment</b> (Transgender)</p>	<p><b>Neutral Impact:</b> There are no specific implications of Covid-19 as a result of gender reassignment.</p>
<p><b>Race</b></p>	<p><b>Potential Adverse Impact:</b> The Council has considered a report which highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Individuals from BAME groups are more likely to work in occupations with a higher risk of COVID-19 exposure.</li> <li>- They are more likely to use public transportation to travel to their essential work.</li> <li>- Historic racism and poorer experiences of healthcare or at work may mean that individuals in BAME groups are less likely to seek care when needed or less likely to speak up when they have concerns about Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) or risk.</li> <li>- For many BAME groups lack of trust of NHS services and health care treatment resulted in their reluctance to seek care on a timely basis, and late presentation with disease</li> </ul> <p>As a result the Council has consider the following internal actions to take:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage staff to stay at home rather than use public transport to get to work</li> <li>- Encourage staff to speak up when they have concerns about Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) or risk.</li> </ul>

	<p>- Create an inclusive approach for staff to feel comfortable doing this.</p> <p>Encourage staff to seek care on a timely basis</p> <p>The Council currently has 67 BAME employees, 10 of which are in the clinically vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable categories.</p> <p>-</p>
<b>Religion or Belief (Includes no belief)</b>	<b>Neutral Impact:</b> There are no specific implications of Covid-19 as a result of religion or belief.
<b>Sex (Gender)</b>	<b>Neutral Impact:</b> There are no specific implications of Covid-19 as a result of sex.
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<b>Neutral Impact:</b> There are no specific implications of Covid-19 as a result of sexual orientation.
<b>Other protected groups (Pregnancy &amp; maternity, marriage &amp; civil partnership)</b>	<p><b>Potential Adverse Impact:</b> Pregnancy is included as one of the categories under clinically vulnerable or clinically extremely vulnerable for implications from Covid-19. The Council has taken steps to monitor employees within these groups.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that employees at higher risk of complications from Covid – 19 due to pregnancy are unlikely to return to the workplace for some time and so alternative provision/ reasonable adjustments will need to be made to support these staff members during this time.</p> <p>The Council currently has 3 employees classed as clinically vulnerable due to pregnancy.</p>
<b>Other socially excluded groups (carers, low literacy, priority neighbourhoods, health inequalities, rural isolation, asylum seeker and refugee communities etc.)</b>	<b>Neutral Impact:</b> There are no specific implication of Covid-19 as a result of other socially excluded groups in relation to the Council's response to Covid-19 for its employees.

<p>Where there are potential barriers, negative impacts identified and/ or barriers or impacts are unknown, please outline how you propose to minimise all negative impact or discrimination.</p> <p>Please note:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you have identified adverse impact or discrimination that is illegal, you are required to take action to remedy this immediately.</li> <li>Additionally, if you have identified adverse impact that is justifiable or legitimate, you will need to consider what actions can be taken to mitigate its effect on those groups of people.</li> </ol>
<p>The Council is continuously monitoring its employees, particularly in light of the fast past of changes relating to this from the government. This has enabled the Council to monitor those employees who might face potential barriers as a result of the pandemic. Health and Safety processes have been put in place to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the Council's employees.</p> <p>Where it is acknowledged that employees at higher risk of complications from Covid – 19 are unlikely to return to the workplace for some time and alternative provision/ reasonable adjustments are made to support these staff members during this time, the Council will continue to assess any impact upon employee welfare and address issues on a case by case basis.</p> <p>The Council will continue to assess national research regarding BAME individuals and the impact of COVID-19. Issued will be addressed with BAME employees, risk assessments developed, and specific actions taken to address any impacts upon employee welfare.</p>

Summarise your findings and give an overview as to whether the policy will meet Charnwood Borough Council's responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity (please refer to the general duties on the front page).

The processes in place are designed to ensure service provision within the Council, whilst ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its employees. Extensive work is being undertaken including working parties and processes and procedures to ensure that the Council meets its obligations in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic.

■ **Step 6- Monitoring, evaluation and review**

Are there processes in place to review the findings of this Assessment and make appropriate changes? In particular, how will you monitor potential barriers and any positive/ negative impact?

Employee data is monitored through the iTrent system. Where there is a requirement for new data, steps are put in place to obtain this. The data is reviewed on a regular basis to ensure the Council is meeting its obligations under health and safety, and is working consistently with the government guidance.

How will the recommendations of this assessment be built into wider planning and review processes? e.g. policy reviews, annual plans and use of performance management systems.

Processes and procedures that have been implemented as a result of Covid-19 will be regularly reviewed through the consultation process highlighted at question 2 of this EIA.

■ **Step 7- Action Plan**

Please include any identified concerns/actions/issues in this action plan:

**The issues identified should inform your Service Plan and, if appropriate, your Consultation Plan**

Reference Number	Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date
1	To continuously monitor and review the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic	Senior Leadership Team	

■ **Step 8- Who needs to know about the outcomes of this assessment and how will they be informed?**

	Who needs to know (Please tick)	How they will be informed (we have a legal duty to publish EIA's)
<b>Employees</b>	*	EIA will be published.
<b>Service users</b>		
<b>Partners and stakeholders</b>		
<b>Others</b>		
<b>To ensure ease of access, what other communication needs/concerns are there?</b>		

■ **Step 9 – Conclusion (to be completed and signed by the Service Head)**

<b>Please delete as appropriate</b>
<b>I agree with this assessment / action plan</b>
<b>If <i>disagree</i>, state action/s required, reasons and details of who is to carry them out with timescales:</b>
<b>Signed (Service Head): A. Ward</b>
<b>Date:</b>