

Notice of Meeting

Employment Committee

Councillor Leake (Chairman),
Councillor Allen (Vice-Chairman),
Councillors Angell, Bhandari, Dudley, Neil, Porter, Tullett and Wade
Councillor Peter Heydon

Wednesday 10 February 2021, 6.30 - 8.30 pm

Online Only



Agenda

Item	Description	Page
1.	Apologies	
	To receive apologies for absence and to note the attendance of any substitute members.	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
	<p>Members are asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary or affected interests in respect of any matter to be considered at this meeting.</p> <p>Any Member with a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in a matter should withdraw from the meeting when the matter is under consideration and should notify the Democratic Services Officer in attendance that they are withdrawing as they have such an interest. If the Disclosable Pecuniary Interest is not entered on the register of Members interests the Monitoring Officer must be notified of the interest within 28 days.</p> <p>Any Member with an affected Interest in a matter must disclose the interest to the meeting. There is no requirement to withdraw from the meeting when the interest is only an affected interest, but the Monitoring Officer should be notified of the interest, if not previously notified of it, within 28 days of the meeting.</p>	
3.	Minutes from previous meeting	5 - 10
	To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8 July 2020.	
4.	Urgent Items of Business	
	Any other items which, pursuant to Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chairman decides are urgent.	
5.	Update from the Chairman of the Local Joint Committee	
	A verbal update from the Chairman of the Local Joint Committee.	
6.	Minutes of Sub Groups	11 - 16

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	The Committee is asked to note the minutes of the Local Joint Committee held on 8 July 2020 and the Education Employment Sub Committee held on 8 July 2020.	
7.	Health & Safety Assessment Report	17 - 38
	Display screen equipment, home working assessment and BAME vulnerable groups analysis Reporting: Kamay Toor	
8.	Pay Policy Statement 2020-21	39 - 70
	To review and agree the Pay Policy Statement for 2020/21. Reporting: Stuart McKellar	
9.	2nd Quarter - Wellbeing Check-In Survey Results	71 - 86
	To receive a presentation on the Wellbeing Check-In Survey Results. Reporting: Stuart McKellar	
10.	Homeworking Policy	87 - 160
	To obtain Employment Committee approval for the implementation of a homeworking policy, Reporting: Stuart McKellar	
11.	Reform of Local Government Exit Pay	161 - 176
	To receive a report outlining the legislative changes already passed and the subsequent effect on discretionary compensation payments and Local Government Pension scheme regulations. Reporting: Stuart McKellar	
12.	Exclusion of Public and Press	
	To consider the following motion: That pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and having regard to the public interest, members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of the following item 13 which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of that Act: (3) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person.	
13.	HR Policy - Organisational Change Protocol	177 - 190
	To receive a revised Organisational Change Protocol.	

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	Reporting: Stuart McKellar	
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Published: 3 February 2021

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**EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE
8 JULY 2020
6.30 - 7.40 PM**

Present:

Councillors Leake (Chairman), Allen (Vice-Chairman), Angell, Bhandari, Dudley, Neil, Tullett and Wade

Non-Voting Co-optee Present:

Councillor Heydon

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Porter

1. Election of Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Leake be elected Chairman of the Employment Committee for the municipal year 2020/21.

2. Appointment of Vice-Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Allen be appointed Vice Chairman of the Employment Committee for the municipal year 2020/21.

3. Appointment of Sub and Advisory Groups

RESOLVED that the Education Employment Sub Committee, Personnel Appeals Panel and Local Joint Committee Membership for the 2020/21 municipal year is as below:

**Education Employment - Sub Committee of Employment Committee
(7 Councillors)**

Conservative (6) Labour (1)
Allen (Chairman Elect) Neil
Bhandari
Leake
Porter
Tullett
Wade (Vice-Chairman Elect)

Non-voting Members of the Teachers Associations:

David Allais (UNISON)
Graham Jackson (NASUWT)
Gregory Wilton (NUT)
Asia Allison (GMB)

Substitute Members

Conservative (3) Labour (3)
Angell Brown

Brossard Temperton
Mrs Hamilton

**Personnel Appeals Panel – Sub Committee of Employment Committee
(5 Councillors)**

Five Councillors drawn from the Employment Committee in the first instance as follows:

- At least one Executive Member and one opposition Member
- Three other Members
- Up to three substitutes per political group(s)

Members must not have had any previous involvement in the matter being considered.

Chief Executive to agree the appointments in accordance with the wishes of the political group(s)

**Local Joint Committee, Consultative Committee of Employment
Committee (4 Councillors)**

Conservative (4)
Allen
Angell
Leake (Chairman elect)
Wade

Staff side representatives
David Allais (Unison)
Vacant (Unison)
Nikki Dancey (GMB)
Substitute Members
Conservative (3)
Bhandari
Porter
Tullett

4. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5. Minutes from previous meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

7. Update from the Chairman of Sub Committees and Committee Review

The Chairman update the Committee that Local Joint Committee had been held earlier in the afternoon and had covered the items that were on the Employment Committee agenda. There were no particular issues raised. The Chairman also paid his respects to Lorna Cameron who had been a long standing member on the Local

Joint Committee and had asked for condolences to be passed on to family and colleagues.

Councillor Allen provided an update on the Education Employment Sub Committee, which had been held informally due to the timing of the meeting. The Committee rarely met but gave the Unions relating to school the opportunity to ask questions. These included the local lockdown process in Bracknell Forest, any contractual issues for the return of staff to schools in the summer and autumn terms and if there were any financial support for staff. Paul Young was the officer in attendance and had provided the Unions with their answers.

The Chairman had requested that the terms of reference be included on the Employment Committee agenda as the three meetings all fell on the same afternoon and there was often repetition for members and officers. However, on reflection it was agreed that the meetings should remain as separate committees.

It was raised that previously there had been a Health & Safety Committee which had since been disbanded but it was thought that the committee's role would be undertaken by the Local Joint Committee or Education Sub Committee.

8. **Parental Bereavement Leave**

The Assistant Director: HR reported that new legislation had been introduced in April 2020 in relation to the death of a child. The report set out the options regarding support for staff who experienced the loss of a child and to pay an enhanced rate of Parental Bereavement Leave for two weeks for all staff, rather than the statutory minimum amount for qualifying staff.

The bereavement of a child was a significant loss to an employee and the legislation had been introduced to allow employees a statutory right to time off. The right to be paid was dependent on length of service with an organisation.

The Council's current policy was to pay for up to one-week compassionate leave on full pay

As a result of the Members comments and questions, the following points were made:

- The statutory minimum service was the criteria that the Council could claim back the statutory amount.
- The Assistant Director was having regular regional catch up with HR Directors' and all were on board with the same approach to enhance the pay to 2 weeks. It was thought that this was also the national approach, but the Assistant Director: HR would confirm this.

RESOLVED that the Employment Committee agree the options outlined below regarding support for staff experiencing loss of a child and approve the recommendation to pay an enhanced rate of Parental Bereavement Leave for two weeks for all staff, rather than the statutory minimum amount for qualifying staff.

This would be consistent with other employment rights where an enhanced rate has been applied rather than the statutory minimum, i.e. annual leave, parental leave, maternity leave.

9. **Challenges and Successes during Covid19**

The Committee received a presentation on challenges and successes during Covid19. The information within the presentation had been gathered at recent two manager forums, rather than a full survey of all managers. The forums had been broken into facilitated breakout groups who were asked two questions:

- What aspects of working have gone well that we may want to preserve in our new normal?
- What aspects of work have been problematic and challenging?

The presentation would be circulated to all committee members following the meeting.

As a result of members comments and questions, the following points were made:

- The presentation looked very positive.
- An O&S task and finish group was being held on isolation and loneliness and it was requested that any information be fed into this group.
- A stress audit hadn't been undertaken, but three strands of risk assessment had been, which ensured staff had undertaken a DSE workstation set up survey at home, a home working risk assessment was under constant review by staff and recently a further vulnerable group risk assessment had been sent out to those in that fitted into the vulnerable category. But the Assistant Director would take back the Stress Survey to the Assistant Director: Delivery, who was responsible for Health and Safety.
- Managers forums happened regularly, and these were in place prior to COVID19.
- The staff survey included managers, and this would be undertaken quarterly as a temperature check.
- It was important to ensure data was taken confidentially.
- Many of the comments made, were already being actioned.
- For some staff, work was also a social activity, a counselling service had been provided which was available 24/7. Managers were ensuring that work was not all about targets and outputs. Many teams were having virtual weekly socials and quizzes.
- It was important to recognise those staff who were isolated without prying into people personal lives.

The committee noted the information provided within the presentation.

10. **Wellbeing Survey**

The Committee received a presentation on the staff wellbeing which had been undertaken with all staff. It was the intention that this would be undertaken quarterly.

There had been 589 responses, which was 44% off staff. Which was very good for a staff survey response.

The Committee would receive a copy of the presentation.

Arising from the member's comment and question, the following points were made:

- The Assistant Director: HR wasn't sure the exact break down of female staff across the council and in schools.

- The survey had been undertaken using a platform called objectives, which would have been accessible on a number of devices, including mobile phones.
- The survey was anonymous, the lowest drill down was to service level.
- The survey was undertaken in June, a whole report with more detail would be brought back to the committee, including the questions.
- There were a number of options being but together for the future of Time Square going forward.
- If there was a vaccination, there wasn't a demand for all staff to return to the office, it was doubted that the office would ever be as full as it was pre Covid-19.
- Any options surrounding Time Square would be brought to members for decision.

The committee noted the information provided within the presentation.

11. **Exclusion of Public and Press**

RESOLVED that pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and having regard to the public interest, members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of the following item which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of that Act:

- (1) Information relating to any individual (Item 13).

12. **Furloughed Staff**

The Committee were provided with an overview of Bracknell Forest Council employees who had been put forward under the government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

RESOLVED that the Committee noted the report.

CHAIRMAN

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LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEE
8 JULY 2020
4.00 - 5.13 PM

Present:

Councillors Leake (Chairman), Allen, Angell and Wade

Non-Voting Co-optees Present:

David Allais, UNISON

Neil Duncan-Jordan, UNISON

1. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

The Chairman expressed his condolences of the passing of Lorna Cameron.

2. Minutes from Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 18 December 2019, were approved as a correct record.

3. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

4. Employment Committee: Agenda and Related Matters

i. Terms of reference for the Employment Committee, The Education Employment Sub-committee and the Joint Local Committee.

The Chair had requested that the terms of reference be included on the Employment Committee agenda as the three meetings all fell on the same afternoon and there was often repetition for members and officers. However, on reflection it was the consciences of the committee that the meetings should also remain as separate committees.

ii. Parental Bereavement Leave

The Head of HR reported that new legislation had been introduced in April 2020 in relation to the death of a child. The report considered the options regarding support for staff who experienced the loss of a child and to pay an enhanced rate of Parental Bereavement Leave for two weeks for all staff, rather than the statutory minimum amount for qualifying staff.

UNISON were supportive of the proposals and thanked the Head of HR for the introduction of the enhanced rate of Parental Bereavement Leave.

iii. Furloughed Staff

The Head of HR provided an overview of those who have been put forward under the government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. In total, 31 permanent employees, and 21 Casuals had been put forward for furlough. Of those put forward for furlough, the council has managed to reassign 3 to other areas of the organisation, and their furlough period had ended. A large number of staff based at the Lookout had now returned back to work, however were completing work outside of their normal remit.

The Head of HR confirmed that the staff who had been furloughed were receiving 100% of their salary. The council would be able to recoup 80% back from the government under the scheme.

iv. Challenges and Successes during Covid19 & Wellbeing Survey

The Head of HR gave two presentations, the first was on Challenges and Successes during Covid19 which was collective responses which had been gathered at a manager's forum, the second presentation were the results of the staff wellbeing survey.

The staff wellbeing survey would be held again later in the year, so that their was a constant up to date picture on the workforce, rather than just a snapshot in time.

The presentations would be circulated to the group.

5. Matters to be Raised by Trade Unions

No issues were raised by the Trade Unions.

CHAIRMAN

**INFORMAL MEETING OF EDUCATION
EMPLOYMENT SUB COMMITTEE
8 JULY 2020
5.30 - 6.00 PM**



Present:

Councillors Allen (Chairman), Wade, Bhandari, Leake, Neil and Porter

Non-Voting Co-optees Present:

David Allais, Unison
Graham Jackson, NASUWT
Gregory Wilton, NUT

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Tullett
Asia Allison, GMB

1. Election of Chairman

The first two agenda items to elect the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee were deferred as this was an informal meeting. This was due to the committee being held prior to the Employment Committee meeting which would formally agree the membership of the Education Employment Sub Committee.

However it was agreed that Councillor Allen be elected Chairman for the duration of the informal meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items to be considered.

4. Minutes of previous meeting

As this was an informal meeting consideration of the Committee's minutes from 20 November 2019 was deferred.

5. Items raised by Union representatives

In advance of the meeting a number of questions were raised by the Union representatives and were answered by Paul Young, HR Business Partner - People & Schools as set out below:

- Return to work Summer term 2020: Contractual issues

Graham Jackson asked for a run down of what was occurring for the return to work since half term and then September. The HR Business Partner confirmed that contractually schools had been operating as normal with no contractual changes or reduction in school staff numbers. He noted that longer term there may be an impact due to the financial impact of Covid-19 but there had been no ongoing issue. Advice

provided to schools following discussions with union colleagues re. arrangements that should be in place for September. Following further guidance from central government the Council was expecting almost all of the workforce to be returning to duty at the start of September.

- Long term plan from Sept 2020 onwards

This question had been submitted a few weeks ago but Graham Jackson was interested to see how updated guidance was being applied by Bracknell Forest. The HR Business Partner responded that updated guidance had been circulated at the end of the previous week and schools were making their preparations for all pupils to return to all settings in September and there was an expectation that all staff would be returning to deliver support and teaching. Expectation for operations to continue and schools to be operating.

- Financial support for Schools

The Schools Forum was considering the overall position in relation to the financial implications for schools. Graham Jackson asked in particular what the impact was on schools of increased cleaning and how that additional cost was being managed. Schools have the opportunity to request additional funds to cover additional costs during lockdown and covid-19 period, there are restrictions, finance colleagues are working with schools to support them in making those submissions for the funds. A further report was going to the Schools Forum encourage to submit bids for funds – three areas covered.

- Test and trace

Greg Wilson stated that SAGE had said that schools should not reopen until Test and Trace can reach 80% of those who had received a positive test. Last week only 74% were being traced. He asked the Committees' thoughts about what decisions should be made if SAGE is not working at 80% plus in September.

In response the HR Business Partner explained that the Council had consistently been following the Central Government and Department for Education guidance and this was that schools should reopen from September. Further guidance on Outbreak Control Plan was being provided to schools and training for Headteachers was being delivered the following week. This guidance would be shared with union colleagues.

- Process for local lockdown in Bracknell Forest

Outbreak Control Plan was now in place and would be fully operation from the following week with training being provided to Head teachers.

- Extra funding to local authority regarding long term sickness or death in service

Greg Wilson enquired whether additional funding was being provided to support the long-term impacts or death in service. Reports had recently indicated a long-term impact on health. The HR Business Partner replied that no confirmation had been received about additional funding. Deaths of staff would be reported to Department for Education.

- Compulsory attendance at schools

Graham Jackson enquired how Bracknell Forest was going to manage the issue of enforcing compulsory attendance at schools. The HR Business Partner advised that the issue did not fall within the remit of the Education Employment Sub Committee but could be followed up in another forum.

CHAIRMAN

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To: **Employment Committee**
10 February 2021

COVID-19: Health & Safety Assessment Report **Executive Director: Delivery**

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to report the council's compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (as amended in 2002) and the council's general duty to look after our staff's wellbeing when working at home and in the office.
- 1.2. As a result of COVID 19 and the changes with working arrangements, this report summarise the results of Display Screen Equipment assessments, Home working assessments, Completion of eLearning package "Display Screen Equipment and "BAME" vulnerable group assessments undertaken since end of November 2020.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. To consider and endorse the next step identified in section 6.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1. The council has a duty of care under Health and Safety legislation for ensuring the wellbeing of staff. With all staff having had to change their working environments and ways of working, the council was required to update everyone's risk assessments. For those who use computers as part of their work, these staff also had to undertake new Display Screen Assessments (DSE). Finally, for home and remote workers, their risk assessments needed to be updated, to reflect the increased time working away from the main offices and the new requirements for the protection of customer data while away from the office.
- 3.2. The coronavirus pandemic has increased the health inequalities across the country. Evidence shows this has had a particularly negative effect on Black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) communities. Therefore, it is important that the council is informed of how this may impact the workforce and puts in place actions to mitigate these impacts.

4. Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1. No alternative actions proposed.

5. Key findings

- 5.1 Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, employers and the employee have a duty to look after the employee's wellbeing.

General duties of employees at work UK.

It shall be the duty of every employee while at work—

- a) to take reasonable care for the health and safety of himself and of other persons who may be affected by his acts or omissions at work; and

- b) as regards any duty or requirement imposed on his employer or any other person by or under any of the relevant statutory provisions, to co-operate with him so far as is necessary to enable that duty or requirement to be performed or complied with. Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

5.2 The purpose of the report is to ensure compliance with these provisions for staff when working at home and in the office. To this end, an analysis of assessment has been carried out on the following from 1123 employees:

- Home Assessments: **546**
- Display Screen Assessments: **910**
- BAME /Vulnerable Assessment: **97**
- DSE e-learning: **592**

More detail can be found within the report at Appendix A.

6. Next Steps as agreed by CMT 9th December 2020

- 6.1. All new employees to complete a home working assessment prior to commencing employment. Completing a refreshed home working assessment becomes mandatory for all existing employees.
- 6.2. All new employees to undertake a Display Screen Equipment assessment, and the eLearning package “Display Screen Equipment” as part of their induction process. Completing the new eLearning package, which requires a new Display Screen Equipment assessment, is now mandatory for all existing employees.
- 6.3. All Directors should ensure their staff have an up to date Display Screen Equipment and home working assessment by the end of March 2021 and provide the data to Health and Safety, highlighting any changes or issues with individuals home working arrangements since the beginning of the pandemic.
- 6.4. All Directors should re-review existing risk assessment for staff with potential work-related exposure to COVID-19 by the end of March 2021 and provide the data to HR and OD highlighting any concerns raised by managers and staff.
- 6.5. HR and OD to provide an annual report on issues/concerns highlighted in the risk assessment for staff with potential work-related exposure to COVID-19.
- 6.6. The Health & Safety Assessment Report is to be produced annually, to provide comparative data.

7. Background Information

- 7.1. Based on the representation made to CMT in September (Annex A), it refers to the [‘Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19’ report published by Public Health England](#) (PHE) on 2nd of June 2020, a package of actions aimed at reducing the risk within the workforce was agreed along with recognition that colleagues health and safety is paramount during this period as we all continue to work from home.

8. Consultation and Other Considerations

Legal Advice

- 8.1. The recommendations in this report are underpinned by the Council's duties as an employer both in common law and under statute to take reasonable care in ensuring a safe work environment (which extends to home working) and safe systems of work for its staff.

Financial Advice

- 8.2. There are no financial implications.

Assistant Director: HR and OD

- 8.3. CMT have agreed it makes sense for all staff working from home to have completed a homeworking assessment, regardless of whether there are not any perceived risks.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 8.4. This paper is provided to summarise information related to health equalities and coronavirus. The proposed actions aim to encourage positive actions related to equalities.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 8.5. The council has reviewed its workplace risk assessment tool developed to assess working practice of all staff. The tool now enables a particular assessment of BAME staff as well as considering other protected characteristics which might put a member of staff at greater risk from COVID 19.

Background Papers

Appendix A – CMT 9th September – COVID-19 Inequalities in Relation to BAME Community.
Appendix B - Health and Safety Report 2020

Contact for further information

Assistant Director: Property
Kamay Toor: 01344 355183
Kamay.Toor@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Health and Safety Manager
Doug Brady: 01344 352288
Doug.Brady@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

To: **Corporate Management Team**
9 September 2020

COVID-19 inequalities in relation to the BAME community
Assistant Director of Chief Executives Office

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Two reports were published in June by Public Health England, reporting how COVID-19 is affecting different demographic groups. A number of factors and characteristics are identified that increase the likelihood of catching the virus and dying from it.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to summarise these two PHE publications and identify issues and actions relevant to consider at a local level.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 **To note the research and findings of the Public Health England reports in the context of the needs within the borough.**
- 2.2 **To approve the proposed priority actions identified in section 5.15.**

3 Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The coronavirus pandemic has increased the health inequalities across the country. Evidence shows this has had a particularly negative effect on BAME communities. Therefore, it is important that the council is informed of how this may affect the local community and puts in place actions to mitigate these impacts.

4 Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 No alternative actions proposed.

5 Supporting Information

Report one: Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19

- 5.1 The '[Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19](#)' report was published by [Public Health England](#) (PHE) on 2nd of June 2020. It used statistical evidence from surveillance data to identify the patterns of characteristics related to diagnosis and mortality of COVID-19. It takes a purely statistical view of the information to date and states that the causation and reasons behind the patterns are not clear.
- 5.2 The following key patterns were identified:
 - The largest disparity was for age – older adults are significantly more at risk of mortality, especially those over 80 years old.
 - Although a similar rate of diagnosis, males are more likely to need intensive care treatments and have a higher risk of mortality than females.
 - Those living in areas of deprivation have a greater risk of mortality.
 - Black ethnicities are the most likely to be diagnosed with COVID-19.
 - All BAME groups have a greater risk of mortality than white ethnicities.

- Specific occupations such as healthcare, security and public vehicle drivers are at greater risk of mortality.
 - More deaths are occurring in care homes than would be expected in normal circumstances.
 - Other health conditions such as diabetes are often reported in COVID-19 deaths (diabetes was reported on 21% of COVID-19 death certificates).
- 5.3 These disparities mostly replicate existing inequalities in mortality rates, except for the finding related to the BAME community, as previously mortality has been higher in white ethnic groups.
- 5.4 One of the most significant findings related to BAME was that after accounting for the effect of sex, age, deprivation and region, people of Bangladeshi ethnicity had around twice the risk of death than people of White British ethnicity. There were also health conditions related to the impacts of coronavirus with higher rates of cardiovascular disease in Bangladeshi and Pakistani ethnicities and higher rates of hypertension in Black Caribbean and Black African ethnicities.

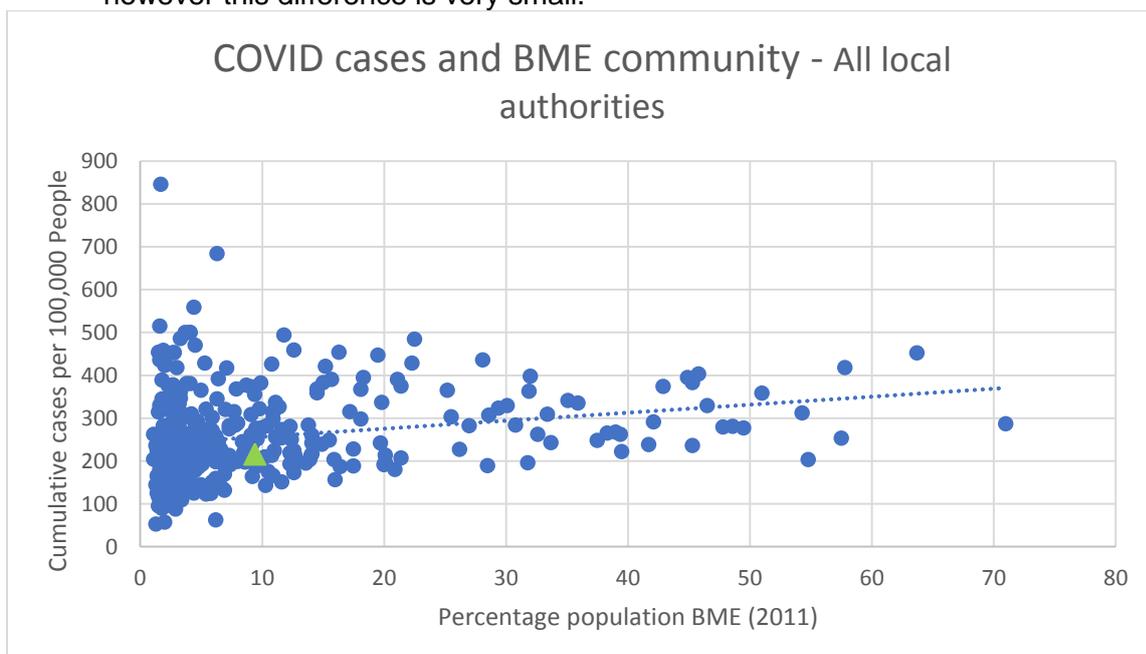
Report two: Beyond the data: Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups

- 5.5 A second report, '[Beyond the data: Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups](#)', was subsequently published by PHE on 16th of June 2020. Whilst the previous report identified a range of inequalities, the purpose of this report was to understand the context and reasons related to BAME communities. It reported on insights from over 4000 stakeholders to deliver practical actions and initial strategies for addressing the inequalities. It also extends the previous report to provide a more detailed literature review comparing the effects of COVID-19 for BAME groups and the white British population.
- 5.6 Findings from the literature review show that BAME groups are more likely to:
- work in occupations at higher risk of COVID-19 exposure.
 - live in multigenerational housing, particularly Asian families.
 - live in high density urban areas
 - use public transport to travel to essential work.
 - avoid seeking health care due to effects of historic racism and poor previous experience.
 - remain quiet if they have concerns about PPE in the workplace.
- 5.7 The stakeholder engagement identified five emerging themes related to BAME communities:
- There are longstanding inequalities which are exacerbated by COVID-19. This is in structural and societal environments, and socio-economic factors.
 - There is increased risk of exposure and acquisition of COVID-19 e.g. through occupation as key workers.
 - There is increased risk of complications and death e.g. through high instance of underlying conditions like diabetes and obesity.
 - Racism, discrimination, stigma, fear and low trust are affecting health seeking behaviours e.g. the fear of diagnosis was negatively impacting uptake of testing.
 - Further research is needed to understand impact on BAME community. Particularly on the socio-economic, occupation, cultural and structural factors related to COVID-19.
- See appendix A for visual of these findings.

- 5.8 Recommendations of report to central government:
1. Make comprehensive ethnicity data collection routine in the NHS and Social Care systems and available to health and care partners.
 2. Encourage community participatory research to understand BAME communities and to develop accessible programmes to improve health outcomes. Work should be collaborative with community leaders.
 3. Improve access, experiences and outcomes of NHS, local government and Integrated Care System services for BAME communities, including regular equality audits and use of health impact assessments.
 4. Further develop culturally competent occupational risk assessment tools to reduce employee risk of exposure to COVID-19.
 5. Fund and launch culturally inclusive COVID-19 education and prevention campaigns to reinforce risk reduction strategies and rebuild trust. (Including promotion of clinical services for testing)
 6. Prioritise promotion of culturally competent general health and disease prevention programmes. Including promoting health weight, physical activity, smoking cessation and effective management of chronic conditions.
 7. Ensure recovery strategies actively reduce inequalities of health and create sustainable change.
- 5.9 The government's Equality Hub, led by the Equalities Minister, has committed to using these findings to inform their future work.

Relevance to Bracknell Forest/ Key issues

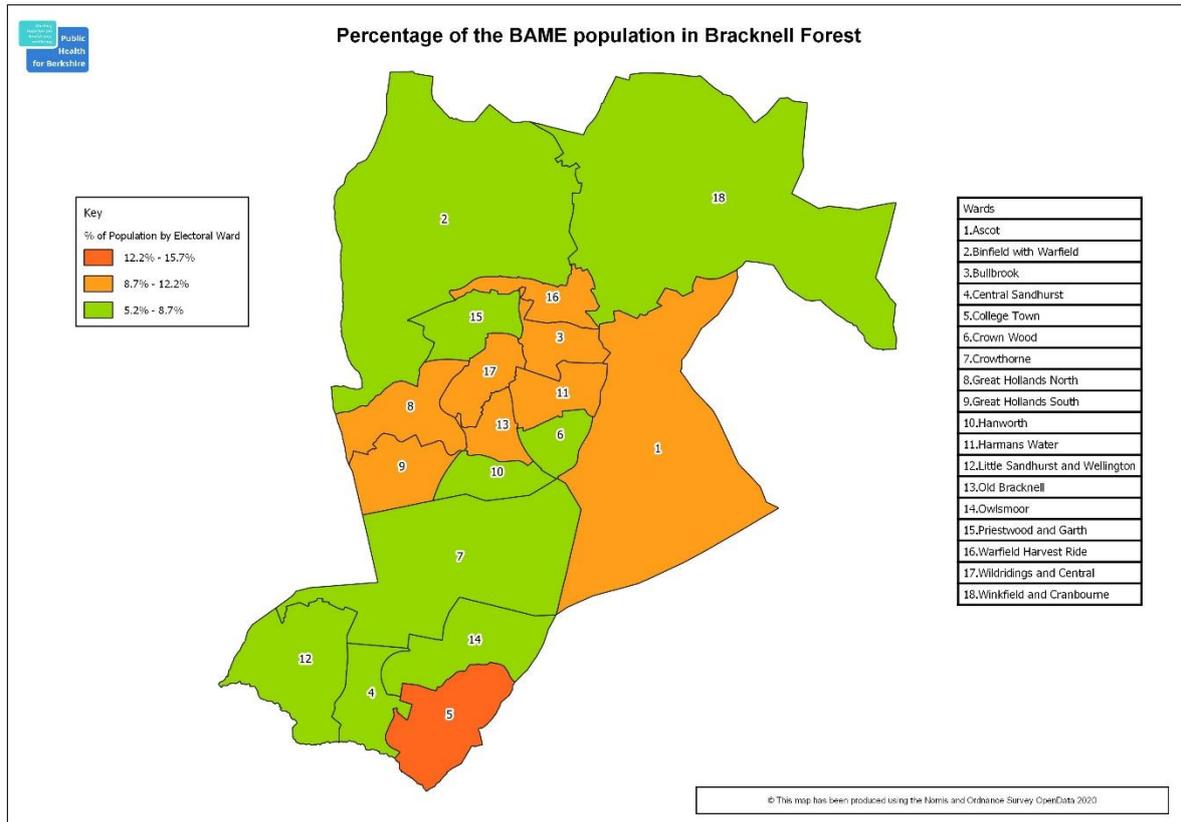
5.10 In Bracknell Forest there is an estimated BAME population of 10,500¹, this is proportionally similar to the rest of the South East and slightly lower than the average for England. Compared to all local authorities, in Bracknell Forest there is a slightly lower rate of COVID-19 cases than the average for the size of the BME community, however this difference is very small.



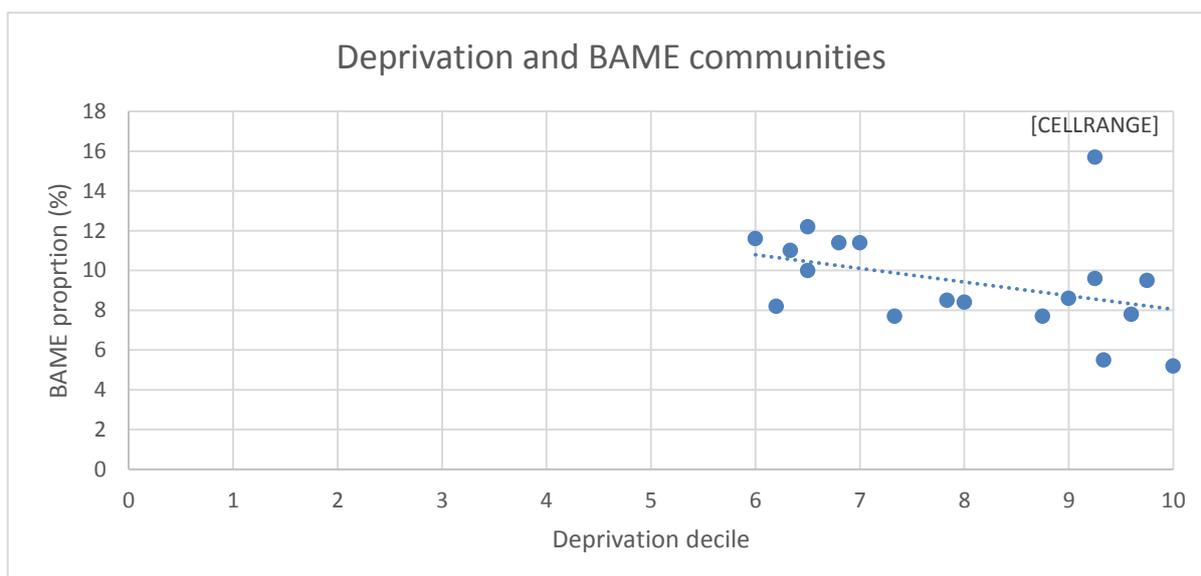
Bracknell Forest is marked with green triangle, 9.4% BME and 216 cases per 100,000 people. Reported 15/6/20. Source: LG Inform <https://lginform.local.gov.uk/reports/view/lga-research/covid-19-cases-and-area-characteristics>

¹ Based on 2011 census proportions and extrapolated according to the 2019 population projections.

5.11 The highest proportion of the BAME community for Bracknell Forest is located in the College Town ward where there is a significant Nepali population, many of whom are ex-Gurkhas. Other areas with greater proportions of the BAME community are broadly in central Bracknell. Therefore, additional consideration may be required for these areas when targeting resources to engage the BAME community.



5.12 Similar to the findings of the PHE report, there is also a correlation locally between BAME communities and deprivation. Broadly, the greater the deprivation of an area, the more likely there is to be a higher proportion of BAME residents. Deprivation is intricately linked to many inequalities such as poor housing, higher unemployment, income, levels of poverty, age, life expectancy, gender and disability. For example, currently, in England, people living in the least deprived areas of the country live around 20 years longer in good health than people in the most deprived areas. Therefore, addressing these inequalities is likely to be complex, and need further investigation.



Plot of wards. Note that deprivation deciles are published at an LSOA level and are based on a national scale. The first deprivation decile is the most deprived and the tenth is the least deprived. To get an estimate for the ward, an average of the LSOA deprivation deciles has been calculated.

- 5.13 Work is also being undertaken as part of the local Community Impact Assessment to further map neighbourhood level data such as ethnicity, areas of deprivation, age profile and other vulnerability characteristics related to COVID-19.

Proposed actions and wider work taking place

- 5.14 The key recommendation for action is to **develop an engagement plan** for BAME communities across Bracknell Forest, to ensure they are aware of COVID support including prevention advice, the Test and Trace system and the Outbreak management plan.
- 5.15 Following the development of an engagement plan there are also a number of recommendations linked to the findings in the second PHE report. Although many of the original actions from the report are targeted to the NHS and central government, there may be other considerations for local authorities. The actions recommended for CMT are based on the themes of recommendations from the PHE reports and in discussion with the Public Health team and Council's Equality Group. These are the priority actions that sit within a wider plan.

Ref	Action	Timescales	Lead
1	Ensure BAME communities are accessing COVID testing by evaluating the use of local testing centres to ensure it is representative of population demographics.	Sept 2020	Public Health
2	Evaluate the completion of occupational risk assessments for vulnerable groups within the council to assess any improvements to the process and understand the data generated, for example any gaps in completion. Use this data to identify areas internally with high numbers of BAME workforce.	Oct 2020	Health and Safety
3	Improve the quality of local information about BAME communities by better utilisation of existing data sources. For example, identifying BAME community with comorbid diabetes or obesity, identifying local occupations with high BAME workforce and understanding local profiles linked to GP surgeries.	Sept – Dec 2020	BF Public Health working with shared team & Health
4	Take measurable action to improve access, experiences and outcomes of our services for BAME communities by ensuring comprehensive	Jan 2021 and ongoing	Directors and DMT's

	ethnicity data collection in the delivery of services including in health, social care, housing and schools. This should use standardised definitions and categories and include quantitative and qualitative data for effective equalities monitoring.		
5	Engage BAME communities to research perceptions, confidence and trust in BFC/health & social care services working with partners including health and the VCS.	April 2021	Public health, health, social care, supported by the Engagement and Equalities team.

5.16 Locally, Slough Borough Council have the highest proportions of BAME residents. They have already outlined an initial pilot approach to tackling the BAME inequalities related to COVID-19. They have identified five strands as part of this test:

1. Community awareness and engagement – getting information to the BAME community and wider population
2. Improving information – collecting and monitoring quality data
3. Prevention and hard reduction – Improving detection and management of health
4. COVID-19 clinical management – prevention outreach, home monitoring and early hospital admissions
5. Workforce – linked to Frimley ICS to complete risk assessments and gather staff feedback.

5.17 There is also already work taking place at a local level, led by Public Health and linking closely with the communications team. This group is looking at learning from and replicating some of the community activity from Slough and the other pilot areas. It is aiming to:

1. Increase awareness of the higher rate of COVID-19 related deaths for BAME communities.
2. Motivate and empower professionals and residents to take action to reduce this rate.
3. Communicate what professionals, organisations and residents can do to reduce COVID-19 related deaths in BAME communities.

5.18 The equalities subgroup will track the progress of the recommended actions from this report with regular reporting to CMT.

6 Consultation and Other Considerations

Legal Advice

6.1 n/a

Financial Advice

6.2 n/a

Other Consultation Responses

6.3 n/a

Equalities Impact Assessment

6.4 This paper is provided to summarise information related to health equalities and coronavirus. The proposed actions aim to encourage positive actions related to equalities.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.5 The council has reviewed its workplace risk assessment tool developed to assess working practice of all staff. The tool now enables a particular assessment of BAME staff as well as considering other protected characteristics which might put a member of staff at greater risk from COVID 19.

Background Papers

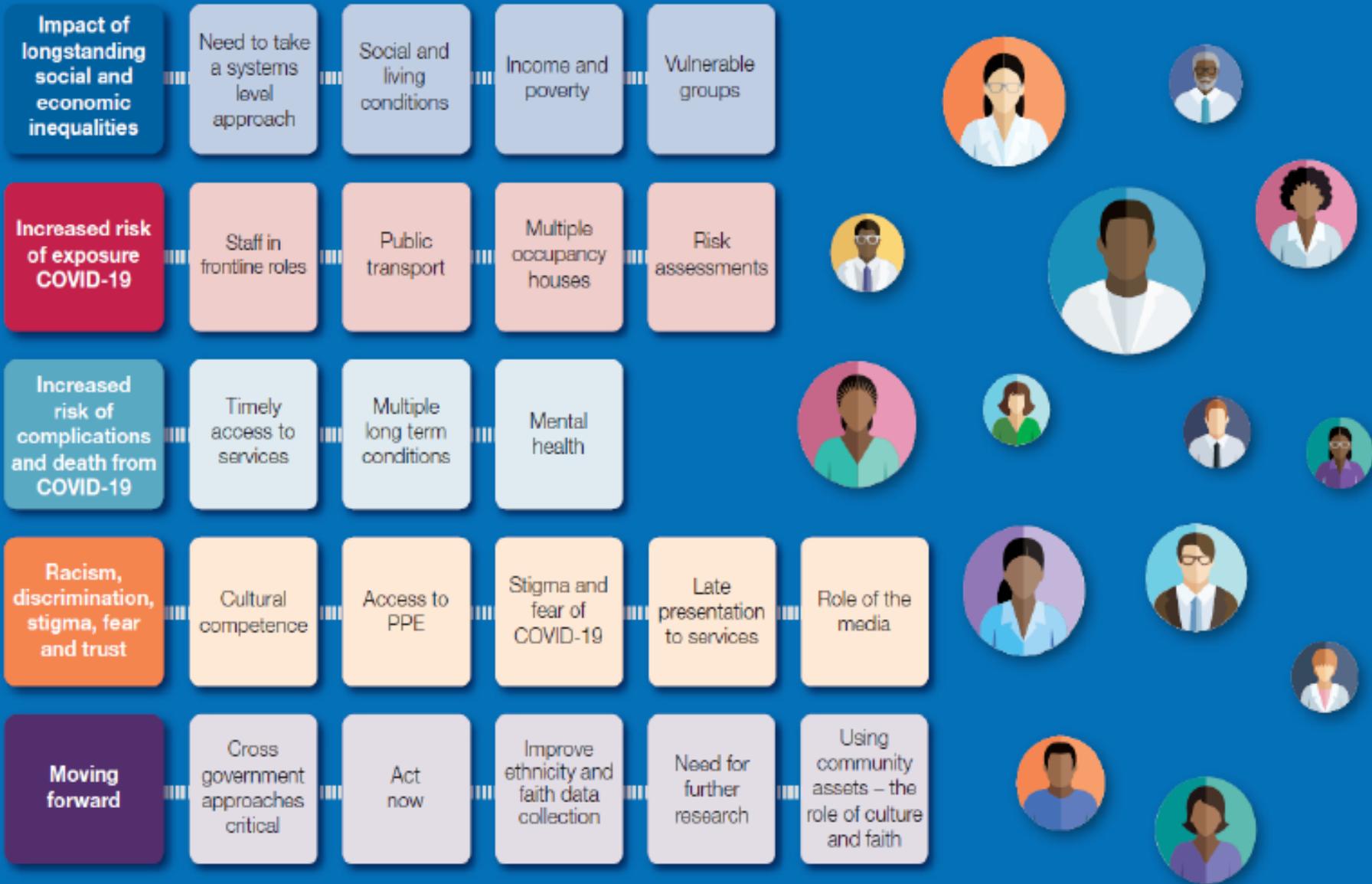
1. [Disparities in the risk and outcomes of COVID-19](#)
2. [Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on BAME groups](#)

Contact for further information

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Major and sub-themes emerging from stakeholder engagement sessions



Health and Safety Report 2020

29

Display Screen Equipment, Homeworking Assessment and
BAME/Vulnerable Group Analysis



Outcome

Engagement level with all assessments issued are low. For outcome to be useful in the future we need to encourage greater level of manager buy in .

Employee satisfaction

The analysis shows that responding colleagues are on the whole satisfied with their working from home set up.



Value for Money

The outcome for some of the assessment resulted in purchase of equipment to help resolve colleagues issues and concerns. In the long run acting as a protective factor for DSE and homeworking related absences.

Summary of returns:

- Of the 546 Homeworking assessments returned 29 from Chief Executive, 185 are from the Delivery Directorate, 76 from People, 76 from Place Planning and Regeneration and 40 from Resources. The returned assessments therefore represents 49% sample of the workforce.
- Display Screen Assessments were returned. 21 from Chief Executive, 185 from Delivery Directorate, 156 from People, 75 from Place Planning and Regeneration, 75 from Resources and 40 from People Directorate. A return rate of 81%.
- BAME/Vulnerable assessment returns were 97, there are 126 BAME employees, this represents 77% return.
- 592 DSE eLearning packages were completed, this represents 53% return

Key figures used in the Health and Safety Analysis

Health & Safety Questionnaires Returned

Home Assessments: **546**
Display Screen Assessments: **910**
BAME /Vulnerable Assessment: **97**
DSE e-learning: **592**

Employee Numbers

Number of employees per directorate:

- Resources: **90**
- Place, Planning and Regeneration: **159**
- People: **653**
- Delivery: **185**
- Chief Executives: **36**

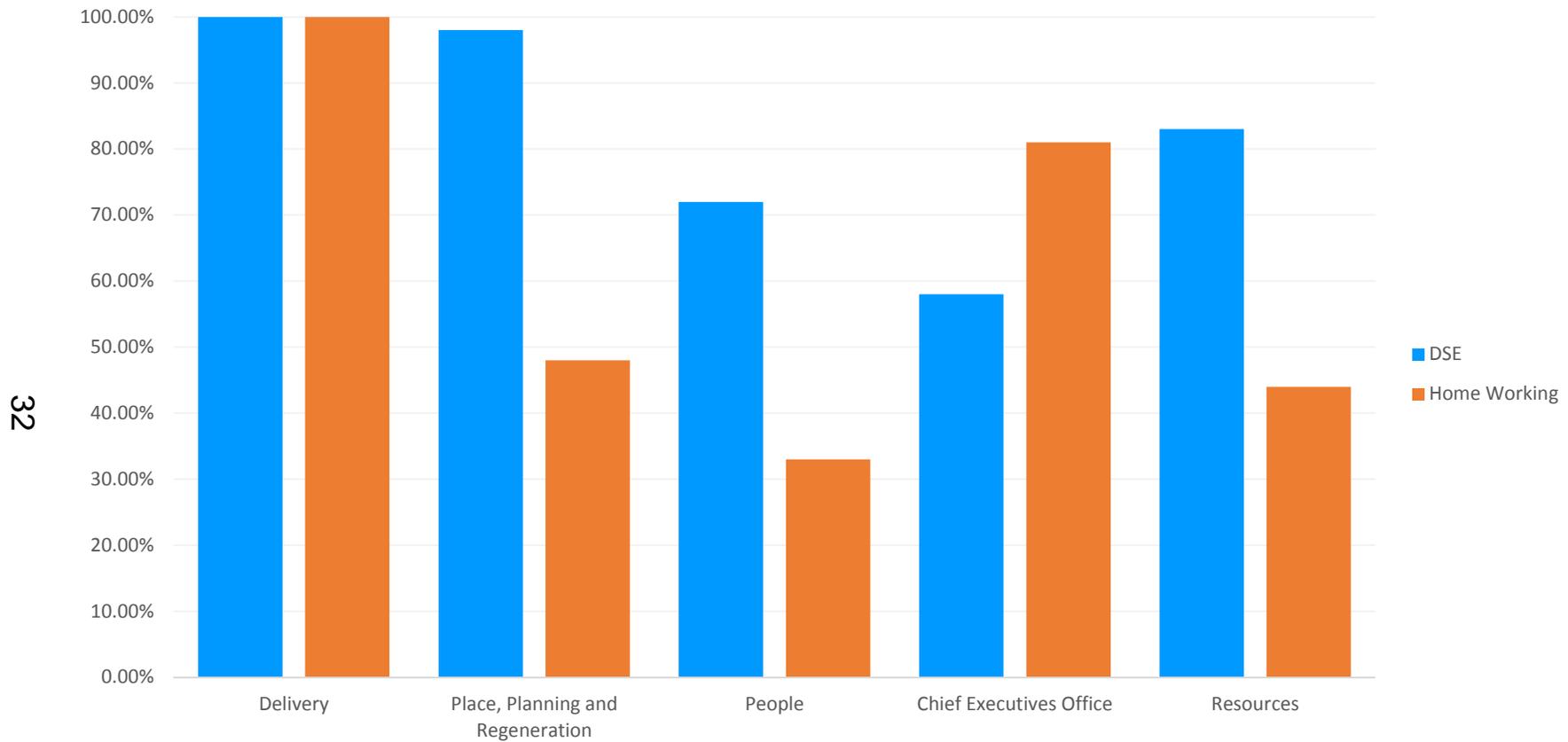
BAME employee numbers

The council employees **126** BAME individuals.

BAME employee numbers per directorate:

- Resources: **6**
- Place, Planning and Regeneration: **13**
- People: **85**
- Delivery: **18**
- Chief Executives: **4**

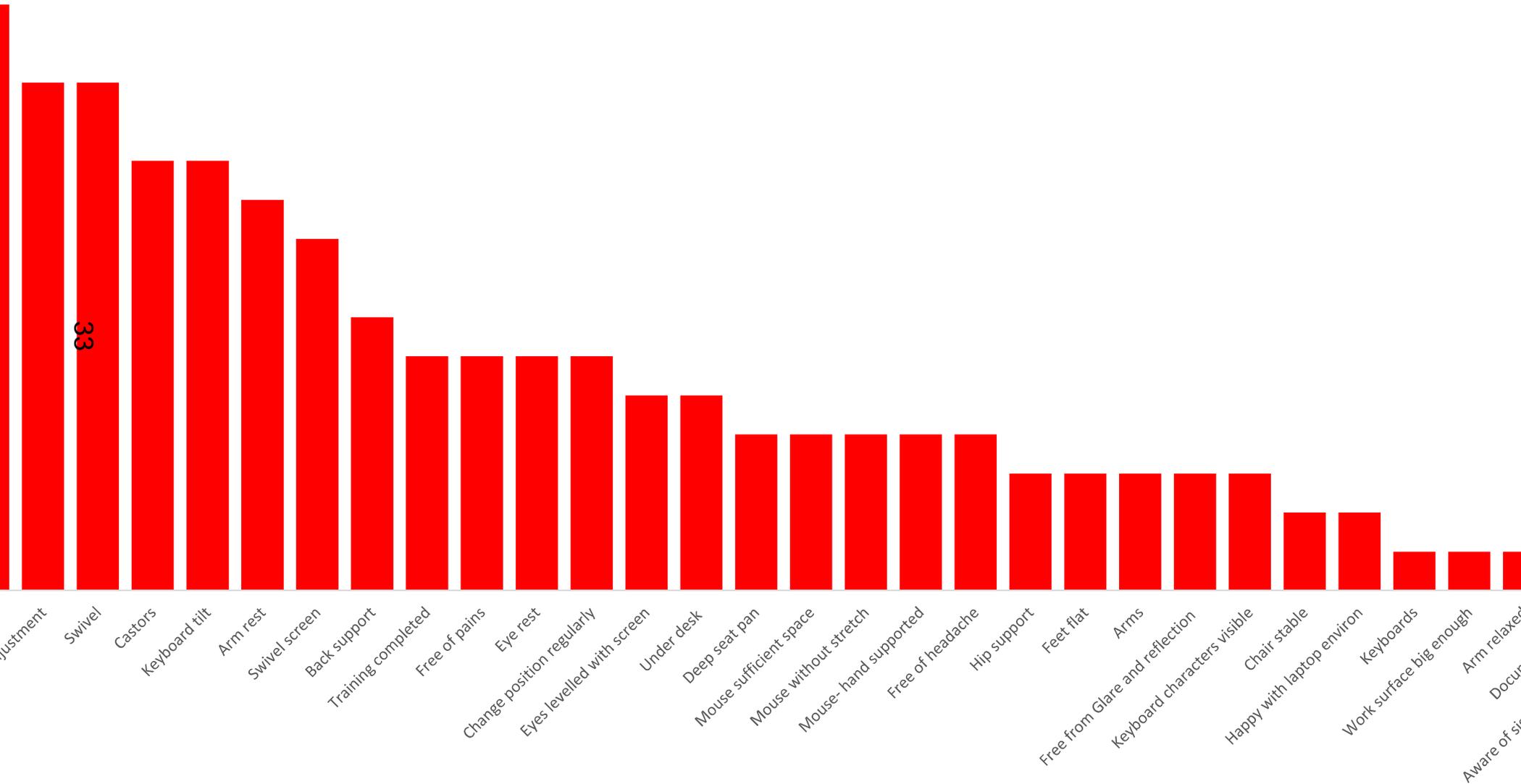
DSE and Home Working assessment analysed by Directorate



32

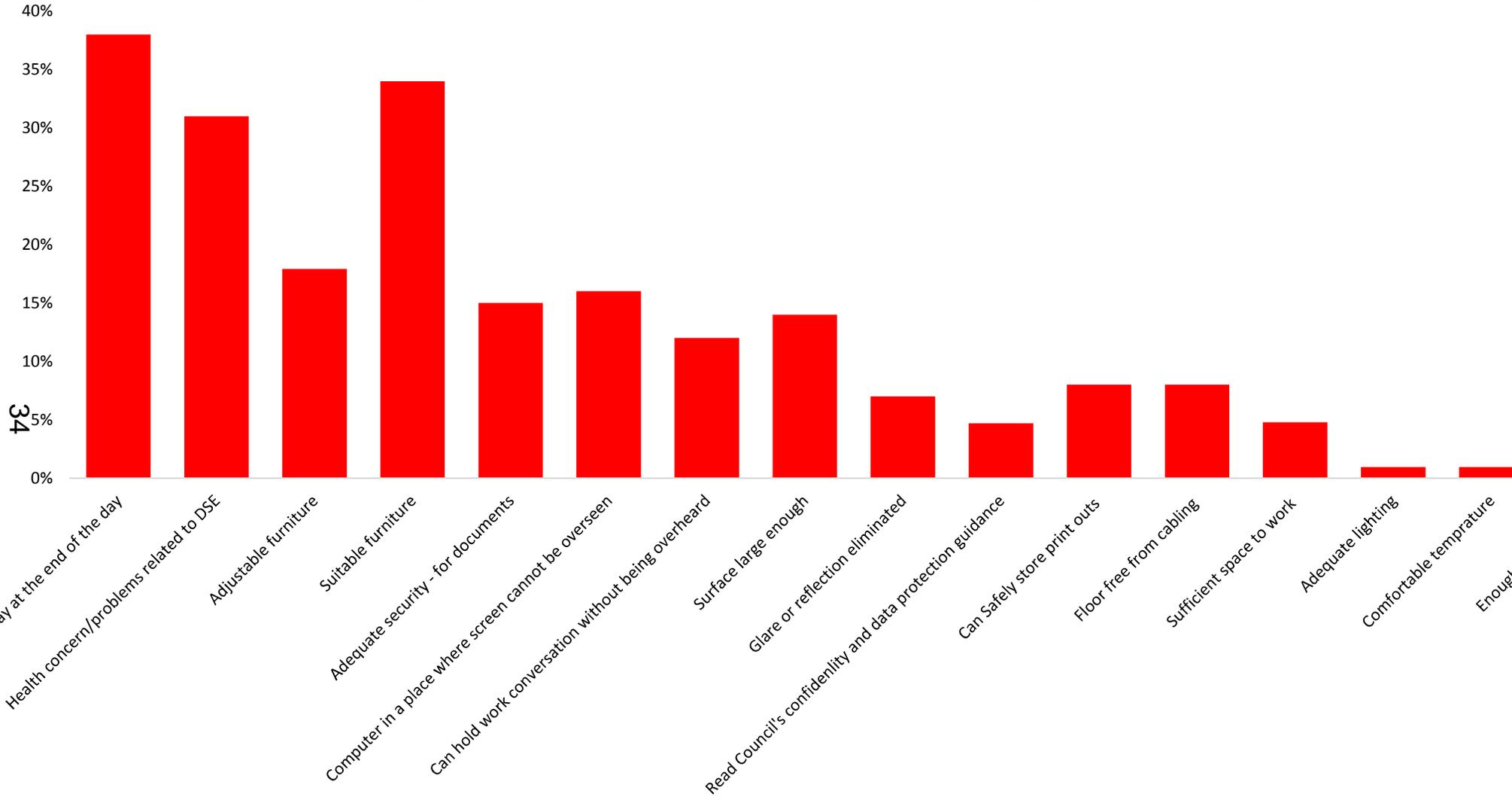
Students areas of concern in DSE assessment

% of people concerned about various aspect of DSE assessment

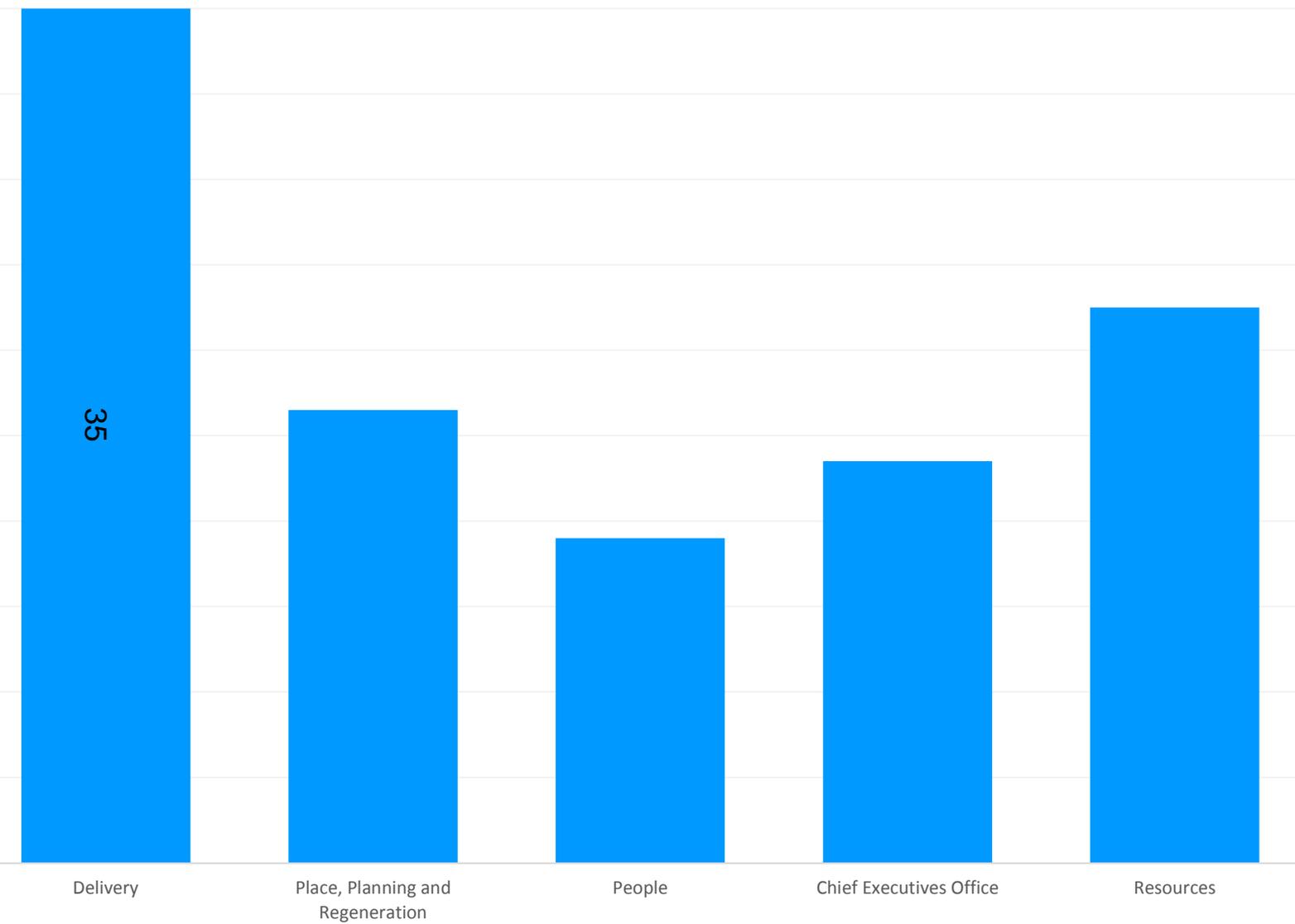


Identified areas of concern in Homeworking assessment

% of people expressing concern about different aspects of homeworking arrangements

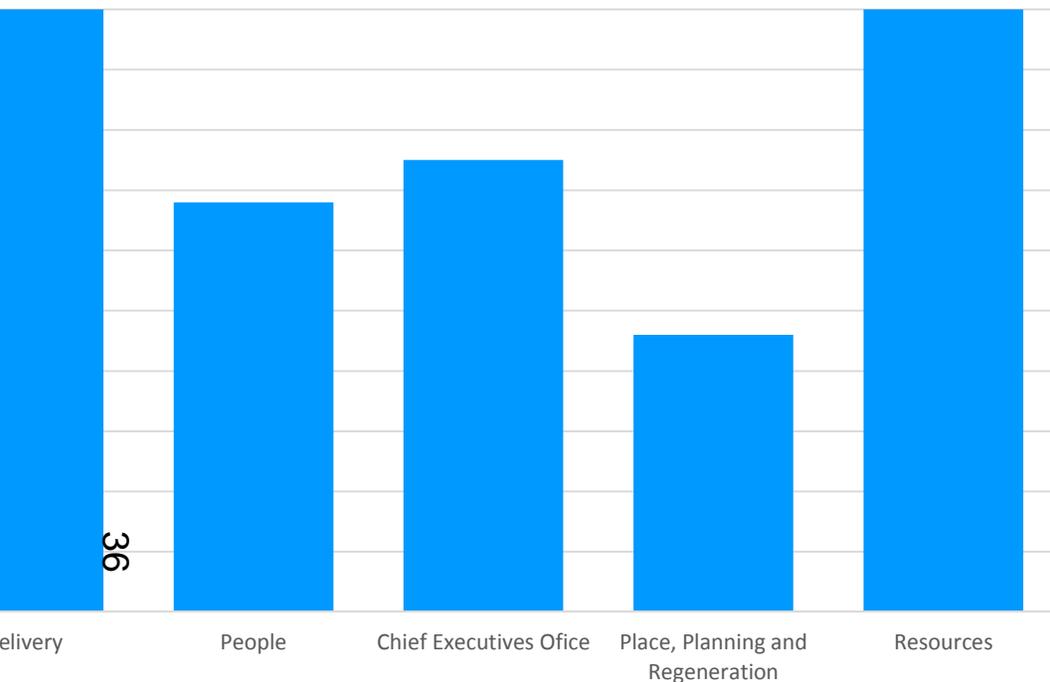


OSE eLearning assessments completed per Directorate



/Vulnerable Assessment Analysis

BAME/Vulnerable assessments completed per Directorates



Summary

BAME staff represents 11% of the workforce at Bracknell Forest Council and 11% of the workforce are recognised as vulnerable or at an increased risk of Covid-19. As such, the Council has followed Health advices that extra measures are taken to reduce their risk of exposure to the disease.

Understanding individual's level of risk and seeking to mitigate them is a high priority.

97 out of a possible 126 assessments were submitted for analysis.

Findings and Next Steps

1

Many colleagues have been provided with office chairs and monitors for homeworking.

2

Colleagues with furniture's they consider unsuitable for home working tend to answer "yes" to the question about health concern related to DSE equipment.

3

Colleagues overall are satisfied with their DSE and home arrangements.

4

The questionnaires should be issued to staff annually to track and record issues that might impact negatively on the workforce.

5

There should be clear documentation of actions taken to manage and resolve colleagues concerns by each manager.

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To: **Employment Committee**
10 February 2021

Annual Update of The Council's Pay Statement **Assistant Director: HR and Organisational Development**

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Since 2012, and in accordance with the 2011 Localism Act, the Council has been required to publish an annual Pay Statement. The Statement is also aligned with the requirements of the Transparency Regulations.
- 1.2 This report has already been agreed by Council. The report now needs to be reviewed by Employment Committee

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Employment Committee review and agree the Pay Policy Statement for 2020/21.**

3 Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 To comply with the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) guidance and 2014 Transparency Code requirements.
- 3.2 To Highlight the Councils commitment to transparency and equity in pay.

4 Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 None. It is a legal requirement to produce and publish the statement.

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 The Pay Policy Statement is attached.

6 Consultation and Other Considerations

Legal Advice

- 6.1 Section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011 requires local authorities to produce a pay statement to be agreed by Members before the beginning of each financial year. The Act does not apply to local authority schools. This document meets the requirements of the Act for the Bracknell Forest Council. This Pay Policy Statement presents the expected position at 1 April 2021.

The provisions of the Localism Act require that local authorities are more open about their own local policies and how their local decisions are made. The Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency enshrines the principles of transparency and asks Authorities to follow three principles when publishing data they hold: responding to public demand, releasing data in open formats available for re-use, and, releasing data in a timely way. This includes data on senior salaries and the structure of the workforce.

Financial Advice

- 6.2 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Other Consultation Responses

- 6.3 None, though the statement will be discussed at the Local Joint Committee and Employment Committee.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.4 Discussed across the document.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.5 Failure to explicitly respond to guidance on the content of published information will run the risk of challenge from the DCLG.

Background Papers

None

Contact for further information

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Bracknell Forest Council
PAY STATEMENT FOR THE
FINANCIAL YEAR 2020/21
(Reported data based on 2019/20)

INTRODUCTION

Source and scope of pay statement

This Pay Statement has been produced in accordance with Sections 38 to 43 of the Localism Act 2011 (the Act), which, from 2012 onwards, require local authorities to publish an annual statement of their approach to pay for the relevant financial year in relation to:

- The remuneration of their most senior employees (which the Act defines as the head of paid service (Chief Executive), the Monitoring Officer, the Assistant Directors (or Directors), and the Deputy Assistant Directors (i.e. managers who report directly to a Director));
- The remuneration of their lowest-paid employees; and
- The relationship between the remuneration of the most senior employees and that of other employees.

The statement is for the financial year 2020/21. Data on existing salaries, job roles and statistics contained within the statement are based as at 1 April 2020.

The Secretary of State has produced guidance on the Act's provisions relating to openness and accountability in local pay, which local authorities must have regard to in preparing and approving their annual pay policy statements and the Council's statement takes full account of this guidance to date as well as the provisions of the Act.

It also takes account of:

- Local Government Transparency Code 2014
- Guidance issued by the Joint National Council (JNC) for Local Authority Chief Executives on pay policy statements, published in November 2011
- Guidance under section 40 of Localism Act 2011, published by DCLG
- Employment and equalities legislation affecting local authority employers, where relevant.

To aid transparency, this statement also contains or refers to information which the Council is already required to publish under other legislation, i.e.

- Information on the actual level of remuneration paid to senior managers, as required by The Accounts and Audit (Amendment No. 2) (England) Regulations 2009
- Policies on the exercise of its discretions over payments upon termination of employment under the Local Government Pension Scheme, as required by Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations
- Policies on the exercise of its discretions over payments upon termination of employment under the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006, as required by Regulation 7 of those regulations.

The Government's guidance on the Localism Act's pay provisions states that it is open to Councils to include in this Statement their policies on the remuneration of employees who

are neither the most senior officers nor the lowest paid. Accordingly, this Policy Statement also gives details of:

- The policies applied to employees earning in excess of £50,000, as required by Local Government Transparency Code 2014
- Elements of remuneration which apply to all employees, regardless of their pay level, status or grading within the Council.

As such, this Statement draws together all the relevant existing policies and can therefore be seen as a comprehensive document covering all relevant aspects of pay and remuneration within the Council.

Status of pay statement

In line with the requirements of the Localism Act, the Pay Statement will need to be reviewed on an annual basis, with a new version approved before the start of each subsequent financial year, which will need to be complied with during that year.

The Pay Statement can also be amended during any financial year, but only by a resolution of the full Council. If it is amended during the year to which it relates, the revised version of the statement will be published as soon as reasonably possible after the amendment is approved by the Council.

Transparency and autonomy

It is important to recognise that, whilst producing national legislation relating to their pay policies, the Government also explicitly recognises that each local authority remains an individual employer, and, as such, has the autonomy to make decisions on pay that are appropriate to local circumstances and deliver value for money for local taxpayers.

SECTION 1: REMUNERATION OF STATUTORY AND NON-STATUTORY DIRECTORS, ASSISTANT DIRECTORS, MONITORING OFFICER AND OTHER SENIOR POSTS

1.1 REMUNERATION COVERED IN THIS SECTION OF THE POLICY

This section covers the Council's policies in relation to the remuneration of its senior employees, including:

- Its Chief Executive;
- Its Executive Directors and Directors who report to and are directly accountable to the Chief Executive – this includes both statutory and non-statutory Directors;
- Its Assistant Directors, who report to and are directly accountable to Directors;
- Its Section 151 Officer (the Director of Resources), who is also a Director and remunerated as such;
- Its Monitoring Officer (the Borough Solicitor, who is the officer responsible for ensuring the Council's compliance with the law in all its activities) is also an Assistant Director and is remunerated as such.

1.2 CONTEXT

These senior employees are responsible for working with elected politicians to determine the overall strategic direction of the Council, to develop the scale, nature, efficiency and effectiveness of all the services provided by the Council, and to provide day-to-day leadership and management of those services.

In relation to other organisations in all sectors across the UK, the Council is a large, complex organisation providing a very diverse range of services. Many of those services are vital to the wellbeing of individuals and groups of residents in the local community and are delivered in very challenging circumstances, taking account of levels of need and the availability of resources to meet them.

The Council's senior employees are responsible for:

- 3522 employees (equivalent to 2375.4 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees). These numbers are as at 1 April 2020 and include schools
- Services to an estimated 122,549 residents within the local community (source: ONS 2018 via <https://bracknell-forest.berkshireobservatory.co.uk/population/>)
- Total Gross Expenditure of £263.9 million, which was the Council's Total Gross Outturn Expenditure in 2019/20
- The following services to the local community:
 - Adult social services
 - Children and families social services
 - Countryside and open space management and maintenance
 - Education and schools
 - Elections and local democracy
 - Environmental and public health, including pest control
 - Environmental Services, including refuse collection, recycling, street cleaning and waste disposal
 - Housing
 - Housing and Council tax benefits
 - Leisure and Arts provision
 - Libraries
 - Planning
 - Roads, transport, street lighting and car parking
 - Youth and Community Services
 - Public Health
 - Regeneration and economic development
 - Community Safety
- The following facilities:
 - 34 schools (including one Pupil Referral Unit and one special school)
 - two respite services (overnight and daytime)
 - 4 Children's Centres
 - 9 libraries
 - 5 leisure centres
 - Over 80 park sites totalling over 1,000 acres of land
 - 24 play areas, plus wheeled sports areas, tennis courts, soccer pitches, a baseball diamond and a sports pavilion
 - 14 community centres
 - One town centre office and the commercial centre

- The Council:
 - Is responsible for the education of around 17,000 children
 - Deals with around 1,200 planning applications per year
 - Manages and maintains around 456 kilometres of roads, 700+ kilometres of paths and cycleways, 200+ bridges, underpasses and other structures
 - Manages and maintains cutting almost 2.5 million square metres of grass and manages and maintains approximately 625,000 square metres of woodland
 - Is responsible for around 142 looked-after children
 - Licences 255 premises and clubs and 296 taxis
 - Currently has over 1,640 open cases on adults and provided long term services to over 1,263 people.

The Council must compete with other employers in the area (and, in many cases, in the country) to recruit and retain managers who are capable of meeting the challenges of delivering this diverse range of services to the required standards. This has an important bearing on the levels of remuneration it offers which has been kept under review on a regular basis by the Employment Committee. At the same time, the Council is under an obligation to secure the best value for money for its residents and tax-payers in taking decisions on pay levels. In recent years the Employment Committee has sought to strike a fair balance between these competing pressures.

In a report on senior pay in the public sector commissioned by the government in 2011, Will Hutton concluded that “Chief Executive Officers of [private sector] companies with a turnover of between £101million and £300 million earn more than twice their public sector counterparts.” He also observed that “The sharp increase in executive pay over the last decade, and the wider trend of growing income inequality, has been largely a private sector phenomenon”.

1.3 RESPONSIBILITIES OF SENIOR ROLES

To give further contextual information for remuneration levels, the main accountabilities of the Chief Executive and Directors are set out below.

- **Chief Executive**

The Chief Executive is the Council’s most senior employee who leads and takes responsibility for the work of the Council. It is a full time appointment and post holders are selected on merit, against objective criteria, following public advertisement.

The role of Chief Executive is complex with ultimate responsibility for managing expenditure of 263.9 million of public funds, serving around 122,549 people in the Council’s area.

As head of the paid service of the Council’s employed staff, the Chief Executive is a non-political post. Whilst the elected councillors provide the policies, Council paid employees put them into practice. The Chief Executive is responsible to and accountable to, the Leader of the Council, the Executive and the whole Council in delivering their political and policy objectives.

The Chief Executive works closely with elected councillors to deliver:

Leadership: to ensure strong and visible leadership and direction, encouraging and enabling managers to motivate and inspire their teams;

Strategic direction: ensuring all staff understand and adhere to the strategic aims of the organisation and follow the direction set by elected councillors;

Policy advice: acting as the principal policy adviser to the elected councillors to lead the development of workable strategies which will deliver the political objectives set;

Partnerships: leading and developing strong partnerships across the local community to achieve improved outcomes and better public services for local people;

Operational Management: overseeing financial and performance management, risk management, people management and change management within the Council.

Staff under indirect management responsibility: 3521

- ***Executive Director – People***

This post has a statutory role in relation to both adult and children's social care, and is responsible and accountable for assessing local needs and ensuring the availability and delivery of a full range of services, and ensure that children and young people achieve the best possible outcomes for their lives through education

The directorate provides advice and information about the range of services that may be available to support individuals or families. Practitioners will work with individuals and their carers to identify needs for care and support and/or housing and how those needs can be met. If people are not eligible, the department can give them information about other ways of accessing support and organisations where they could go to get help. There is joint work with Children's Services to ensure support is in place when the young person reaches 18 years of age.

The focus of support is to enable people to maximise their ability and retain their independence, which will mean people can stay in their own homes for as long as possible. Support may be needed for a crisis or a longer period, and the directorate will generally commission this. Depending on assessed needs, a range of services could be provided in partnership with other organisations to meet the social care needs of adults and older people. Services include home support, day opportunities, the provision of equipment for daily living and residential and nursing care. The Directorate also has a responsibility to ensure that the needs of "informal" carers (usually family or friends) are identified, and appropriate support is offered to enable them to continue in their caring role, should this be what they wish.

The post is also responsible for ensuring the provision of Housing Advice and Homelessness Prevention as well as the provision of Housing and Council Tax Benefits.

Public Health functions, formerly part of the NHS, aim to improve the health and wellbeing of the population, tackle health inequalities and reduce premature mortality. One Public Health team covers the Bracknell area, and another covers strategic Public Health work across Berkshire.

The Welfare and Housing Service aims to maximise customers' income and independence. The Welfare Service provides national and local welfare payments to households in the Borough and provides advice to households so that they can maximise their income including budgeting advice and employment opportunities. The Housing service provides advice to households so that they can resolve their housing need, provides advice and if necessary, accommodation for homeless households and overall helps customers secure a home that meets their needs. The

Forest care service provides an emergency and re-assurance service to its customers so that they can maintain their independence in their home and feel safe and secure in the knowledge that if an emergency occurs there is help to call upon.

The Directorate includes the Bracknell Forest Public Health Team. Public Health work aims to improve the health and wellbeing of the population, tackle health inequalities and reduce premature mortality. The team commissions a range of services including health visiting and school nurses, stop smoking support, weight management, health checks, sexual health, falls prevention, mental health and substance misuse treatment. The team also provides support and advice on health matters direct to the community via campaigns, events and social media, as well as providing support to other professional agencies on issues such as infectious disease control or patterns of health and healthcare outcomes within the local population. Collaboration is central to work of the Public Health team, particularly with colleagues in social care, the NHS and the voluntary sector. In addition to the Bracknell Forest Public Health team, the Directorate also hosts the Berkshire-wide 'Shared' Public Health team which provides strategic, contracting and data support to the six unitary authority Public Health teams across the county. This team is led by the Strategic Director of Public Health.

Its duties include specific support for the following:

Children's Social Care

- Child Protection / Safeguarding
- Looked After Children
- Specialist Support
- Youth Offending Service

Adult Social Care

- Adult Community Team (ACT)
- Learning Disabilities
- Safeguarding

Mental Health and Out of Hours

- Mental Health
- Emergency Duty Team
- Forestcare
- Drug and Alcohol Services (DAAT)

Early Help and Communities

- Housing
- Strategy, Resources and Early Help

Education and Learning

- School Advisory team
- School Sufficiency and Commissioning
- Community Learning
- Governor Services
- Targeted Services
- Education Centre and Education Library Service
- Education Psychology & SEN
- Education Capital & Property

Commissioning

- Financial Assessments (Support Hub)
- Financial Assessments (Income)
- Joint Commissioning
- Performance Management & Governance

Public Health

- Shared Team

Budget responsibility: £55.9 million per annum

Staff under direct or indirect line management responsibility: 682 (excluding schools)

- ***Executive Director – Delivery***

The directorate is responsible for the strategic planning and operational delivery of services covering a wide range of functions and activities. It targets its services to meet the high standards residents, local businesses and visitors expect. Some of these services are delivered directly, others in partnership with the voluntary and charitable sectors and some through contracts with private companies. The directorate operates with 5 service divisions as follows:

- Customer Experience
 - Digital Services
 - Libraries, Arts & Heritage
 - Transport and Support
- Legal Services
- Democratic Services
 - Elections
 - Registrars
- ICT
- Contract Services
 - Environmental services
 - Leisure Services
 - Operational Support
 - Cemetery and crematorium
- Property

The Director also acts as Statutory Overview & Scrutiny Officer

Budget responsibility: £15.6 million per annum

Staff under direct or indirect line management responsibility: 184

- ***Director – Place, Planning and Regeneration***

This post is responsible and accountable for the effective planning and delivery of the regeneration, development and future infrastructure of the Borough, within the statutory policy guidelines and planning framework agreed by the Council. The

directorates target its services to meet the high standards residents, local businesses and visitors expect.

The directorate operates with 6 service divisions including:

- Town and country planning
- Building Control and land charges
- Transport Development
- The Look Out Discovery Centre
- Highway Asset Management
- Parks and countryside management
- Regeneration and economy
- Public Health – Local Team

Budget responsibility: £7.2 million per annum

Staff under direct or indirect line management responsibility: 159.

- ***Director – Resources***

This role fulfils the statutory obligations of the Chief Financial Officer, as set out in Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, Sections 112, 113 and 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, in order to ensure that the financial affairs of the Authority are properly administered. This role is the prime adviser to the Council on financial matters including the development and monitoring of financial strategies, policies, programmes and procedures. This role is also responsible for the strategic implementation of Organisational Development and Human Resources to support the Council Plan, Service Plans and associated budgets.

Areas of responsibility include:

- Accountancy
- Audit
- Finance & Business Services
- Procurement
- Revenue Services
- Human Resources
- Organisational Development

Budget responsibility: £5.9 million per annum

Staff under direct or indirect line management responsibility: 91

1.4 OVERALL POLICY ON REMUNERATION FOR SENIOR ROLES

The Council's overall approach to remuneration for its senior employees is based on:

Compliance with equal pay, discrimination and other relevant employment legislation, plus recognition of the demanding nature of the challenges which the Council faces, and the requirement to offer competitive remuneration in relation to the rest of the local government and public sectors, in order to secure the most talented managers. This means that, on the advice of the Employment Committee, the Council has always taken account of:

- pay levels in the local area, including neighbouring public sector employers
- the relative cost of living in the local area, particularly housing costs
- the responsibilities and accountabilities of posts which may be exceptionally demanding.

The Council seeks to maintain this overall approach by carefully monitoring pay data provided by the Joint National Councils (JNCs) for Chief Officers and Chief Executives, the Local Government Association/Employers, and other relevant pay surveys.

In terms of pay differentials, the Council recognises that the role of Chief Executive leads the organisation's workforce and has the greatest level of accountability, and so warrants the highest pay level in the organisation.

At Director level:

- The Council recognises that all its Executive Directors and Directors have a collective and corporate responsibility for contributing to and delivering the overall strategy of the organisation, however the size and scope of their responsibilities differ and therefore an appropriate grade from the senior salaries structure is determined through a job evaluation conducted by Korn Ferry.

At Assistant Director level:

- The Council recognises that certain roles are more demanding than others and has identified those with a greater level of accountability through job evaluation, (which provides a careful analysis of job demands) and offers them higher remuneration than other Assistant Director posts. Evaluation is based upon the Hay system and evaluations are carried out independently by the Korn Ferry Group including the Director of Public Health.

Below Assistant Director level, the Council recognises that the demands on and accountabilities of different management roles vary considerably and seeks to align pay levels with the relative importance and responsibilities of jobs, using a process of job evaluation, and including Market Premia where applicable to match certain posts with the market rate for similar jobs. There are, additionally, some posts which are on other national payscales such as the teaching payscales, NHS payscales or Soulbury conditions. Some of the posts below Assistant Director level are specifically listed later in this report as earning more than £50,000 pa because they either receive a Market Premia payment or are subject to other national payscales.

1.5 SPECIFIC REMUNERATION OFFERED TO SENIOR EMPLOYEES

At Chief Executive, Executive Director, Director and Assistant Director level, the Council offers only an annual salary and access to the Local Government Pension Scheme. No

other cash benefits or benefits in kind are offered - except any benefits purchased by the employee under the Council's Flexible Benefits scheme under which all employees may purchase benefits from a range offered to all staff. The only one of these benefits which gives an opportunity to increase income is the selling of annual leave, which is available to most employees but not to those at Assistant Director level and above (see section 4). Other than the five Director Posts, the Council does not offer performance related payments or bonuses to its senior employees.

Geographical/location allowance (local weighting) is not payable to the Chief Executive, Executive Directors, Directors or Assistant Directors.

The Chief Executive, Executive Directors, Directors and Assistant Directors are not eligible to participate in the Council's flexible leave scheme whereby employees are able to "buy and sell" annual leave within certain parameters (See section 4, below).

Annual salaries

Annual salary levels for senior employees are fixed in accordance with the overall principles set out in section 1.4. At Chief Executive, Executive Director, Director and Assistant Director level and for other senior managers, they consist of a grade range which is determined locally by the Council. This grade range consists of several incremental salary points. Progression through to the top of the grade is dependent on annual performance ratings, until the top of the grade is reached.

Remuneration of senior employees on recruitment

The Council's policy is that any newly appointed senior employee will normally commence employment at the lowest pay point in the pay range for their job, other than when taking account of the successful applicant's current salary and the market requirements. Any decision to appoint a senior employee on a higher pay point within the relevant pay range would be made by the Appointments Committee. In the case of one Director, an additional recruitment and retention payment was agreed by the Chief Executive and the Chair of Employment Committee as a result of market conditions and the need to recruit to this key position.

Pay progression

Pay progression within a specific grade is normally by annual increment, payable from 1 April, until the employee reaches the top pay point of their grade. However, for employees at Director grade and above progression is dependent on annual performance ratings.

- Pay progression is based on the period the employee has served in that grade, subject to performance as evidenced by annual performance ratings.
- Senior employees who are considered to have demonstrated exceptional performance may receive accelerated incremental progression within the grade at the discretion of the Chief Executive or relevant Director or, in the case of the Chief Executive, at the discretion of the Leader of the Council.

Pay awards

The salaries of senior employees are reviewed annually in line with any pay award agreed in the Joint National Councils (JNCs) for Chief Executives/Chief Officers, the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services, NHS or Soulbury conditions, as appropriate for the contracts of the senior managers. Periodic reassessments will benchmark the grades against market rates for similar roles in the region.

Bonuses

The Council does not pay bonuses to any of its employees.

Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)

The Council offers all its senior employees' access to the Local Government Pension Scheme, in accordance with the statutory provisions of the scheme, on the same basis as all its employees. Any pension payments made to its senior employees on termination of employment either on grounds of redundancy, in the interests of the efficiency of the service or on grounds of ill health are made within the statutory terms of the LGPS.

- The employer's contribution rate for senior employees who join the scheme is the same as for all other employees, as set out in Section 4 "**POLICIES COMMON TO ALL EMPLOYEES**"
- The discretions which the Council can apply under the scheme upon termination of employment are the same for senior employees as for all other employees who are LGPS members and are set out in Section 4 "**POLICIES COMMON TO ALL EMPLOYEES**".

Payments on Termination of Employment

Other than payments made under the LGPS, the Council's payments to managers whose employment is terminated on grounds of redundancy or in the interests of the efficiency of the service will be in accordance with the policy the Council has adopted for all its employees in relation to the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006, as set out in Section 4 "**POLICIES COMMON TO ALL EMPLOYEES**".

Other than payments pursuant to the LGPS (including the exercise of the Council's discretions) or payments in accordance with the Council's policies under the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006, the Council's policy is not to make any other termination payments to its senior employees. The only exception to this, which is very rarely used, is where it has received specific legal advice to the effect that a payment is appropriate to settle proceedings in an Employment Tribunal or court of law or may be required to eliminate risk of claims against the Council. Any severance payment of £100,000 or more which falls outside the agreed policy parameters will be referred to full Council for approval.

Election fees

Election fees are paid separately. Returning Officer fees for national elections are set by central government. Local election fees are paid in accordance with a scale of fees which is based on national election rates and agreed locally.

1.6 RE-ENGAGEMENT OF SENIOR MANAGERS

Re-engagement of Chief Executives, Executive Directors, Directors and Assistant Directors who have left Bracknell Forest Council with a severance or termination payment

Re-engagement as employees

(1) Subject to any relevant provisions in employment and equalities legislation, the Council's policy is not to re-employ *in any capacity* any former Chief Executive, Executive Director, Director or Assistant Director who was in receipt of a severance or termination payment for any reason other than compulsory redundancy, for a period of three years from the date of termination of employment.

(2) Where a Chief Executive, Executive Director, Director or Assistant Director's employment has been terminated compulsorily on grounds of redundancy, they will not be

re-employed *in the same or a similar post* for a period of three years following the date of termination of employment. If they are re-employed in another post within four weeks after the effective date of redundancy, they will lose their right to a redundancy payment, including any enhancements under the provisions of the LGPS or the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006. Any re-employment will be subject to the Council following the strict application of the normal process of competitive selection for employment. New legislation has been introduced regarding a cap on Local Government exit payments. The cap includes introducing a limit on the salary used for redundancy calculations (£80,000) and ensuring the exit package does not exceed £95,000 (including pension strain costs).

(3) Any former Chief Executive, Executive Director, Director or Assistant Director who is employed by the Council who has previously received a severance, termination or redundancy payment from this or any other Council or related body will not have previous service counted when determining any further entitlements to notice periods, sickness payments, annual leave or other benefits/entitlements based on continuous service.

Re-engagement under a contract for services

The Council's policy is not to re-engage under a contract for services any former Chief Executive, Executive Director, Director or Assistant Director who left the Council for any reason and was in receipt of a redundancy, severance or termination payment, for a period of three years from the cessation of employment.

Policy variation

This re-engagement policy may be varied only in exceptional circumstances and then subject to the agreement of the Employment Committee.

Employment of those in receipt of an LGPS pension

General:

Policy is set out in Section 4 **POLICIES COMMON TO ALL EMPLOYEES.**

Flexible retirement:

The LGPS regulations permit the Council to offer flexible retirement to employees (including Chief Executive, Executive Directors, Directors and Assistant Directors) aged 55 or over, so that they can reduce their hours of work, and receive a pension in respect of the proportion of full-time hours they are no longer required to work. This policy is set out in Section 4 **POLICIES COMMON TO ALL EMPLOYEES.**

1.7 PUBLICATION OF DETAILS OF EMPLOYEE REMUNERATION

In accordance with 39 (5) of the Localism Act, this policy will be published on the Council's website.

The Council is also required to publish information about the remuneration of senior officers under The Accounts and Audit (Amendment No. 2) (England) Regulations 2009, and the Local Government Transparency Code 2015.

For ease of reference, remuneration data for posts identified under these Regulations is set out below, individual annual salaries for staff in post can be found on the Council's website.

The table below indicates the grades at 1 April 2020.

Chief Executive	£169,784 - £185,112
Executive Director - People	£141,487 - £164,544
Executive Director - Delivery	£118,430 - £137,295
Director of Finance	£100,613 - £114,237
Director: Place, Planning and Regeneration	£100,613 - £114,237
Director of Public Health	£92,228 - £107,949
Asst Director: Adult Social Care	£92,228 - £107,949
Asst Director: Children's Social Care	£92,228 - £107,949
Asst Director: Early Help & Housing	£92,228 - £107,949
Asst Director: Education and Learning	£92,228 - £107,949
Asst Director: Commissioning	£92,228 - £107,949
Borough Solicitor	£92,228 - £107,949
Asst Director: Contract Services	£92,228 - £107,949
Asst Director: Customer Experience, ICT & Digital Services	£92,228 - £107,949
Asst Director: Property	£88,771 - £94,123
Consultant in Public Health	£88,771 - £94,123
Asst Director: HR and OD	£79,850 - £86,395
Head of Highways and Transport	£79,850 - £86,395
Head of Planning	£79,850 - £86,395
Chief Accountant	£79,850 - £86,395
Head of Finance and Business Services	£79,850 - £86,395
Head of Transformation and Engagement	£79,850 - £86,395

Figures as at 1 April 2020 and are inclusive of supplements and/or market premia where payable. Teaching staff not included.

SECTION 2: REMUNERATION OF LOWEST PAID EMPLOYEES

This section sets out the Council's policies in relation to the remuneration of its lowest-paid employees, as defined in this Pay Policy Statement.

2.1 ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

The Council considers it is important that its policy with regard to the remuneration of its lowest paid employees is seen within the broader organisational context, in particular the range and diversity of services for which it is responsible, either directly or indirectly, the number of residents within the local community, the level of its financial responsibilities and the numbers of staff directly employed.

2.2 OVERALL REMUNERATION POLICY: LOWEST PAID EMPLOYEES

Aims, Objectives and Key Principles

The Council aims to develop, implement and maintain fair and equitable remuneration arrangements which enable it to recruit, retain, motivate and develop staff with the skills and capabilities necessary to ensure the continued provision of high-quality services and which are cost effective and provide value for money.

The Council's remuneration policy complies with all equal pay, discrimination and other relevant employment legislation.

When setting pay levels for specific posts the Council takes account of both internal differentials, as measured by job evaluation, and external relativities, as measured against the relevant employment market. The Council aims to ensure its pay rates for specific posts are set at a level which enables it to recruit and retain staff with the appropriate knowledge, skills and capabilities necessary for the role.

2.3 DEFINITION OF LOWEST PAID EMPLOYEES

The definition of the "lowest-paid employees" adopted by the Council for the purposes of this statement is as follows:

The lowest paid employees within the Council paid on the Council's lowest hourly pay rate.

The current annual full-time equivalent value of this pay level, based on a 37-hour standard working week and including local weighting, is £18,468.

2.4 REMUNERATION OF LOWEST PAID EMPLOYEES

Pay structure

The Council's lowest paid employees are on a grade range derived from the national pay spine, as set out in the National Joint Council for Local Government Services National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service. This grade range consists of a number of incremental salary points through which employees may progress until the top of the grade is reached.

Pay Progression

Pay progression is normally by annual increment, payable from 1 April.

Pay progression is based on the period the employee has served in that grade, subject to satisfactory performance. Directors may accelerate incremental progression within the grade for employees who are considered to have demonstrated exceptional performance.

Annual Pay Review

The basic pay of the Council's lowest paid employees is reviewed annually at a national level, with any cost-of-living, or other, increase normally applied on 1 April in each year.

Any increase will normally be applied in accordance with that agreed by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services.

Pension Provision

The Council's lowest paid employees may participate in the Local Government Pension Scheme in accordance with the statutory terms of that scheme.

Contributions are made to this scheme in respect of each participating employee as set out in Section 4, **Policies Common to all Employees**.

Any increases in or enhancements to the pension entitlement of the Council's lowest paid employees would be made in accordance with the discretions available to it under the statutory provisions of the Local Government Pension Scheme, as exercised by the Council and set out in the relevant policy statement (see Section 4 of this Pay Policy Statement, **Policies Common to all Employees**).

Termination or Severance Payments

Any termination or severance payments made by the Council to its lowest paid employees, either on grounds of redundancy, in the interests of the efficiency of the service or on grounds of permanent ill-health, will be made in accordance with the statutory terms of the Local Government Pension Scheme, as applicable, and/or in accordance with the discretions available to it under that Scheme or under the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006, as set out in the relevant policy statement (see Section 4 of this Pay Policy Statement, **Policies Common to all Employees**).

Other than payments pursuant to the LGPS (including the exercise of the Council's discretions) or payments in accordance with the Council's policies under the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006, the Council's policy is not to make any other termination or severance payments to its lowest paid employees, other than where it has received specific legal advice to the effect that a payment may be necessary to eliminate risk of claims against the Council.

Other elements of remuneration

The other elements of remuneration which it is the Council's policy to offer to its lowest paid employees (where applicable) are listed below and are as set out in section 4, "Policies common to all employees":

Recruitment/retention payments

Reimbursement of removal/relocation costs/mortgage subsidy on appointment

Geographical/location allowance (local weighting)

Car allowances/mileage rates

Payment of professional subscriptions or membership fees

Subsistence or other expenses allowance

Provision of mobile telephones/personal devices

Honorarium/acting up/additional responsibility payments

Payment for reduced leave entitlement

Discounted loans

In addition, the Council's lowest paid employees may have access to the following payments where patterns of work make them appropriate:

Working arrangements

Employees on national conditions, who are required to work beyond the Council's normal full-time equivalent working week of 37 hours and/or work other non-standard working patterns, as listed below, will receive payment in accordance with the provisions of the National Joint Council for Local Government Services National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service for:

- Additional hours
- Saturday and Sunday working
- Night work
- Public and Extra Statutory holidays
- Sleeping-in duty

Standby and/or call-out payments

Employees who are required to be on standby at times which are outside their normal working week and/or who may be called-out to attend to an issue at the Council's premises or other location may receive an additional payment in accordance with the provisions of the relevant Council policy.

2.5 OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The other terms and conditions which apply to the Council's lowest paid employees are as set out in the National Joint Council for Local Government Services National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service, as amended and/or supplemented by any local agreements which may apply.

2.6 REMUNERATION OF EMPLOYEES WHO ARE PAID MORE THAN THE LOWEST PAID EMPLOYEES BUT WHO ARE NOT ASSISTANT DIRECTORS

The Council's policy and practice with regard to the remuneration of employees who are paid more than its lowest paid employees but who are not Assistant Directors is the same as that which applies to its lowest paid employees, other than where any differences are indicated in this policy statement. Some specific groups of employees are paid on nationally determined Soulbury Conditions or Youth and Community Conditions.

2.7 EMPLOYEES WHO ARE PAID LESS THAN THE COUNCIL'S LOWEST PAID EMPLOYEES, AS DEFINED IN THIS PAY POLICY STATEMENT

The following categories of employees *may* be paid less than the Council's lowest paid employees, as defined in this Pay Policy Statement:

- Apprentices
- Casual workers

The Council may apply a lower pay rate and/or different remuneration arrangements to these categories of employees, which reflects the nature and/or duration/frequency of their employment.

SECTION 3: PAY RELATIONSHIPS

This section sets out the Council's overall approach to ensuring pay levels are fairly and appropriately dispersed across the organisation, including the current pay multiples which apply, and its policy toward maintaining acceptable pay multiples in the future.

The Council believes that the principle of fair pay is important to the provision of high quality and well-managed services and is committed to ensuring fairness and equity in its remuneration practices. The Council's pay policies, processes and procedures are designed to ensure that pay levels are appropriately aligned with and properly reflect the relative demands and responsibilities of each post and the knowledge, skills and capabilities necessary to ensure they are undertaken to the required standard, as well as taking account of relevant market considerations. This includes ensuring that there is an appropriate relationship between the pay levels of its senior officers, as defined in this Pay Policy Statement, and of all other employees.

The Council has adopted several policies and practices to ensure fairness in the overall pay relativities within the Authority. These include:

- Using an analytical job evaluation scheme to determine the grading of all posts below Assistant Director level
- Jobs at Assistant Director level and above are also subject to measurement using a separate job evaluation scheme
- Applying a clear and objective methodology for evaluating all new and changed jobs to ensure they are properly graded and that pay levels properly reflect their level of responsibility
- Establishing a defined procedure for employees who wish to request a review of their job grade or who wish to appeal against their grading outcome
- Providing for additional payments and allowances, with clearly defined eligibility criteria, to recognise and reward any working arrangements or requirements not reflected in basic pay levels
- Undertaking corporate monitoring of the application of pay progression arrangements to ensure these are applied and operated on a fair and consistent basis across the organisation
- Reviewing the roles and responsibilities of individual posts on a regular basis, for example, as part of the annual appraisal process, when a vacancy arises, as part of any organisational restructuring
- Undertaking an equal pay audit at intervals, investigating and addressing the outcomes, as appropriate

Under the provisions of the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency, issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government under Section 2 of the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980, the Council is required to publish its "pay multiple", i.e. the ratio between the highest paid salary and median full time equivalent salary of the whole of the local authority's workforce. The current pay multiple, based on full time equivalent earnings in the financial year ending 31 March 2020 including base salary, overtime pay, and any lump sum car allowances is 6.3 (Last year's multiple was 7).

The figures are not a direct comparison because of the number of hours actually worked; for example, senior officers do not have a specific number of required work hours/week in their contract of employment and will often work more than the standard 37 hours used in non-senior contracts.

The median salary is the salary value at which 50% of the full-time equivalent salaries which apply to the whole of the Council's workforce are below that salary value and 50% are above it. The lowest pay point in the overall salary range which has been used by the Council in calculating the median salary is that which applies to its lowest paid employees, as defined in section 2 of this Pay Policy Statement.

If the mean salary is used in the above calculations instead of the median, the pay multiple is 5.7. (Last year's multiple based on mean was 6.2).

The Council considers that the current pay multiple, as identified above, represents an appropriate, fair and equitable internal pay relationship between the highest salary and that which applies to the rest of the workforce and has adopted the following actions to ensure an acceptable level is maintained:

Periodic benchmarking against the market rate for the Chief Executive will continue to take place and changes such as job evaluation outcomes or outsourcing of functions may impact on the median payment levels; both may affect the pay multiple. However, the multiple will be reviewed annually by means of this document to ensure it remains acceptable.

SECTION 4: POLICIES COMMON TO ALL EMPLOYEES

The following elements of remuneration are determined by corporate policies or arrangements which apply to all permanent employees of the Council (including its Chief Executive, Executive Directors, Directors and Assistant Directors), regardless of their pay level, status or grading within the Council:

Contracts of Employment

It is the Council's policy to engage all of its permanent employees on standard contracts of employment and to apply Pay As You Earn taxation arrangements to all remuneration under those contracts in accordance with HMRC rules.

Access to Local Government Pension Scheme

The Council offers all its employees' access to the Local Government Pension Scheme in accordance with the statutory provisions of the scheme (except where the Teachers' Pension Scheme applies). The employers' contribution rate for employees who join the scheme is currently 14.3% of salary for all employees. The employee contribution rate ranges from 5.5% to 12.5% dependent on salary. All employees, including casuals and those on very short-term contracts, have a right to be in the scheme.

Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) - discretions on termination of employment

Any termination or severance payments made by the Council to all its employees, either on grounds of redundancy, in the interests of the efficiency of the service or on grounds of permanent ill-health, will be made in accordance with the statutory terms of the Local Government Pension Scheme, as applicable, and/or in accordance with the discretions available to it under that Scheme.

The Council's policies on the exercise of these discretions under the LGPS are set out in the policies it has published under the requirements of the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations. These are shown in Appendix A1.

Payments on Termination of Employment

Other than payments made under the LGPS, the Council's payments to any employee whose employment is terminated on grounds of redundancy or in the interests of the efficiency of the service will be in accordance with the policy the Council has adopted for all

its employees in relation to the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006. This policy has been published in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 7 of these regulations and, in summary, is:

- Actual weekly pay is used in all redundancy calculations
- Those with immediate access to pension are paid in accordance with the statutory number of weeks' pay
- Those with no immediate access to pension are paid 1.75 times the statutory number of weeks' pay

New regulations are awaited on a proposed cap on severance payments which would limit any severance payment (including the capitalised cost of early pension release) to £95,000. The details, when known, will be the subject of a separate report to Employment Committee but so far, no implementation date has been announced.

Employment of those in receipt of an LGPS pension

Subject to the administering authority's policy, pension benefits built up under regulations in force prior to 1 April 2014 (i.e. final salary benefits) may be subject to abatement where an individual in receipt of such a pension is re-employed. However, the policy of the administering authority to the Berkshire Pension Fund is not to abate pensions in these circumstances.

The only occasion where a re-employed pensioner may suffer some abatement to their pension is where they have previously been awarded compensatory added years in accordance with regulations 16 or 19 of the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England & Wales) Regulations 2000.

Flexible retirement

The LGPS regulations permit the Council to offer flexible retirement to employees aged 55 or over, so that they can reduce their hours of work, and draw a pension in respect of the proportion of full-time hours they are no longer required to work. The Council uses this discretion in the same way for all employees. The Council will consider requests for flexible retirement on a case by case basis. Approval will be sought through the Employment Committee for any flexible retirement where there is a cost to the Council, and all costs and business benefits will be made explicit before any decision is taken on whether to grant flexible retirement. Where the flexible retirement is at no cost to the Council, it may be granted by a Director, considering the business benefits.

Market Premia

The job evaluation scheme does not recognise market pay rates when determining the grade for a job. If Directors identify market scarcity through difficulty with recruitment and/or a lack of success with advertising, they may discuss the need for a market premium with the Director: OD, Transformation and HR, who will, using pay surveys and research of the prevailing job market, suggest a level of supplement. The Employment Committee decide whether to authorise a market premia payment which is then periodically reviewed.

Recruitment/retention payments

Recruitment payments are a recruitment incentive which can be used for positions where there is a nation/regional/local shortage of qualified persons. They are used to induce an individual to take up employment within the Council and are in the form of a one-off lump sum. These are infrequently used and are repayable on a sliding scale if the individual leaves within 3 years of appointment.

Key staff retention payments may be given where it is important to retain the services of an employee to the end of a specific project. The period of tie in will not normally exceed three years and any lump sum payment will not be made if the employee leaves before the relevant date. Employees in some children's social work teams and Approved Mental Health Practitioners are currently in receipt of retention payments as part of strategies to retain these key staff in a recruitment shortage area.

Geographical/location allowance (local weighting)

The Council applies London and Fringe Area Allowances in accordance with the provisions of and rates agreed by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service, or Soulbury or Youth and Community Conditions as appropriate. There are certain employees whose pay is determined locally who do not receive this type of allowance, and it is not payable to the Chief Executive, Directors or Assistant Directors.

Reimbursement of removal/relocation costs on appointment

The Relocation Scheme provides assistance to people moving house in order to take up an appointment with the Council. The scheme will not necessarily cover the full expenses of moving and is not intended to do so. The maximum amount payable under the relocation scheme is £8,000, plus mortgage subsidy where appropriate. The scheme does not apply to all advertised roles, only to those where there is less likelihood of recruiting suitable staff locally.

Honorarium or ex gratia payments/acting up/additional responsibility allowances

The Council pays honoraria or *ex gratia* payments to employees only in accordance with its corporate scheme for such payments, and all such payments are made only with the express approval of the relevant Director. Where employees are required to "act-up" into a higher-graded post or take on additional responsibilities beyond those of their substantive post for a temporary/time-limited period, they may receive an additional payment. Merit payments are like honoraria payments but are generally paid as a "one off" sum. They can be for a variety of reasons including examination success or for a particularly demanding or meritorious piece of work.

Car provision – employees using their own cars on Council business

The Council compensates:

- Employees who are required to use their own car on Council business paying an Essential Car User payment of £963pa plus mileage at below the HMRC rate; and
- Employees who are otherwise authorised to use their own car on Council business by paying a casual user mileage rate based on the HMRC rate.

Payment of professional subscriptions or membership fees

The Council will pay one professional subscription or membership fee on behalf of any employee where the subscription or membership is appropriate to the duties of the post.

Subsistence or other expenses allowance

The Council reimburses expenditure on meals and overnight accommodation and any other expenses necessarily incurred by employees on Council business, in line with the Council's Expenses policy.

Car loans

All employees have access to loans at a favourable rate of interest for the purchase of bicycles or the purchase of season tickets for travel. There is no subsidy for these loans.

Flexible benefits

The Council offers a range of flexible benefits which enable employees to elect to buy certain benefits from their salary. The only part of the range which enables employees to increase their pay is a flexible leave scheme whereby employees can “buy and sell” annual leave within certain parameters. Under this scheme, employees may be able to receive a day’s additional pay for each day of leave they “sell” to the Council and agree to work. Assistant Directors and above may not participate in this scheme, although they may elect to buy other flexible benefits in the range. The maximum number of days that can be sold is 5 (pro rata for those working less than 5 days per week.)

Provision of mobile telephones and personal devices

Chief Executive, Directors and Assistant Directors are issued with mobile phones and are required to be on an emergency duty list, other staff are issued phones in accordance with their workstyle in order to be more effective. Usually this means that Free workers will be issued with a mobile phone. The council funds the phone.

All employees working flexibly are issued with a softphone and a business case needs to be made if a mobile phone/device is required in addition to this.

SECTION 5: CONTRACTORS AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS WORKING FOR THE COUNCIL

There may be occasions where the Council procures, commissions or contracts-out one or more of the services for which it is responsible. This section sets out the Council’s approach to and policies on the pay policies of contractors, partners and other organisations who may undertake work for, or on behalf of, the Council.

The terms and conditions of employment by contractors of their workers are non-commercial matters, so we are required to procure without reference to them (S17 (1) and (5) LGA 1988).

Where any of the Council’s services are contracted-out or re-tendered or where a previously outsourced service returns to the Council, any matters relating to the remuneration of the transferred employees will be managed, as appropriate, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 as amended by the Collective Redundancies and Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (Amendment) Regulations 2014.

Any payments to agency workers who may undertake work for the Council will be made in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contract between the Council and the relevant agency provider, having due regard to the relevant provisions of the Agency Workers Regulations 2010 and any other relevant employment legislation.

SECTION 6: DECISION MAKING ON PAY

The Council recognises the importance of ensuring openness, transparency and high standards of corporate governance, with clear lines of accountability, in its pay decision-making processes and procedures. Any pay-related decisions must be capable of public scrutiny, be able to demonstrate proper and appropriate use of public funds and ensure value for money. The arrangements adopted by the Council are designed to reflect these requirements, as well as ensuring compliance with all relevant legislation and other statutory regulation.

The Council has agreed that the following roles and responsibilities about decision-making in remuneration matters will apply within the Authority as follows:

Full Council: consideration and approval of the annual Pay Policy Statement, as required under the Localism Act 2011. Approval of both the senior salary pay structure, within which senior appointments are made, and the severance policy, within which severance payments are made. Approval of any salary or severance payment over £100,000 which is not consistent with these policies.

Employment Committee: responsible for decisions relating to changes to terms and conditions of employment other than those dictated by employment law/statute, including scrutiny of this statement.

The provisions of this Pay Policy Statement will apply to any determination made by the Council in the relevant financial year in relation to the remuneration or other terms and conditions of senior officers of the Authority and of its lowest paid employees, as defined in this statement, and other employees who are paid more than the lowest paid employees but who are not senior officers.

The Council will ensure that the provisions of this Pay Policy Statement are properly applied and fully complied with in making any such determination.

This Pay Policy Statement has been approved by full Council.

The full Council will approve the appointment or dismissal of the Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service) following the recommendation of such an appointment by a Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council, which will include at least one Member of the Executive. Council will resolve that the post is remunerated in accordance with the Senior Salary Pay Structure.

For Director posts, unless otherwise directed by the Council, a Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council, the Council will appoint. The Committee or Sub-Committee will include at least one Member of the Executive. Council will resolve that the post is remunerated in accordance with the Senior Salary Pay Structure.

For Assistant Director posts, the Chief Executive or his nominated representative, with the relevant Executive Member or members and the Leader of the Council, may determine whether any appointment to an Assistant Director post is to be made exclusively from the Council's existing officers. Where the Chief Executive or his or her nominated representative, determines that it is to be made from existing Officers, the appointment may be made by the Chief Executive or his/her representative. Where a recruitment process is undertaken involving external candidates, a Committee or Sub-Committee will be appointed to interview the shortlisted candidates and make the final appointment. That Committee or Sub Committee will include at least one member of the Executive.

The above arrangements ensure that the Council meets the requirement of the Localism Act that any proposal to offer a new appointment on terms and conditions which include a total remuneration package of £100,000 or more, including salary, bonuses, fees or allowances which would routinely be payable to the appointee and any benefits in kind to which the officer would be entitled as a result of their employment (but excluding employer's pension contributions), will be referred to the full Council for approval before any confirmed offer is made to a particular candidate, if they fall outside the scope of the agreed senior salary pay scales.

SECTION 7: AMENDMENTS TO THIS PAY POLICY STATEMENT

This Pay Policy Statement relates to policy for the financial year 2020/21.

The Council may agree any amendments to this Pay Policy Statement during the financial year to which it relates in accordance with the decision-making arrangements set out in the introduction to this document.

SECTION 8: PUBLICATION OF AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The Council will publish this Pay Policy Statement on its website as soon as is reasonably practicable after it has been approved by the Council. Any subsequent amendments to this Pay Policy Statement made during the financial year to which it relates will also be similarly published.

The information advised to be published by the Council in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Transparency Code 2014 and in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (Amendment No. 2) (England) Regulations 2009, as referred to in this Pay Policy Statement, is also available on its website.

The Council's policies in relation to the exercise of discretions under the Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006 and under the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013, are set out in this policy statement.

For further information about this Pay Policy Statement, please contact the Council as follows:

Trish Barnard
Assistant Director:HR and Organisational Development
Trish.Barnard@Bracknell-forest.gov.uk

EMPLOYER DISCRETIONS**PART A – Formulation of COMPULSORY policy in accordance with Regulation 60 of the****Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013****Regulation 16 – Additional Pension Contributions**

The Scheme employer may resolve to fund in whole or in part any arrangement entered into by an active scheme member to pay additional pension contributions by way of regular contributions in accordance with **Regulation 16(2)(e)**, or by way of a lump sum in accordance with **Regulation 16(4)(d)**.

The Scheme employer may enter into an APC contract with a Scheme member who is contributing to the MAIN section of the Scheme in order to purchase additional pension of not more than the additional pension limit (£6,500 from 1st April 2014 subject to annual increase in line with the Pensions (Increase) Act 1971).

The amount of additional contribution to be paid is determined by reference to actuarial guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Consideration needs to be given to the circumstances under which the Scheme employer may wish to use their discretion to fund in whole or in part an employee's Additional Pension Contributions.

Scheme Employer's policy concerning the whole or part funding of an active member's additional pension contributions

The Employing Authority has resolved not to adopt this discretion

Regulation 30(6) – Flexible Retirement

An active member who has attained the age of 55 or over and who with the agreement of their employer reduces their working hours or grade of employment may, with the further consent of their employer, elect to receive immediate payment of all or part of the retirement pension to which they would be entitled in respect of that employment as if that member were no longer an employee in local government service on the date of the reduction in hours or grade (*adjusted by the amount shown as appropriate in actuarial guidance issued by the Secretary of State – separate policy required under Regulation 30(8)*).

As part of the policy making decision the Scheme employer must consider whether, in addition to the benefits the member may have accrued prior to 1 April 2008 (which the member must draw), to permit the member to choose to draw all, part or none of the pension benefits they built up after 31 March 2008 and before 1 April 2014 and all, part or none of the pension benefits they built up after 1 April 2014.

Due consideration must be given to the financial implications of allowing an employee to draw all or part of their pension benefits earlier than their normal retirement age.

Scheme Employer's policy concerning flexible retirement

The Employing Authority will consider requests for flexible retirement on a case by case basis. Approval will be sought through the Employment Committee where all costs and benefits will be explicit; requests which carry no costs to the Employing Authority will be dealt with by officers and reported back to the Committee.

Regulation 30(8) – Waiving of Actuarial Reduction

Where a Scheme employer's policy under regulation 30(6) (flexible retirement) is to consent to the immediate release of benefits in respect of an active member who is aged 55 or over, those benefits must be adjusted by an amount shown as appropriate in actuarial guidance issued by the Secretary of State (commonly referred to as actuarial reduction or early payment reduction).

A Scheme employer (or former employer as the case may be) may agree to waive in whole or in part and at their own cost, any actuarial reduction that may be required by the Scheme Regulations.

Due consideration must be given to the financial implications of agreeing to waive in whole or in part any actuarial reduction.

Scheme Employer's policy concerning the waiving of actuarial reduction

The Employing Authority has resolved to examine such issues on a case by case basis.

Regulation 31 – Award of Additional Pension

A Scheme employer may resolve to award

- (a) an active member, or
- (b) a member who was an active member but dismissed by reason of redundancy, or business efficiency, or whose employment was terminated by mutual consent on grounds of business efficiency,

additional annual pension of, in total (including any additional pension purchased by the Scheme employer under Regulation 16), not more than the additional pension limit (£6,500 from 1st April 2014 subject to annual increase in line with the Pensions (Increase) Act 1971).

Any additional pension awarded is payable from the same date as any pension payable under other provisions of the Scheme Regulations from the account to which the additional pension is attached.

In the case of a member falling within sub-paragraph (b) above, the resolution to award additional pension must be made within 6 months of the date that the member's employment ended.

Scheme Employer's policy concerning the award of additional pension

The Employing Authority resolves to use the scheme for awarding additional pension in cases of redundancy, efficiency of the service and severance, only in exceptional circumstances.

Local Government Pension Scheme (Transitional Provisions and Savings) Regulations 2014

Schedule 2 – paragraphs 2 and 3

Where a scheme member retires or leaves employment and elects to draw their benefits at or after the age of 55 and before the age of 60 those benefits will be actuarially reduced unless their Scheme employer agrees to meet the full or part cost of those reductions as a result of the member otherwise being protected under the 85 year rule as set out in previous Regulations.

So as to avoid the member suffering the full reduction to their benefits the Scheme employer can 'switch on' the 85 year rule protections thereby allowing the member to receive fully or partly unreduced benefits but subject to the Scheme employer paying a strain (capital) cost to the Pension Fund

Scheme Employer's policy concerning the 'switching on of the 85 year rule

The Employing Authority resolves not to adopt this discretion.

PART B – Formulation of RECOMMENDED policy in accordance with the

Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013

Regulation 9(1) & (3) – Contributions

Where an active member changes employment or there is a material change which affects the member's pensionable pay during the course of a financial year, the Scheme employer may determine that a contribution rate from a different band (as set out in Regulation 9(2)) should be applied.

Where the Scheme employer makes such a determination it shall inform the member of the revised contribution rate and the date from which it is to be applied.

Scheme Employer's policy concerning the re-determination of active members' contribution bandings at any date other than 1st April

The Employing Authority has resolved to make changes to employee contribution rates throughout the year from the effective date of any change in employment or material change to the rate of pensionable pay received.

Regulation 17(1) – Additional Voluntary Contributions

An active member may enter into arrangements to pay additional voluntary contributions (AVCs) or to contribute to a shared cost additional voluntary contribution arrangement (SCAVCs) in respect of an employment. The arrangement must be a scheme established between the appropriate administering authority and a body approved for the purposes of the Finance Act 2004, registered in accordance with that Act and administered in accordance with the Pensions Act 2004.

The Scheme employer needs to determine whether or not it will make contributions to such an arrangement on behalf of its active members.

Scheme Employer’s policy concerning payment of Shared Cost Additional Voluntary Contributions

The Employing Authority has resolved not to adopt this discretion

Regulation 22 – Merging of Deferred Member Pension Accounts with Active Member Pension Accounts

A deferred member’s pension account is automatically aggregated with their active member’s pension account unless the member elects within the first 12 months of the new active member’s pension account being opened to retain their deferred member’s pension account.

A Scheme employer can, at their discretion, extend the 12 month election period.

Scheme Employer’s policy concerning merging of Deferred Member Pension Accounts with Active Member Pension Accounts

The Employing Authority has resolved not to extend the 12 month election period

Regulation 100(6) – Inward Transfers of Pension Rights

A request from an active member to transfer former pension rights from a previous arrangement into the Local Government Pension Scheme as a result of their employment with a Scheme employer must be made in writing to the administering authority and the Scheme employer before the expiry of the period of 12 months beginning with the date on which the employee first became an active member in an employment (or such longer period as the Scheme employer and administering authority may allow).

Scheme Employer’s policy concerning the extension of the 12 month transfer application period

The Employing Authority has resolved to examine such issues on a case by case basis

Regulation 21(5) – Assumed Pensionable Pay

A Scheme employer needs to determine whether or not to include in the calculation of assumed pensionable pay, any ‘regular lump sum payment’ received by a Scheme member in the 12 months preceding the date that gave rise to the need for an assumed pensionable pay figure to be calculated.

Scheme Employer’s policy concerning inclusion of ‘regular lump sum payments’ in assumed pensionable pay calculations

The Employing Authority has resolved that “Regular lump sum payments” will always be included in the calculation of assumed pensionable pay

Regulation 74 – Applications for Adjudication of Disagreements *(see guidance note 9 in employer’s guide)*

Each Scheme employer must appoint a person (“the adjudicator”) to consider applications from any person whose rights or liabilities under the Scheme are affected by:

- (a) a decision under regulation 72 (first instance decisions); or
- (b) any other act or omission by a Scheme employer or administering authority,

and to make a decision on such applications.

Responsibility for determinations under this first stage of the Internal Disputes Resolution Procedure (IDRP) rests with “the adjudicator” as named below by the Scheme employer:

Name: Tim Wheadon
Job Title: Chief Executive
Full Address: Time Square, Market Street, Bracknell
Post Code: RG12 1JD
Tel No: 01344 355609

Adjudicator’s Signature: _____

Date: _____

Or alternatively:

Name: Stuart McKellar
Job Title: Director of Resources
Full Address: Time Square, Market Street, Bracknell
Post Code: RG12 1JD
Tel No: 01344 355605

Adjudicator’s Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX B1 – EMPLOYER DISCRETIONS: INJURY ALLOWANCE

Formulation of COMPULSORY policy in accordance with Regulation 14 of the

Local Government (Discretionary Payments) (Injury Allowances) Regulations 2011

Regulation 3 - Reduction in remuneration

Whilst an employee is receiving reduced pay as a direct result of an injury or disease contracted in the course of carrying out their employment, a relevant employer may consider paying the employee an allowance while the reduction in pay continues.

The relevant employer shall from time to time determine whether the employee should be entitled to continue to receive the allowance.

Any allowance payable must be paid directly by the relevant employer and, when added to the value of the reduced pay being received by the employee, must not be of a value that means the employee receives total pay in excess of the pay that they would normally expect to have received but for their injury or disease.

Employer's policy concerning the award of an allowance due to reduction in remuneration

The Employing Authority has resolved to examine such issues on a case by case basis in line with its existing Standing Orders.

Regulation 4 – Loss of employment through permanent incapacity

Where an employee ceases employment due to permanent incapacity as a direct result of injury or disease contracted in the course of carrying out their employment, a relevant employer may consider paying the employee an allowance not exceeding 85 per cent of the employee's annual rate of remuneration at the point the employment ceased.

The relevant employer shall from time to time determine whether the employee should be entitled to continue to receive the allowance.

Any allowance payable must be paid directly by the relevant employer and, where the employee was receiving no pay or reduced pay at the time the employment ended because of absence, the employer must assess the remuneration on the basis of the pay the employee would have received but for being absent.

The relevant employer may suspend or discontinue the allowance if the (former) employee secures gainful employment (paid employment for not less than 30 hours in each week for a period of not less than 12 months).

Employer's policy concerning the award of an allowance due to loss of employment

The Employing Authority resolves not to adopt this discretion.

October 2020 2nd Quarter - Wellbeing Check-In Survey Results



Braemar
For Cattle
Co-operative

Working Together For
Wellbeing

Agenda Item 9



9 months into the pandemic keeping in touch with our employees continues to be of paramount importance at these uncertain times.

This is to gain insight into how staff are the survey results is to gauge staff feeling regarding communication, health and safety and general wellbeing and morale and ensure we continue to have effective communication and support strategies in place for staff

roduction
72

73 Findings

- ❑ A 5% point drop in the response rates from the last survey. 585 to 510 (The IT survey was also being run during the same time, which may have had an impact).
- ❑ Some were reporting that their wellbeing had been negatively impacted, with over ½ of respondents felt their wellbeing had got a little or a lot worse, with 1/3 of staff indicating neither worse or better.
- ❑ Caring responsibilities while working from home, particularly for those with primary and secondary aged children.
- ❑ Isolation stress, anxiety, loneliness or other mental health issues.
- ❑ Achieving a work/life balance and finding it harder to switch off from work.
- ❑ Feeling pressure to work longer hours; increased workload; experiencing physical pain because they did not have the right workspace/equipment.
- ❑ There was notable anxiety about returning to the office in relation to social distancing, safety concerns, childcare/caring for parents, clean toilets, and team integration (Hybrid Working)



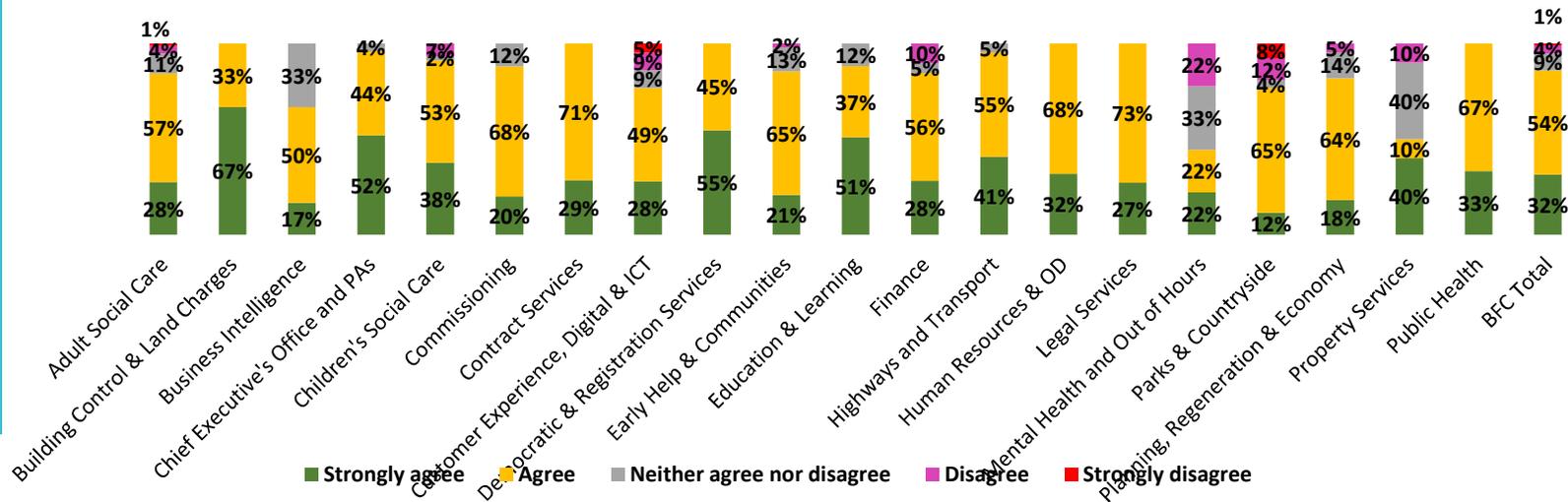
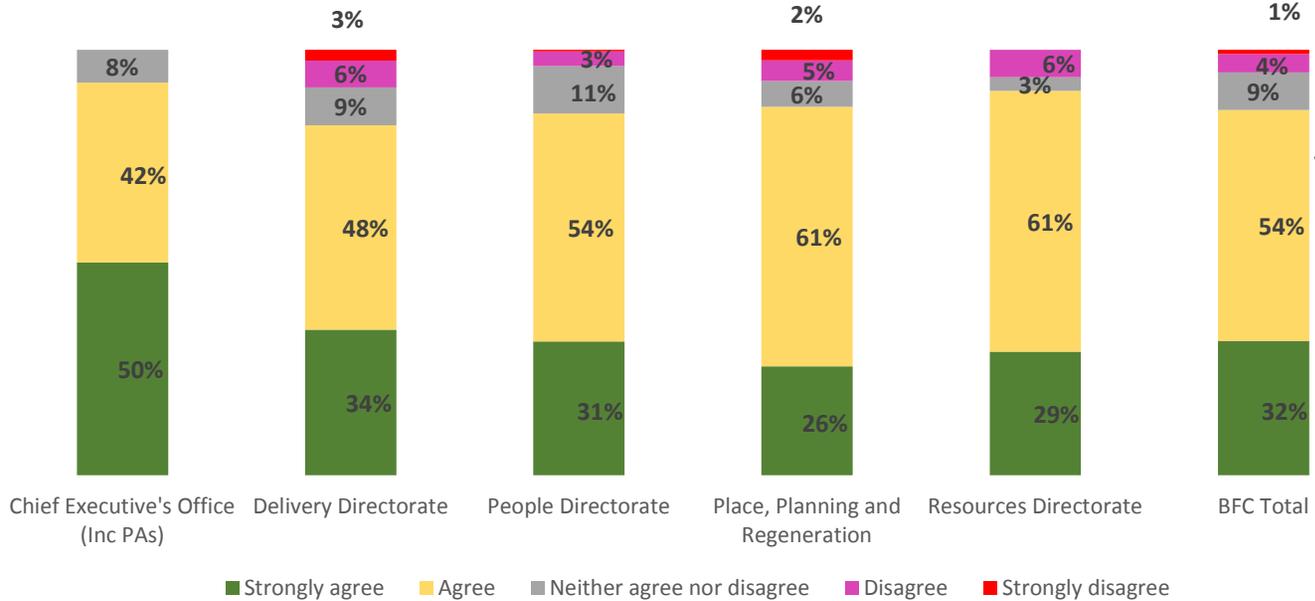
Management & Communication

Being Kept Up-to-date with What Is Happening Across The Council

Comparison to the 1st survey. There has been a 7% point drop in the number of staff who agree/strongly agree they are being kept up to date. There has been a 3% increase of those who neither agree / strongly disagree.

Service areas Customer Experience, Digital & IT and Parks & Leisure are strongly disagreeing, 22% of staff in Health Out of Hours indicating they are not up-to-date communication. Other service areas are generally in the agree/strongly agree categories.

I Am Being Kept Up-to-date With What Is Happening Across the Council



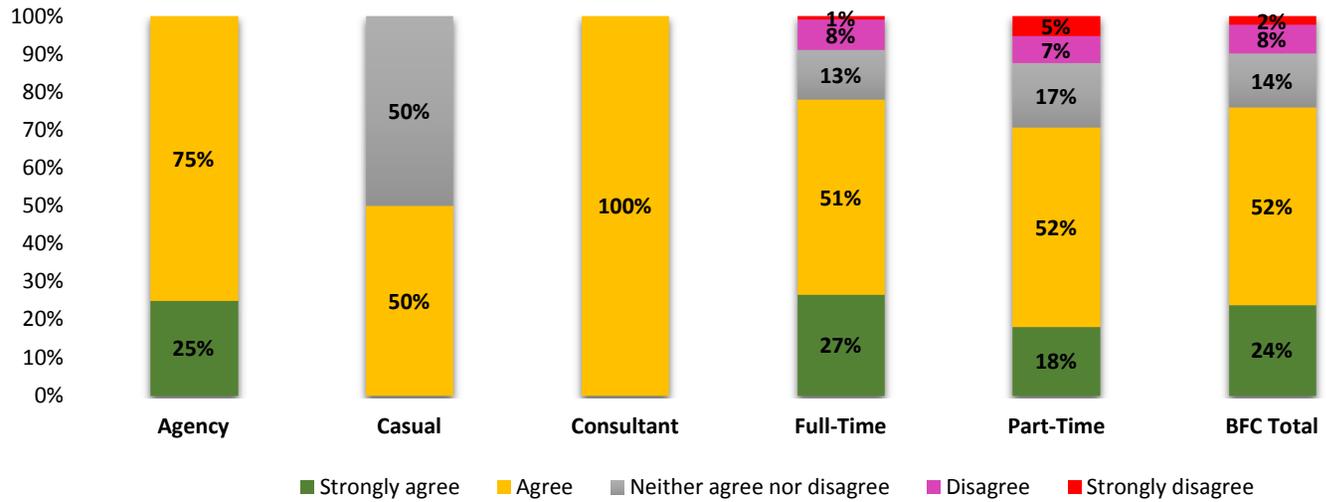
Management & Communication:

Communication between management and staff is effective” 75

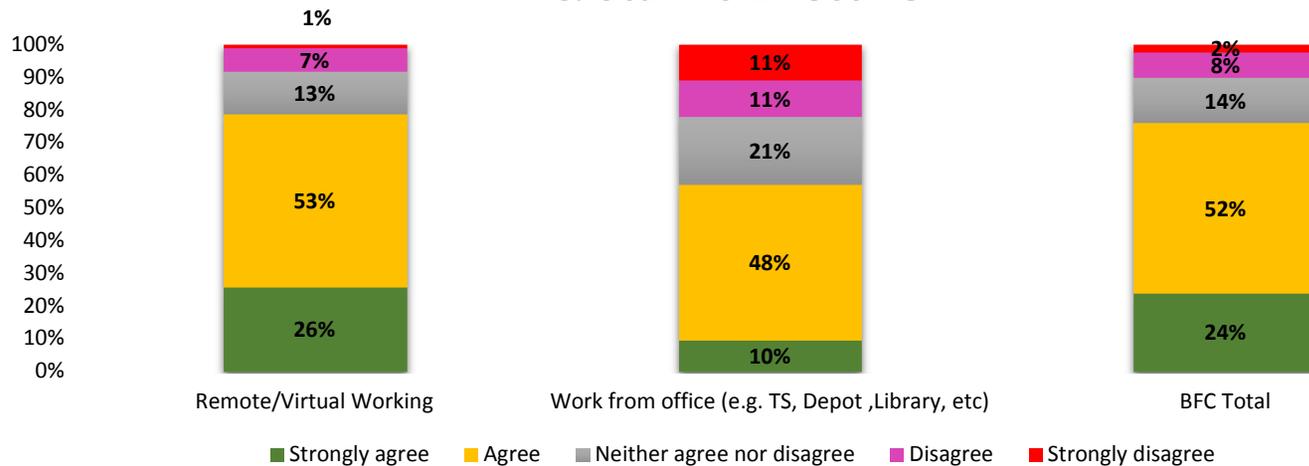
Responding Part-time staff are likely to strongly agree and disagree that communication with Snr management staff.

Percentage of responding staff working from the Office are likely to disagree or strongly disagree with the effectiveness of management communication

Work Pattern- Communication Between Snr Management & Staff is Effective



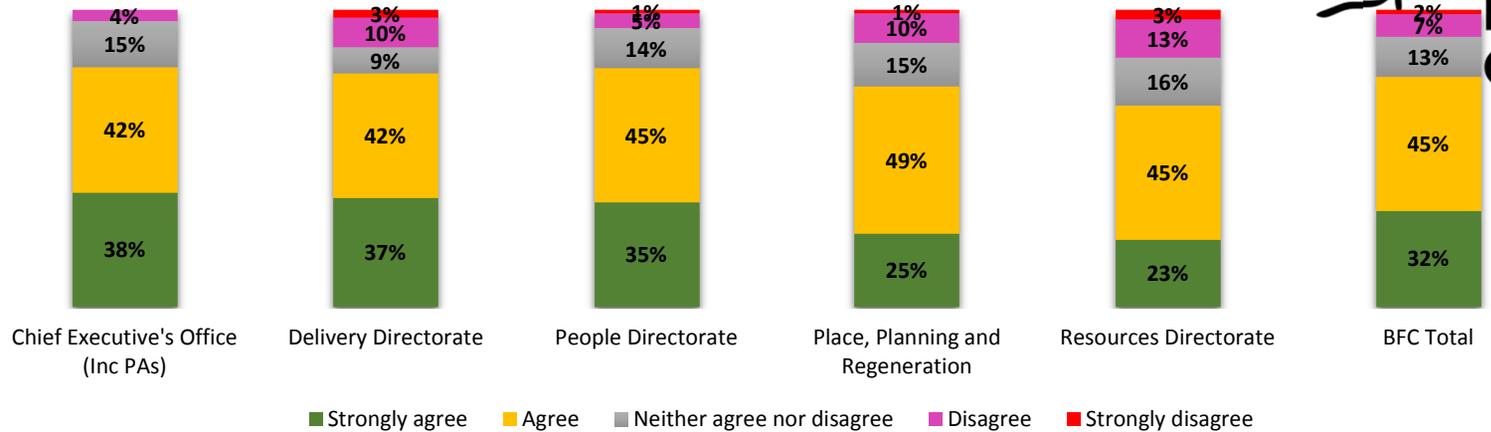
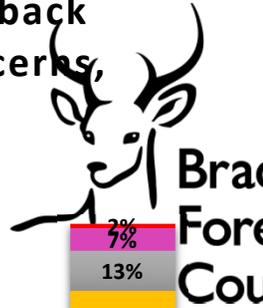
Work Location- Communication Between Snr Management & Staff is Effective



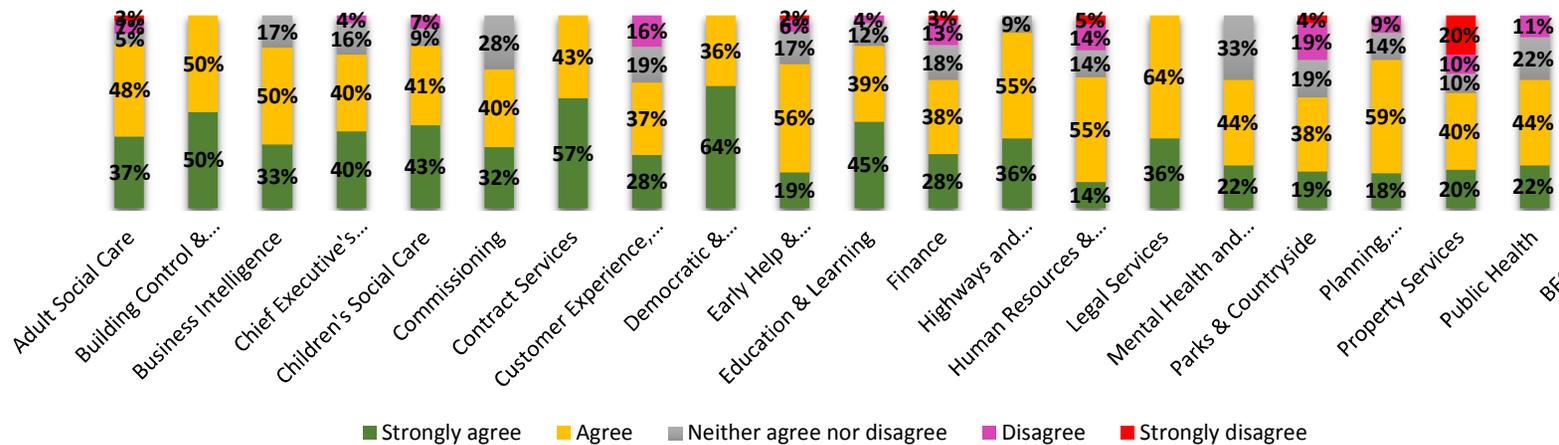
Management Communication

Indicated overall positive satisfaction with their 1:1 supervision/feedback reviews with 9% disagreed / 1% disagreed with this

Directorate: I Am Satisfied that My Supervision, 1:1 Feedback Review Sessions Are Used Constructively To Listen To Concerns, Manage Workload and Provide Positive Feedback



Service Areas: I Am Satisfied that My Supervision, 1:1 Feedback Review Sessions Are Used Constructively To Listen To Concerns, Manage Workload and Provide Positive Feedback



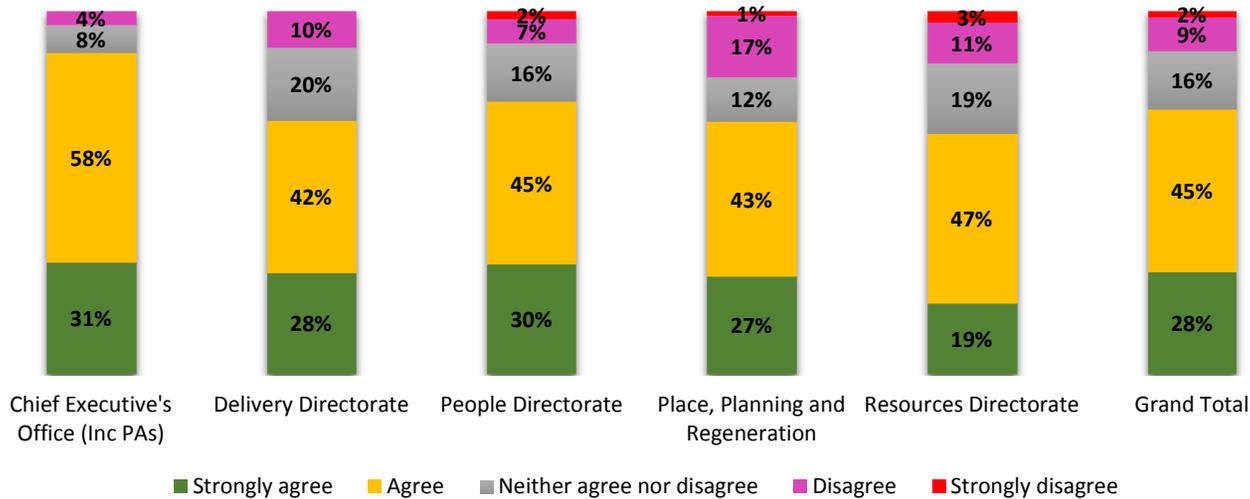
Management & Communication:

“We are Staying Connected As A Team” 77

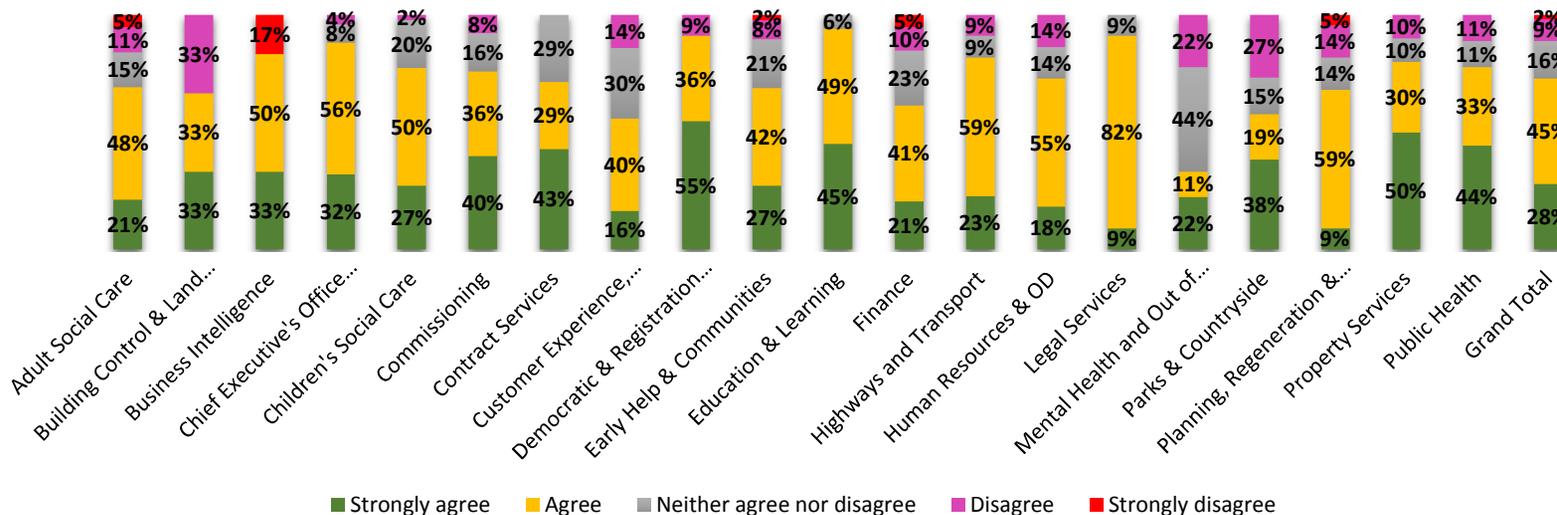
of team connection is still high, though it has reduced slightly since the 1st survey 87% off general comments increased feelings of social and professional isolation.

ingly this is reflected in the across the directorates service areas with 17% of Place, Planning & Regeneration staff indicating higher level of agreement.

Directorate: We Are Staying Connected As A Team



Service Areas: We Are Staying Connected As A Team



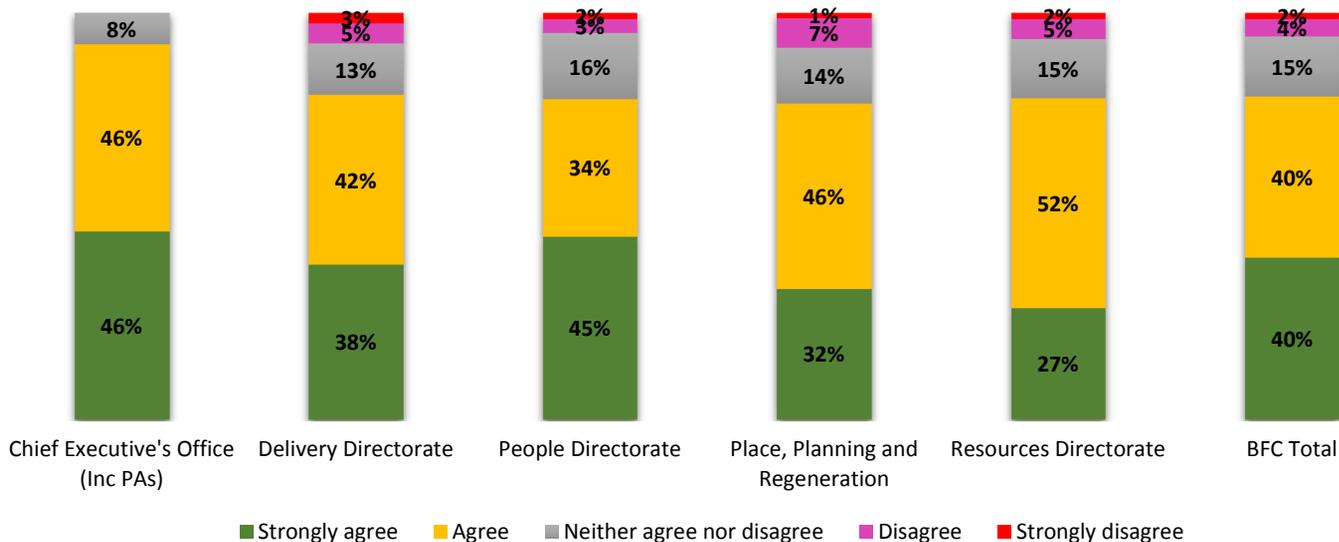
Management & Communication:

“My Manager Is Checking Up Regularly”

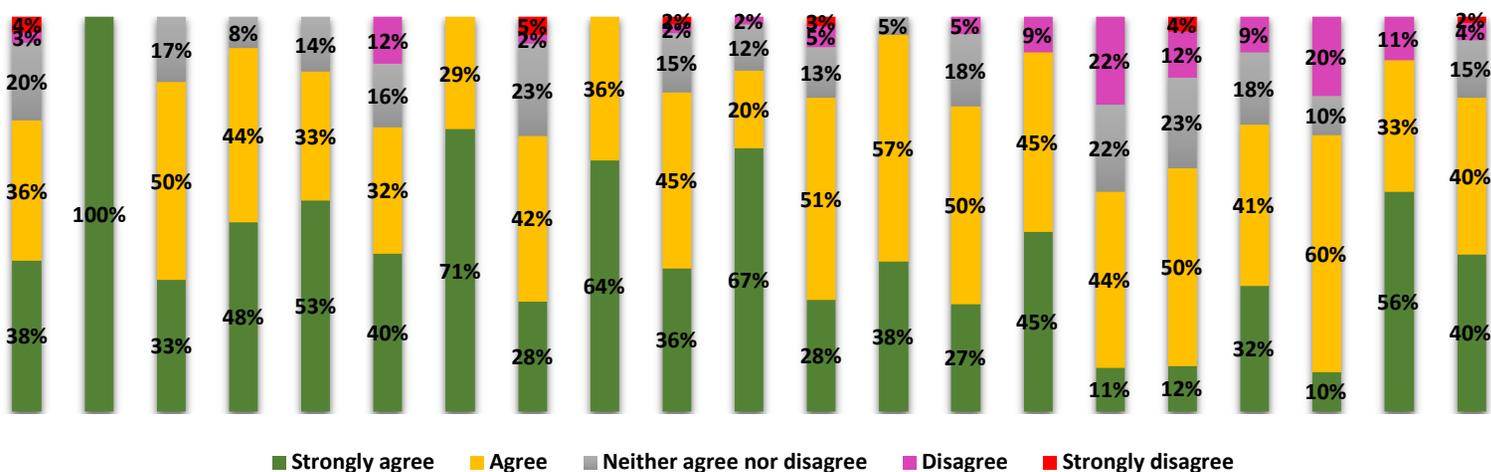
There has been a 9% point drop in agree/strongly agree. 6% strongly disagree, an increase from 3% in the 1st survey.



Direcorates: My Manager is Checking Up On Me Regularly



Service Area: My Manager Is Checking Up on Me Regularly



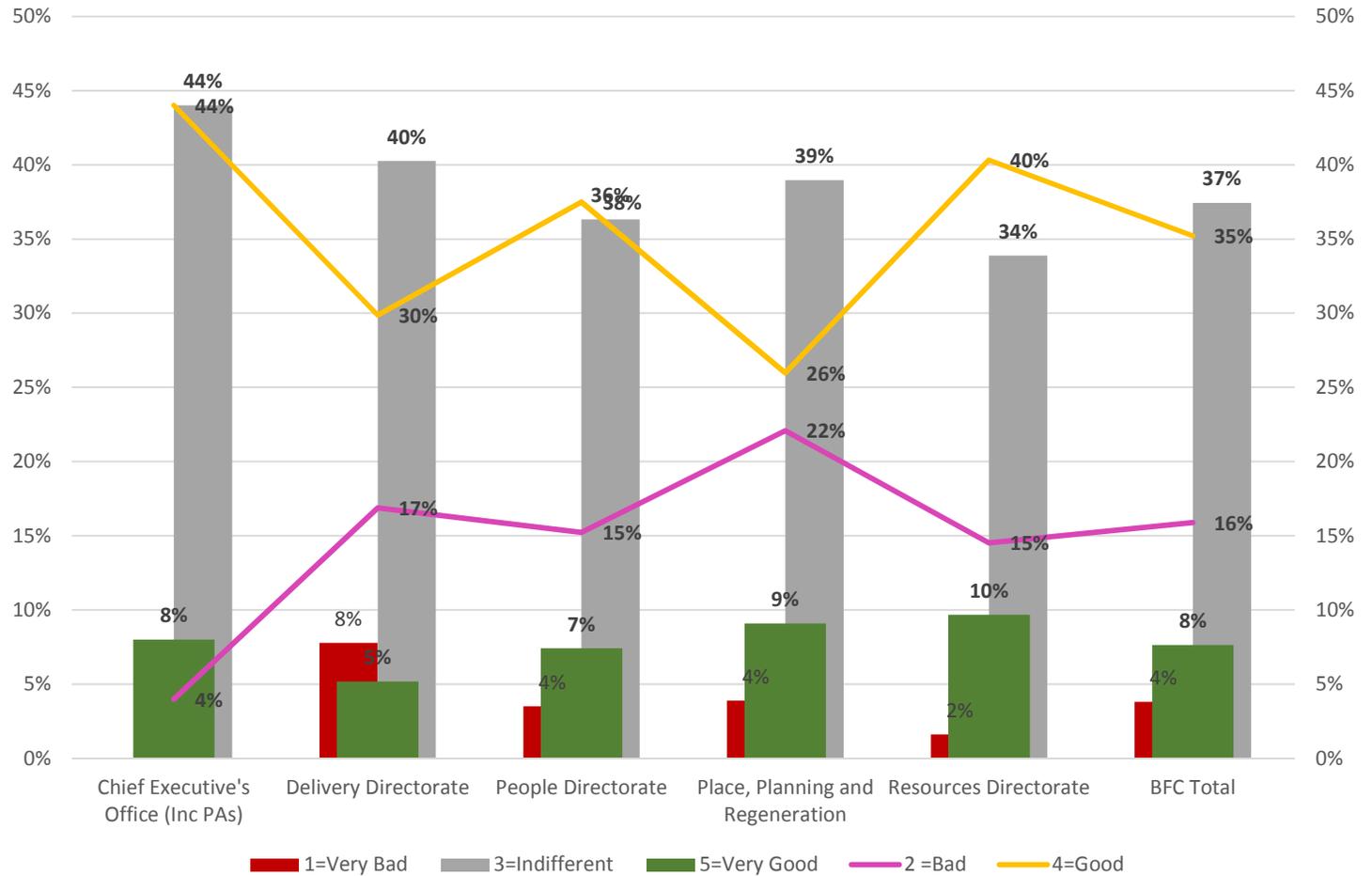


On a scale of 1-5, how would you currently rate your general morale and morale?
 1=Very Bad, 2=Bad, 3=Indifferent, 4=Good, 5=Very Good

79% are reporting not feeling in a...

Views are very closely mirrored with staff's views about continuing to work from home over a prolonged period, with 53% feeling positive about this.

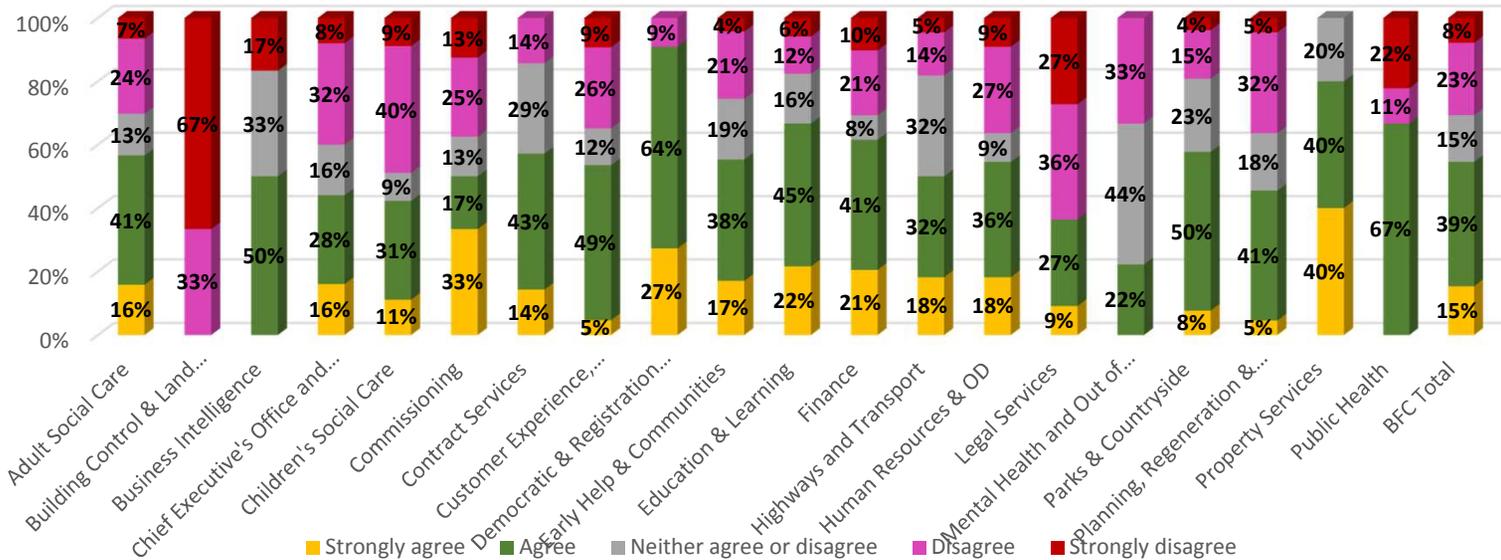
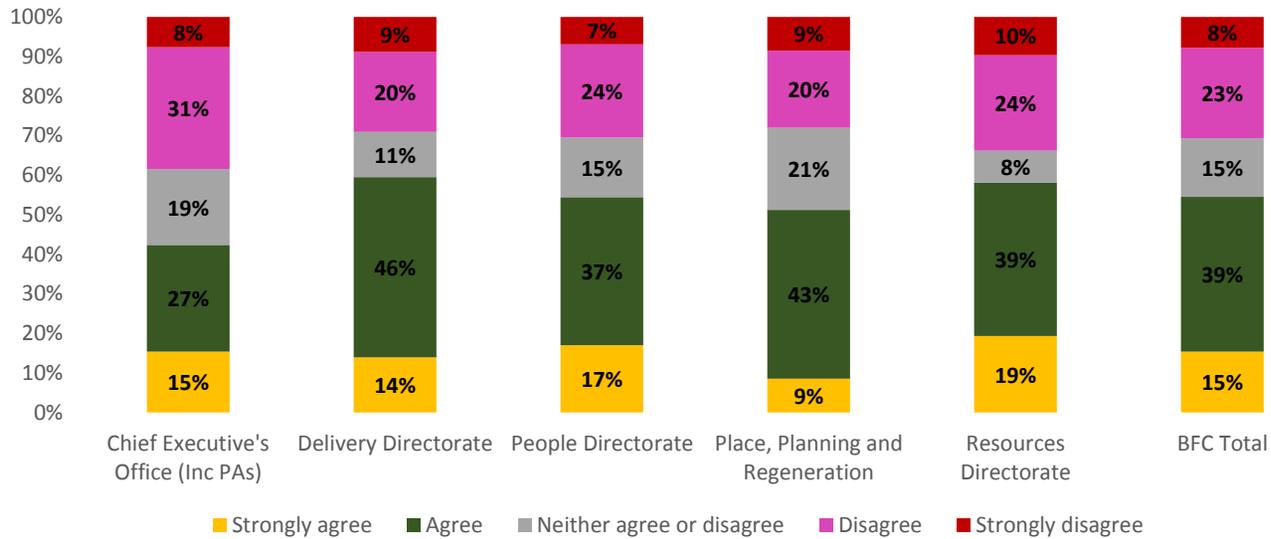
Views are negatively with 78% who are not satisfied with current work arrangements in the office when almost all were working from home.





ing:
 extent do you agree
 e with the following
 t. I am able to
 y switch off from work
 ime for rest and
 a work-life balance)"

half of staff indicated
 are able to switch off
 k, with 31% indicating
 unable to switch off from

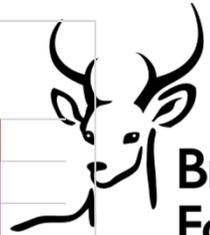


being:

The Start of the
19 My Wellbeing
ot”:

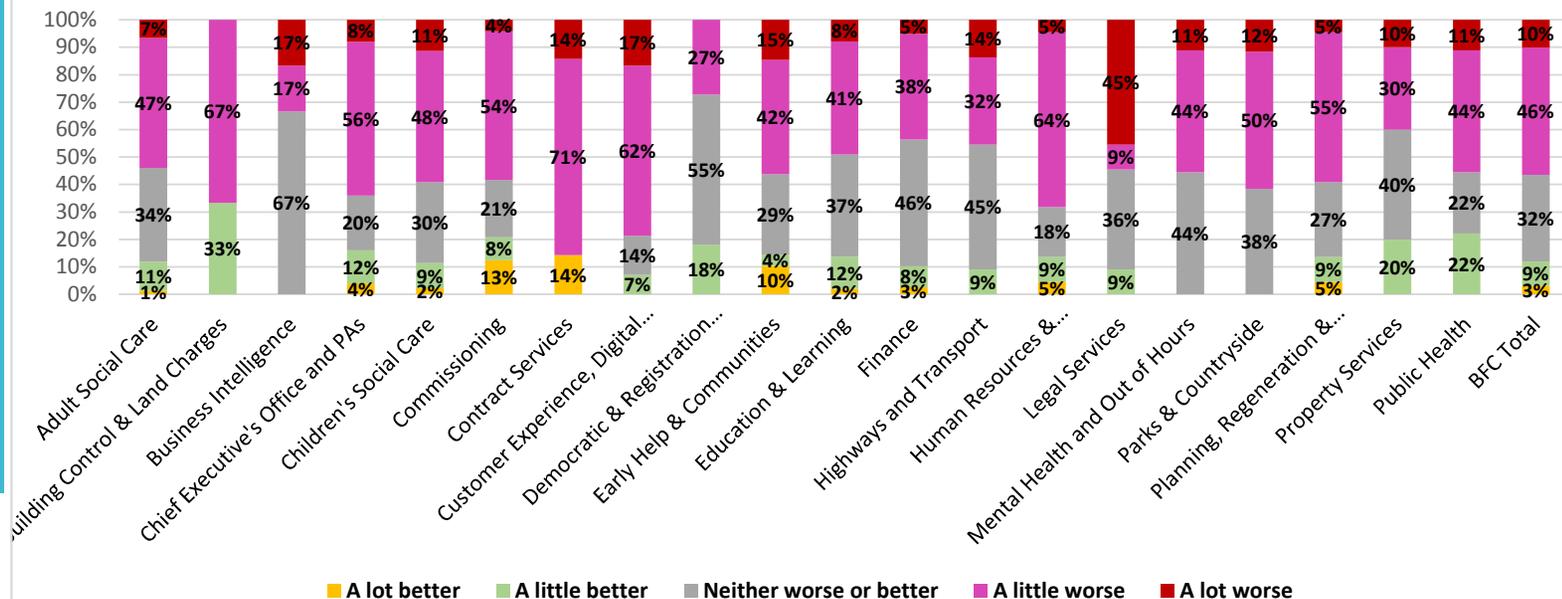
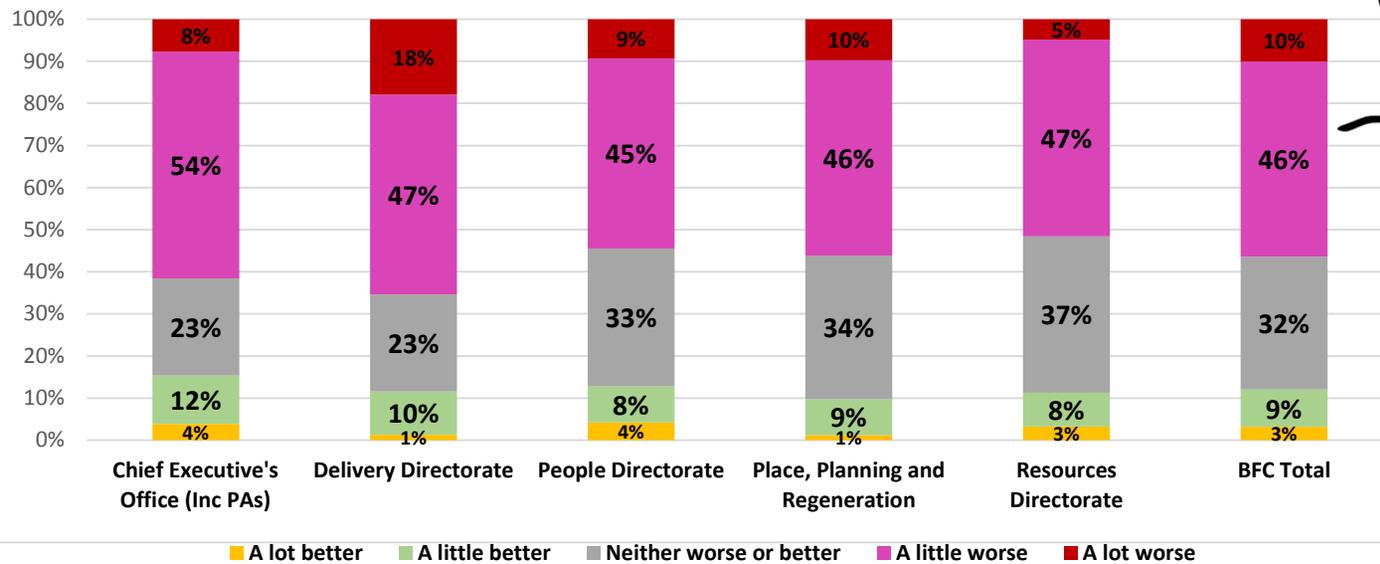
81

6%) of respondents felt
being had got a little or a
, with 1/3 of staff
g neither worse or better.



Braemar
Forest
Country

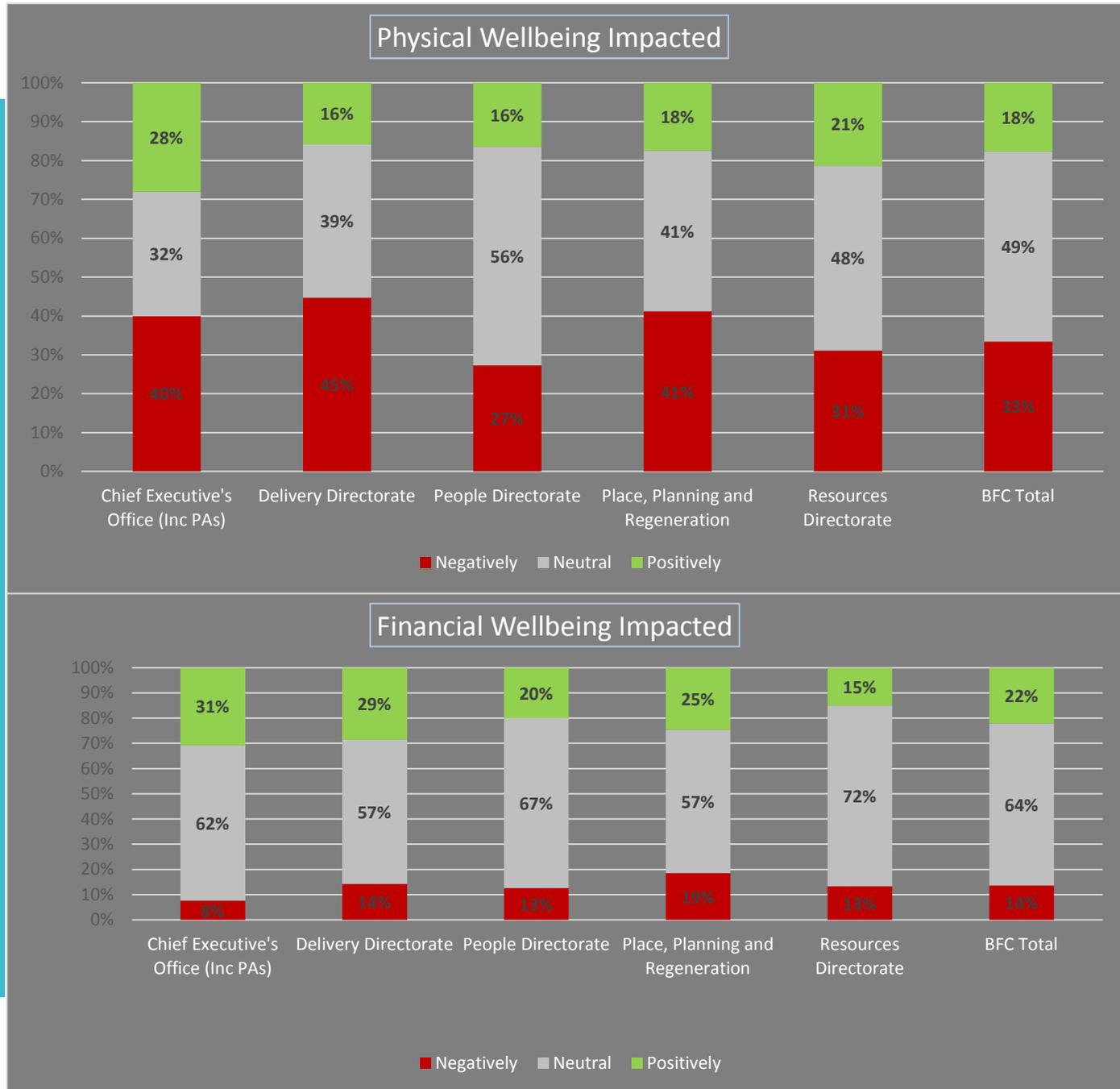
“Since The Start of the Covid-19 My Wellbeing Has Got”



being:
 Covid-19
 mic has
 antly impacted

82

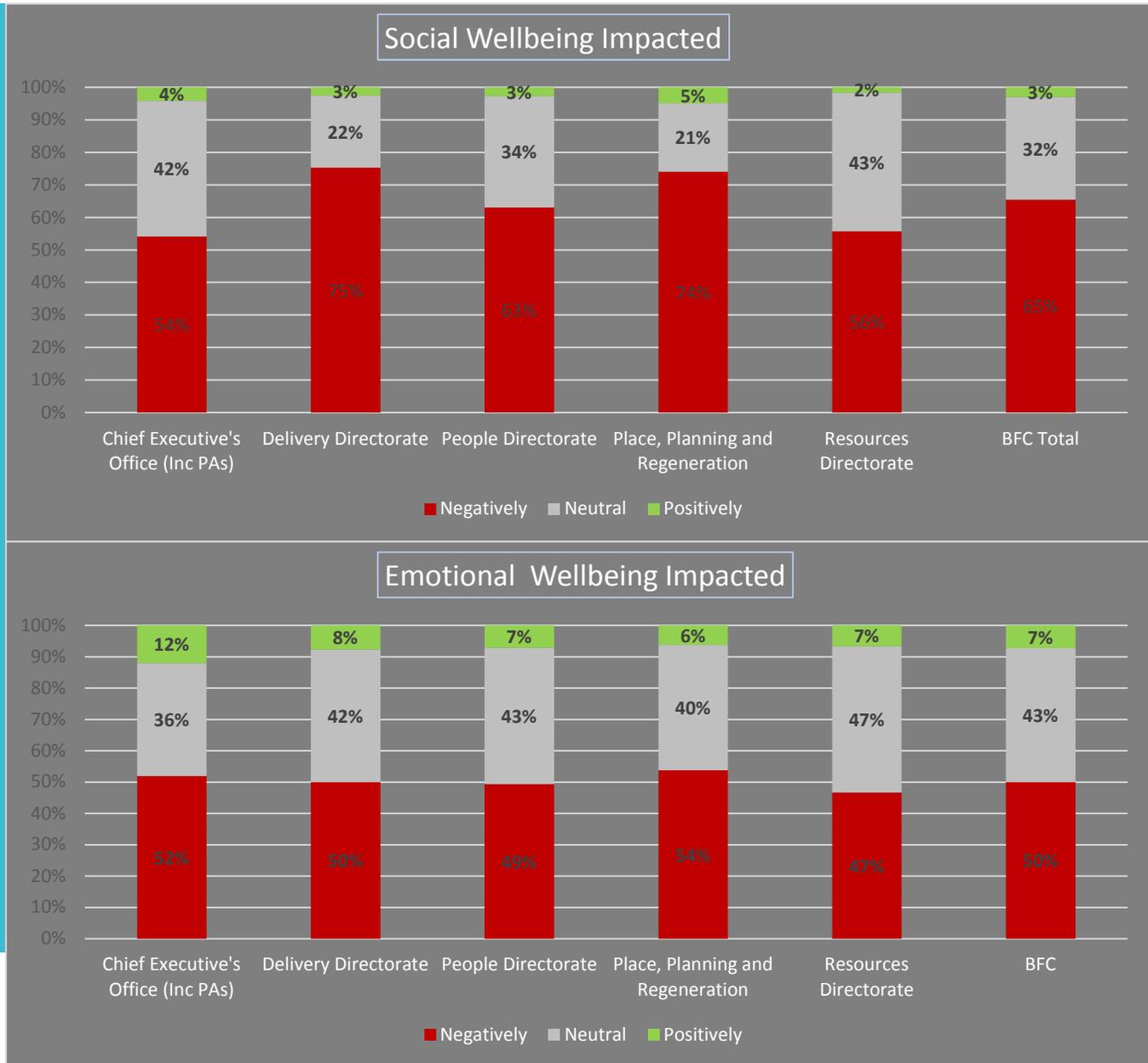
ng financial wellbeing as
 Just over 1 in 5 staff have
 increased financial
 g and just under 1 in 5
 physical wellbeing.



Wellbeing:
 Covid-19
 pandemic has
 significantly impacted



3 of staff have reported
 and has had a significant
 in their social wellbeing,
 citing their emotional
 wellbeing being negatively

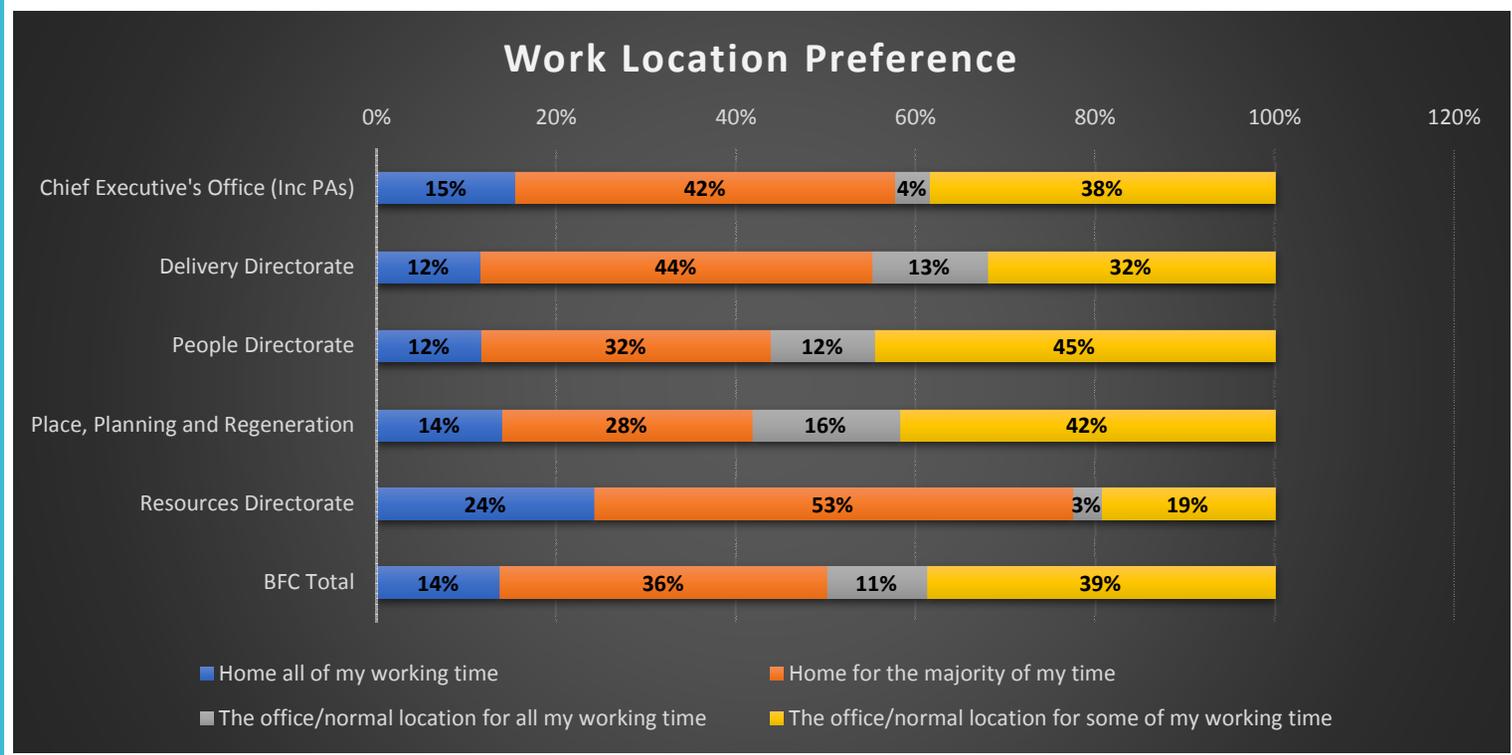




ing:

85
In the future, I prefer to work at home all the time in / normal working

Staff stated that they prefer to work at home all the time. 11% indicated a preference to work all the time in the office / normal working



Recommendations Next Steps

- Directorates should have a conversation about what people expect in terms of communications. CMT agreed that directorates should review how they were communicating with staff and ensure that they were aware of what to expect in the future, including, potentially, monthly updates from the director.
- Run regular staff mindfulness sessions.
- Staff should be encouraged to leave gaps in their diaries to ensure they could take breaks from their computer screens.
- The survey results should be published on the intranet.
- Another survey will be conducted in mid February using the same questions.



**To: Employment Committee
10 February 2021**

Homeworking Policy Director of Resources

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 Following the increase in homeworking as a result of the pandemic, a policy to address homeworking has been produced to formalise an increase in homeworking and the procedure for requests for extended homeworking i.e. over 80% of an employee's normal working hours spent at home.

Under the Council's constitution, new policies are brought to the Employment Committee for consideration and approval.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 **That CMT / the Employment Committee approve the proposed Bracknell Forest Homeworking Policy.**

3 Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 There is no existing policy to formalise homeworking or to respond to requests for more extensive homeworking from employees.
- 3.2 The approach to homeworking has changed significantly as a result of the pandemic throughout which the majority of employees have been homeworking. The homeworking policy reflects the Council's new way of working post-pandemic which allows for an increase in the amount of time that employees may be asked to work from home to alleviate the demand on the Council's office space.
- 3.3 The Council are seeing an increase in requests from employees to work from home as they wish to relocate further away from their normal office locations. The homeworking policy lays down considerations and guidelines so that all requests are handled fairly and equitably.
- 3.4 The policy stipulates that permanently working from home without occasional visits to the employee's main place of work is not to be permitted, to ensure that some level of face to face contact is maintained and well-being can be regularly assessed.

4 Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 Relying upon existing policies but these do not specifically deal with the issues associated with homeworking.

5 Supporting Information

- 5.1 Feedback from staff well-being surveys undertaken during 2020/21 shows that many roles do not need to be predominantly office based to function effectively and that there is a significantly increased preference amongst staff to work more regularly

from home on a permanent basis. Despite some initial concerns, it has also been clear during the period of enforced home working that there has not been a reduction in staff performance or service efficiencies. Within this overall situation, there is a recognition that for some staff and service areas the office is still the preferred workplace, for mental health, support and wellbeing reasons.

- 5.2 Requests are being received from our employees to work from home for the majority of their working time to support their desire to move to cheaper areas of the country to achieve better work/life balance. Whilst there are other policies which deal with flexible working, there is currently no policy that refers to homeworking. To ensure requests are treated fairly and consistently a formal procedure needs to be in place and a proposed Homeworking Policy is attached as Annex A to this report.
- 5.3 Senior managers and Unions have been consulted during the preparation of the Homeworking Policy and support its implementation.
- 5.4 The content of recruitment documents/employment contracts will be reviewed in relation to the homeworking policy and, where necessary, updated accordingly.
- 5.5 Related policies will also need to be reviewed to ensure they are consistent with the new ways of working outlined by the homeworking policy, eg. ECU, expenses, flexitime etc. Although it is not expected that any significant changes will need to be made

6 Consultation and Other Considerations

6.1 Legal Advice

The legal implications arising from the greater emphasis on homeworking proposed centre primarily around Health and Safety and Data Protection both of which are referenced in the report.

6.2 Financial Advice

There are no direct financial implications arising from the proposals in this report. However, it is recognised that reduced demand from staff in the future for space at Time Square in particular opens up the potential to consider different options for use of the building that could release savings or generate additional income through working with partner agencies.

6.3 Other Consultation Responses

Senior Managers and Trade Unions have been consulted on the proposed Homeworking policy. Their comments and feedback have been used to further refine the document.

6.4 Equalities Impact Assessment

N/A

6.5 Strategic Risk Management Issues

N/A

Background Papers

Contact for further information

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Trish.Barnard@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Alison Beswick, Senior HR Advisor – 01344 351256

Alison.beswick@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

BRACKNELL FOREST BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOMEWORKING POLICY

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19.0	How to Apply for Extended Homeworking

Attachments

Appendix A: Homeworking FAQs

Related Guidance/Policy

Appendix 1: Right to Request Flexible Working Policy

- Appendix 2: Expenses Policy for Employees
- Appendix 3: Claim tax relief for your job expenses
- Appendix 4: Homeworking Health & Safety Advice
- Appendix 5: Homeworking Self-Assessment Form
- Appendix 6: Incident Report Form
- Appendix 7: Flexible/Agile Working Policy
- Appendix 8: Flexitime Scheme Guidance
- Appendix 9: Lone Working Policy
- Appendix 10: Harmony Counselling
- Appendix 11: Employers Liability and Public Liability Insurance Cover

1. INTRODUCTION

The Council is committed to improving the working lives of all staff (full time, part time or job share, regardless of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity/gender expression, age or personal circumstances) and aims help all employees achieve a work/life balance, which balances the demands of the job with their home life.

The homeworking policy is just one of the flexible working options available to Council staff, which allows employees to carry out their daily duties from home. However, it does not cover other aspects of flexible working, such as amendments to working hours, which are considered under the Right to Request Flexible Working Policy (Appendix 1).

There is recognition that many roles do not need to be predominantly based in offices to function effectively so, where business needs permit, the expectation is that employees will be working from home for the majority of their working week (up to 80% of their contracted hours). However, it is recognised that, for some staff, working from home is less positive and to support mental health and wellbeing there is flexibility for those employees who may wish to come into their office location for a higher percentage of time for personal reasons.

This policy outlines the guidelines for all employees working at home and sets out the procedure for requests for working at home for more than 80% of an employee's normal working week i.e. extended homeworking.

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The key principles of the homeworking policy are that:

- Work is about what you do, not where you are. Regardless of where an employee is working, they should be available to communicate and collaborate in person, as required, during their working hours
- The technology available is used to ensure agile working is embraced fully, while maintaining the best level of service.

The overriding factor, when making a decision on the amount of time an employee works from home, office or different locations, will be business need.

This policy provides a framework for homeworking and also sets out the procedure in relation to requests for extended working from home i.e. when more than 80% of an employee's working week is spent at home. However, the nature of work in a team will affect the specific way in which the homeworking policy is applied.

The majority of roles within the Council allow for flexible working, this can be; at home, at the Council Offices or at another work location, whilst others would require all their work to be carried out at the office. Each work location or function will present different opportunities and limitations for homeworking, according to the needs of the service.

Whilst the homeworking policy allows for greater flexibility to work from home, it does not affect your normal place of work which will remain your assigned office, not your home.

Whilst some employees may want to request homeworking for the majority of their contracted hours, it should be noted that working from home on a permanent basis is not be permitted as employees will be required to attend their assigned office from time to time.

3. SCOPE

This document applies to all non-school based employees whose role and work location supports homeworking.

Working at home will not be permitted in the following cases:

- Employees being supported under the Performance Improvement/Capability Procedure, or employees for whom temporary close supervision is necessary to obtain data on work outputs.
- Employees subject to a formal Disciplinary warning for breaches of this procedure or other relevant misconduct.
- Work experience students not employed by the Council.

4. DEFINITIONS

The following are the definitions of the different types of homeworking that are covered by this policy:

Workstyle	Description
Homeworker	Employees who work from home up to 80% of their normal working week.
Extended Homeworker	An employee would be classified as an extended homeworker if they wish to work more than 80% of their working time from home – averaged across a 4 week period.

5. ELIGIBILITY FOR HOMEWORKING

- 5.1 All employees, who are able to work from home, may be required to do so for up to 80% of their normal working week, unless the needs of the business require the employee to work from an office or other location.
- 5.2 Any requests for extended homeworking will be reviewed by the employee's manager on their own merit before agreement is given. In circumstances where the Council cannot agree to a request, then the employee will be given the reasons for refusal in writing.
- 5.3 When making a decision on the amount of time to be spent homeworking, consideration will be given to the following:
- i. Will homeworking meet the Council's business needs as well as the employee's needs, so it is favourable to both?
 - ii. What will be the impact on customers, the department/organisation?
 - iii. Can the employee's job feasibly be done from home and how easy is it to perform the role from home?
 - iv. Does the employee have a suitable place to work from home? Homeworkers need a safe and reasonable space, security and privacy in which to work, and for office-type tasks an internet connection able to support work systems.
 - v. Has the appropriate training been completed?
 - vi. Has a DSE and homeworking risk assessment taken place?

- 5.4 The decision on the amount of time spent homeworking should not be based on a manager's personal preference or concerns over the ability to monitor home working.
- 5.5 Homeworking arrangements will be reviewed between the employee and their line manager on a regular basis to ascertain if the amount of time spent homeworking is successful for both the homeworker and the Council and to ensure that the amount of time working from home is not having a negative impact on the health and wellbeing of the employee. If the homeworking arrangements are not working satisfactorily they can be reduced or removed as outlined in 8.7.

6. PLACE OF WORK

6.1 Location

Whether employees work occasionally/regularly/or for extended periods from home, their official principal place of work will remain a specific office location (eg Time Square), although their contract of employment may also indicate that they may be required or permitted to work at any location within Bracknell Forest.

Employees will be required to attend their principal work location regularly, at times and for purposes agreed with their line manager, in line with business need.

6.2 New Employees

For new employees, homeworking will be a contractual requirement unless the job is assessed as fixed (i.e. based in the office permanently). However, the ability for a potential employee to work at home should not affect the recruitment decision as other work locations could be used. The recruiting manager should assess and record any issues around the ability to work remotely.

6.3 Probationary Periods

New employees, who are subject to a probationary period, may need to spend proportionally more time in the office to enable better training, induction, team-building and assistance but they should be encouraged to build up their time spent working away from the office so that, by the end of the probationary period, the manager can be confident of their ability to work under less direct supervision and their ability to work from home.

7. ACCESS TO EMPLOYEES' HOMES

Should there be concerns over a homeworker's homeworking environment, the manager, or a representative of the Council, reserves the right to visit the homes of employees who are working from home. Should this be necessary, permission will be sought from the homeworker in advance and reasonable notice will be given, unless urgent access is necessary

Examples of reasons for a home visit could include the following (this list is not exhaustive):

- Initial set-up.
- Maintenance of equipment.
- Health and safety assessment.

8. HOMEWORKING GUIDELINES

8.1 General

Homeworking may mean increased flexibility in hours worked, as employees are not necessarily restricted by the opening hours of the office (please see section 8.2 below), unless there is a requirement to work fixed working hours to meet rota requirements. Homeworkers will generally be expected to complete their normal working hours between 7.30am and 7.30pm Monday to Friday to take account of the needs of the service and the availability of other colleagues, in line with the Flexible Working policy. Any request to extend these working hours must be agreed in advance by the employee's manager.

8.2 Availability

Employees should be contactable whilst homeworking, so most working time should be at times when suppliers, managers and colleagues are also likely to be working and when customers will have an expectation of contacting a Council officer.

When working at home, employees are expected to log in to MS Teams, Jabber and Outlook and any other software used as a normal part of their role.

8.3 Working Hours

Homeworkers should not work for longer than their usual hours in line with the Working Time Regulations 1998, and are required to take appropriate breaks as outlined in the flexitime policy.

8.4 The Role of the Manager

It is important to establish what measure of control the manager has on how much work is done at home and when. This is because the boundary between home life and work life can become blurred, and also because the manager must ensure the interests of the service are not prejudiced. The following principles apply:

- i. To access the employee's home if required – see section 7. above.
- ii. At times, the manager may require the employee to work at the principal work location in the interests of the service. This might be required for example if there was a need for closer supervision; if the task can be completed more efficiently using the resources at work; for cover in the office; for meetings; for a short period for a particular task or project, or for operational reasons; or if the manager is not convinced that the homeworking environment is safe. The employee must always attend the office where the team is based when required, subject to reasonable notice. The employee may also be required to attend meetings, training, seminars etc at any appropriate location.
- iii. The manager may not insist that the home is used as a workplace if the employee is reasonably unable to do so.
- iv. The manager must ensure that staff have appropriate training in Information Security and should periodically check that standards are being adhered to and eLearning completed.
- v. Managers should agree core times at which employees should be contactable while working at home. They will be required to take a minimum of half an hour

lunch break (where working hours are more than 5 hours). The line manager may agree reasonable “time out” in core hours for caring responsibilities or to attend an appointment but these “time outs” should be agreed in advance and clearly indicated on the Outlook calendar as non-contact time. All hours worked, and breaks taken, must be recorded. The Council’s open calendar policy means that the Outlook Calendar should indicate availability clearly.

- vi. Managers should have a clear expectation of the output expected of an employee working from home and should monitor whether this level of output is being achieved. Normal performance management standards apply, and the Performance Improvement/Capability Procedure should be used if performance is not acceptable. The Disciplinary Procedure should be used to address misconduct issues. Remote working may be suspended to allow closer monitoring of work in these circumstances, with advice from HR if necessary.
- vii. Managers should arrange for any Homeworkers who work away from the office extensively to attend the office at least once per month, to ensure that they remain familiar with corporate systems and with the people they deal with at the office. Time should be devoted to regular communications, supervisions/one to ones, and team meetings, team building and team activities.
- viii. Induction for new employees should include them meeting and building working relationships with team members, including those who work outside the normal office location.
- ix. When employees are working from home it may not be as easy for managers to identify changes in their wellbeing. Managers should regularly check on the wellbeing of their team members by regularly asking how they are. If the manager has any concerns regarding the employee’s health or wellbeing, they should refer the employee to the support that is available i.e. Counselling, Occupational Health if there are adjustments that may need to be considered, or to HR if for a stress risk assessment if work related stress is an issue.
- x. To allow any employees who are being negatively affected by homeworking to work from an office base for a greater percentage of their working week, or permanently if needed.
- xi. To ensure that the set-up of the homeworker meets Health & Safety requirements.

8.5 The Responsibilities of the Homeworker

- i. All staff that work from home should ensure they have a suitable and safe environment where they can focus on work and that permits prolonged periods of homeworking.
- ii. Homeworkers must undertake all relevant training in relation to health & safety and homeworking.
- iii. Homeworkers should not hold meetings/business visits at their home.
- iv. Homeworking must not be seen as a substitute for other care arrangements, and employees working from home should not do so whilst in sole charge of dependents requiring care and supervision unless as an agreed “time out”.

- v. On-line information should be used where possible and files containing sensitive personal information should not be removed from Council premises. Any sensitive information should be saved onto the Council network, and never on to non-Council computers.
- vi. Employees should not use personal email accounts for work purposes as these are not secure.
- vii. Printed materials should only be taken home on rare occasions and must be kept securely in line with Data Protection/GDPR legislation and returned to the office promptly or disposed of confidentially when no longer required.
- viii. A personal USB stick should never be used for holding Council data. Data should be shared using OneDrive, SharePoint, Teams or via Secure Email – only as a last resort should a USB stick be used, which should be supplied by ICT and password protected.
- ix. When the employee is working from home, they must be directly contactable. If they are temporarily unavailable (eg in a meeting or on a training course) there must be an appropriate way for messages to be left, and these messages should be checked once the employee is available.
- x. Proposed patterns of work must be discussed with the manager, as the manager is responsible for ensuring there is adequate cover whether in the office or from home. These patterns of work should, however, be flexible – for example on a day when the individual had planned to work at home, they may need to change their plans if needed for a meeting, for example.
- xi. Employees may be required to come into the office when they had planned to work from home, although an acceptable alternative attendance could be through using Teams where a face to face meeting is not necessary.
- xii. If you are working in a public place, please ensure others cannot read your screen or overhear your phone calls. Please see Cyber Security on the intranet.
- xiii. When working at home, if meetings and conversations will involve discussing personal and sensitive information, these should not be held where family members can overhear
- xiv. Employees working remotely should ensure passwords are changed in a timely manner when a prompt is received and not allowed to expire.
- xv. Employees should advise their manager if their health or wellbeing is being adversely affected by prolonged homeworking (See 8.8).

8.6 Managing the Homeworker

The manager should manage all employees consistently, and a homeworker should be managed in the same way as office-based workers, with the same opportunities for training, development and career progression.

The manager should set out how frequently, for how long, where and for what reasons the employee's attendance at the organisation's premises will be required and ensure that this adhered to.

It is important to maintain contact with the employees who are homeworking to ensure that they are not being adversely affected by the homeworking arrangement. Whilst some individuals may prefer working from home, others may start to feel isolated, something that could potentially impact upon their performance. If any issues such as this do start to develop, it may be that the agreement needs to be reassessed and homeworkers reminded how to access the EAP and Counselling services

8.7 What to do if a homeworking arrangement does not work

If the homeworking agreement is not working satisfactorily and attempts to rectify the situation haven't been successful for either the manager or the employee, if the office is accessible then either the manager or employee can request that the employee work more regularly from their office location.

If this is a management decision, reasons will be given and communicated to the employee in writing.

If the employee refuses to return to their office location without good reason, then this may need to be considered under the Disciplinary policy.

8.8 Requests for Reduced Homeworking

Employees who wish to work from their nominated office base for a greater percentage of their working week for health and wellbeing reasons, should raise the request with their line manager in the first instance who should make every effort to consent to greater office based working.

9. EXTENDED HOMEWORKING

- 9.1 Extended homeworking refers to requests to work from home for over 80% of the employee's normal working time.
- 9.2 Requests for extended homeworking should be made in writing to the line manager, outlining; the amount of time the employee wishes to work from home, the reasons why they want to work from home for an extended period of time, and what they consider the effects to be on their work and team.
- 9.3 All extended homeworking arrangements will be subject to a trial 3-month period to ascertain if this is the appropriate working arrangement for the employer and the employee and if the arrangements are successful both for the homeworker and the Council.
- 9.4 The extended homeworking arrangement will be reviewed between the employee and their line manager after 3 months and written confirmation of the outcome of the review will be sent to the employee within 5 working days. If an extended working from home arrangement is withdrawn after the trial-period, an explanation will be given by the manager and the employee will have the right to appeal the decision. The appeal will be heard by another manager (independent from the case) and the employee will have the right to be accompanied by their trade union representative or full time official to the appeal meeting. The appeal process concludes the employee's right to appeal and there will be no right to challenge the decision through the grievance process.
- 9.5 All requests for extended homeworking will require manager approval.

9.6 Regardless of the amount of time approved for homeworking, the homeworkers normal place of work will remain their office location.

10. PAY AND EXPENSES

10.1 Pay

Employees will receive no change to their pay regardless of their working location.

There is no incentive payment to participate and no change to the rate of pay for the job, as the job remains the same wherever and whenever it is done.

10.2 Expenses

Normal expenses rules will apply, but employees should note that subsistence allowances will not be paid for people working from home or at their principal place of work.

10.3 Travel Expenses

Journeys to an employee's principal place of work will still be regarded as normal home to work travel and will not be claimable. If the employee is required to travel in the borough for work purposes, the home-work mileage must be subtracted from the total miles travelled. Employees can then submit a claim for the difference. See Appendix 2 - Expenses Policy for Employees - for more information.

10.4 Tax Relief

Employees working from home, may be eligible to claim tax relief against working from home by completing an HMRC form P87. See Appendix 3 - Claim tax relief for your job expenses.

11. EQUIPMENT - ICT/Chairs etc

The obligations of the Council and the employee that will apply are:

- i. The Council will supply; a laptop with the facility to make & receive phone calls, a headset, which should be collected from their usual place of work. Monitors can also be supplied if required. Additional ICT equipment should be requested via TOTO.
- ii. In accordance with the Health & Safety Risk Assessment, the Council will provide chairs and desks if deemed necessary from the risk assessment, subject to costs being reasonable.
- iii. Any ICT equipment issued to the homeworker will remain the property and responsibility of the Council at all times. Some minor incidental personal use is permitted (such as during lunchtimes) but personal documents and images should not be stored on a Council device. ICT equipment should not be used by friends or members of the family.
- iv. The homeworker will be expected to be responsible for; internet access/broadband suitable for home working, heating and lighting.
- v. The Council will not be responsible for paying for any installation or other costs associated with working from home. If the employee does not have a broadband connection, they will need to provide at their own expense or work from the offices.

- vi. All equipment should be returned to the Council on leaving employment.
- vii. ICT equipment issued is primarily for business purposes.
- viii. In the exceptional circumstance where a Council device is taken overseas (with permission), it should only be used via a WI-FI connection.

12. HEALTH AND SAFETY

12.1 Introduction

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 states that an employer shall ensure, so far as it is reasonably practical, the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees – this also extends to home workers. The Council's duty of care towards the health, safety and wellbeing of our employees extends to those who work from home. Therefore, before allowing any employee to enter into a homeworking agreement the Council needs to ensure that the employee's home environment is suitable for homeworking.

However, as the control that can be exercised over a member of staff working from home is limited, the employee is also obligated to ensure that they and other persons, including members of the household (as well as the public) are not endangered by work activities undertaken at home.

Please see Appendix 4 - Homeworking Health & Safety Advice, for general principles.

12.2 Health & Safety Training

Employees working at home must complete all relevant Health & Safety Training and Assessments, in relation to Agile Working.

12.3 Homeworking Self-Assessment

The employee will be asked to fill in a Homeworking Self-Assessment Form (Appendix 5) and return it to their manager, who will use it to assess any risks and the measures necessary to control them. If issues are identified arising from this, a home visit may be necessary for the manager, Health & Safety Manger or their representative, to complete a full risk assessment on site to ensure a safe and healthy working space at the employee's home.

If the manager feels the working area is not satisfactory then they may require the employee to work from their designated office location until the home area is satisfactory.

It should be noted that laptops are not intended for protracted use if they are not used seated at a table.

If specialised equipment is required (e.g. special chair, a special screen), consult HR for advice on a case by case basis; it may be that a return to fixed working is required, especially if special equipment would otherwise be required at multiple locations.

12.4 The Role of the Unions

An employee can request that a union representative accompany the health and safety manager if they are conducting a risk assessment of the home-based office.

12.5 Accident Reporting

An accident which occurs whilst working must be reported in the normal way, irrespective of where the accident occurs (at work, at home, at another location) using the Incident Report Form (Appendix 6).

13. ABSENCE

13.1 Sickness

If a homeworker is sick, or unable to work, this must be reported to their line manager in accordance with their contractual obligations.

Employees are not under an obligation to perform any work-related tasks while sick at home.

13.2 Other Absence

All other absences should be requested and recorded in the normal way.

14. MORTGAGES AND INSURANCE

Employees who are working at home are advised to notify their Mortgage Providers and Home Insurance Companies in writing that they will occasionally work at home, and that the Council arranges third party public and private liability insurance. This is highly unlikely to affect payments/premiums but if the company is not informed it may invalidate the policy or mortgage agreement.

ICT equipment issued is insured on the Council's policy and the Council will normally bear the cost if lost or damaged, provided the employee can show reasonable care has been taken. If reasonable care is not taken, then the Council may initiate a Disciplinary Investigation and may take disciplinary action. The Council's insurance will not cover equipment if the laptop or other mobile device is left visible and unattended in a car. If the employee has to take the device with them as they travel, they should either take it with them when they leave the car or lock it out of sight in the boot.

15. LOSS/DAMAGE TO COUNCIL EQUIPMENT

Loss of, or damage to, equipment must be reported promptly both to the manager and to ICT via TOTO. ICT will contact the Information Security Officer. If the equipment is stolen it should be reported to the police and a crime number obtained and reported to ICT Helpdesk.

16. DATA PROTECTION/GDPR

Employees working from home are responsible for complying with data protection law and for keeping all documents and information associated with the organisation secure at all times.

If the homeworker is likely, in the course of their work, to obtain or use personal information about individuals/service users they should be fully trained in the requirements of the GDPR and DPA Acts relevant to data security, issuing or re-issuing the data protection policy is advisable.

17. REVIEW AND REVISION OF ARRANGEMENTS

Homeworking arrangements should be kept under regular review and revised as necessary, to ensure that the employee, the manager and the service all continue to derive benefit from the working arrangements.

18. MOVING HOME

If a homeworker moves house, it is their responsibility to arrange for the transfer of any Council issued equipment at their own cost. A new risk assessment will need to be completed to reflect the homeworking arrangements at the new homeworking location.

19. HOW TO APPLY FOR EXTENDED HOMEWORKING

Requests for extended homeworking should be submitted in writing by the employee to their line manager. The request should include:

- i. How much time the employee wants to work at home
- ii. The reason for the request
- iii. Confirmation from the employee that they have completed a DSE and Risk Assessment and all relevant E-Learning.

Essential E-Learning:

GDPR

Cyber Security

Display Screen Equipment

APPENDIX A: HOMEWORKING FAQs

1. Do I need to insure my BFC equipment against theft?

The Council does not expect employees to take responsibility for insuring the work equipment that they have been supplied with in order to facilitate working from home. All work equipment will continue to be covered under the Council's insurance arrangements. However, employees should take reasonable precautions to prevent or mitigate incidents from occurring. It should be noted that, should a claim be made, there is a £250 excess per claim which is chargeable to the department (not the employee directly).

2. What is an employee's insurance liability when working from home?

The Council's liability insurance will continue to provide an indemnity to employees who work from home. If needed, this is a generic letter of Insurance you can use – Appendix 11.

3. Will my car insurance increase if I work from home?

Employees are advised to check with their own vehicle insurers in respect of the classification of business use under the terms and conditions of their motor insurance cover, as insurance policies vary greatly. However, adding business use to a private motor insurance policy does not usually result in an increase in premium.

4. What do I need to do before I start working from home?

Complete a Homeworking Self-Assessment (Appendix 5) and all essential e-Learning.

5. If I have an accident at home do I need to report it?

Any accident which occurs whilst at work must be reported in the normal way, irrespective of where the accident occurs (at work, at home, at another location).

6. What equipment will the Council supply me with?

Employees will be provided with essential equipment to facilitate homeworking, this includes such items as; laptops, monitors, keyboards, mouse.

The equipment supplied remains the property of the Council and must be checked periodically. Any defects in equipment must be reported promptly for managers to take steps to rectify the faults

7. What about desks/chairs?

The Council will provide chairs and desks, subject to costs being reasonable.

If you need a specialist chair, then this will be supplied either for use in the office or home – whichever is the greatest need. Any requirements should be discussed with your line manager prior to homeworking commencing.

8. How can I obtain stationery?

Employees will need to collect any stationery they need when they are in the office.

9. Can I/my family use my Council provided equipment for personal use?

The Council supplied equipment is solely for business purposes. Under no circumstances should other household/family members use your Council laptop. Any information stored on the homemaker's computers/hard copies should always be stored securely in line with GDPR regulations.

10. Will the Council pay for my Broadband/supply a dongle, etc?

No, these are the responsibility of the homemaker.

11. Will I be reimbursed for the costs of heating, lighting, phone/broadband etc?

No, however, homeworkers may be eligible to claim tax relief against working from home by completing an HMRC form P87. See Claim tax relief for your job expenses: Working from home - GOV.UK (Appendix 3)

12. What are the tax implications of homeworking?

As the Council is not providing any equipment that can be used extensively for private use, it is unlikely that there will be any tax applied for homeworking

13. Will my manager/a Council representative need to access my home?

This may be necessary if there are issues with setting up equipment or concerns regarding a homemaker's homeworking environment. Should a home visit be deemed necessary then permission will be sought in advance from the homemaker and notice given. A health and safety assessment may also be required should the home working self-assessment raise any issues.

14. I want to move away from the area, what are the implications on coming into the office. Will I be able to claim commuting costs?

No, any travel to your office location will be at your own expense and outside normal paid working hours.

15. What happens if I move home?

If you move home, all moving costs of Council equipment will be the responsibility of the employee.

16. Can I work flexibly whilst homeworking?

Employees working from home are expected to work within the flexible working policy in terms of start and finish times and taking breaks and to adhere to Working Time Regulations. Some roles will operate outside the flexible working policy and therefore should work in line with their departmental arrangements

17. Will homeworking effect my professional development?

Training and Development opportunities will be discussed during 1:1s/Supervision sessions to identify areas for development and career progression.

18. Who can work from home?

A role can be classified as eligible for homeworking if the job role is assessed and identified as one that can be performed just as well away from the usual place of work.

19. How many days may I be required to work from home each week?

This will be decided in conjunction with your manager, dependent upon your personal requirements to work in the office against your ability to work at home.

Attendance at your office location will depend on the needs of the business and will be discussed with you by your manager. There is an expectation that you will be required to attend the office to attend; team meetings, carry out interviews, attend training; appraisals/1:1s/supervisions or to provide essential cover as and when required on the request of your manager.

20. Can I work from home permanently?

No, Homeworking on a permanent basis is not permitted.

21. Will my contract be changed to reflect the fact that my working style is homeworking?

The majority of contracts are classified as Home-Flex or Free so already allow for homeworking. If you still have a contract which is classified as 'Fixed' and you participate in homeworking, then you will receive written notification of the change to a Home-Flex/Free working arrangement.

22. Do I need to tell my mortgage provider/landlord and home insurer that I am working from home?

Yes, you should check that there isn't anything preventing you from working at home in your mortgage agreement, lease or home insurance. You should check with your home insurer whether you are covered should work equipment cause damage and for claims from third parties.

23. Will I need planning permission to work at home?

It is unlikely that you will need planning consent to work from home, if your home is primarily used as a home and not a business. However, where your home is primarily used as a business premises it is probable that permission will be needed.

24. Will I need to pay business rates?

If the room you are using to work at home is also used privately then this is unlikely.

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Right to ask for flexible working

Document Control

Document Ref:	1.1	Date Created:	1998
Version:	1.1	Date Modified:	December 2018
Revision due	The service would aim to review policies and procedures every 2 years to ensure documents are up to date		
Owning Service	Human Resources		

Approvals (if required)

Date Employment Committee gave authorisation for changes (where necessary)
13 February 2019

Change History

Version	Date	Description	Changes made by
1.1	December 2018		Melissa Berry

**BRACKNELL FOREST COUNCIL'S
AN EMPLOYEE'S RIGHT TO ASK FOR FLEXIBLE WORKING**

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BRACKNELL FOREST COUNCIL'S AN EMPLOYEE'S RIGHT TO ASK FOR FLEXIBLE WORKING

INTRODUCTION

There is a statutory right for eligible employees to request a change to their contract of employment so that they can work more flexibly and therefore balance their home and personal responsibilities with work commitments.

Managers deal with requests for flexible working frequently, and should always approach such requests fairly. This is a statutory right, it requires managers to respond formally and in line with a specific procedure in order to comply with the law. Please note, the law gives employees a right to ask not a right for the request to be granted.

The right applies to employees who:

- Have worked for the Council for six months (26 weeks) minimum
- Have not already made a formal request within the last 12 months

The employee can ask for a change to:

- The hours they are required to work
- The times they are required to work
- The place of work (e.g. they may request to work wholly or partly from home)

The employee must put their request in writing:

- stating that it is an application is under the legal right to request flexible working
- stating whether and when any previous requests were made
- specifying the change they require and the date from which they would like it to become effective.
- explaining what effect they think making this change would have on their section/department and how, in their opinion any such effect might be dealt with.

Once an application has been made, no further applications can be made for 12 months.

Grounds for refusal

Employers must give serious consideration to such requests and under the legislation are only able to refuse a request on the following grounds:

- The burden of additional costs
- Detrimental effect on the ability to meet customer demand
- Inability to re-organise work among existing staff
- Inability to recruit additional staff
- Detrimental impact on quality
- Detrimental impact on performance
- Insufficiency of work during the periods the employee proposes to work
- Planned structural changes

Whilst each case has to be considered on its own merits it is important to look at ways in which requests might be accommodated. If a request to change working hours or pattern of work is granted there will be no right for the employee to revert back to the former arrangement if and when his or her personal circumstance change (unless agreed by

his/her manager). If the exact arrangements requested are not fully acceptable, the manager may discuss with the employee an alternative arrangement.

Procedure for dealing with a formal request for flexible working

When a manager receives a formal request from an employee they must consider it.

- If the manager agrees with the request, the employee must be notified in writing with the date on which it will take effect. This should normally be within 28 days of receiving the request.
- If the manager has not yet decided or does not agree, he/she must hold a meeting with the employee as soon as possible – normally within 28 days. This provides an opportunity to discuss any problems and consider alternatives.
- Once the manager has carefully considered the request and weighed up the benefit to the employee against any adverse business impact, the employee should be notified of the manager's decision in writing. Any suggested change to the arrangements requested should be discussed with the employee.
- If changes are agreed, a new contract will be issued confirming the date on which the new arrangements commence.
- If the request cannot be granted the manager must state why giving at least one of the reasons allowed under the legislation (see above).
- The employee has the right of appeal within 14 days of the decision notice giving full details of their reasons for appeal.
- The manager must respond to the appeal and invite the employee to a further meeting to discuss it - normally within 14 days.
- The employee will have the right to be accompanied at the above meetings by a work colleague or union representative.

All of the above meetings including any appeal hearings should be completed within three months of the formal request.

An employee should not be subject to detrimental treatment on the grounds that he/she has made a request for flexible working.

The manager may decide to offer the new working arrangements on a trial period, in which case the change would be on a temporary basis.

Managers can contact HR on hr@bracknell-forest.gov.uk if they require any further advice about An Employee's Right to Ask for Flexible Working or the procedures for handling requests.

EXPENSES POLICY FOR EMPLOYEES

March 2019

INTRODUCTION

Bracknell Forest Council is aware that there will be circumstances when employees incur additional expenditure when out on Council business. The Council recognises that employees should not be placed at a financial disadvantage under these circumstances and will be fairly compensated for additional costs genuinely incurred. Expenses which can be reimbursed must have been incurred wholly, exclusively and necessarily in the performance of activities related directly to the running of the Council (Section 336 of the Income Taxes Earnings and Pensions Act 2003). These expenses will be classed as “business expenses” which will not then be subject to tax for the individual concerned.

In addition to the non-taxable expenses, the Council does permit employees to claim a limited number of expenses that could otherwise be classed as wholly or partly personal expenses. The guidance which accompanies this policy provides detailed information on which allowances are classified by Revenue and Customs (HMRC) as taxable or non-taxable.

As the Council is managing public money, it is essential that employees exhibit the highest standards of personal behaviour and that all payments are appropriate and made in an open and transparent manner. The overriding aim is to ensure that the Council’s reputation cannot be brought into disrepute. The Council’s Code of Conduct for Employees sets out in more detail the standards that are expected of employees, including those relating to the receiving and giving of gifts and hospitality. Any employee who is suspected of falsely or wilfully claiming expenses to which they would not be entitled will be subject to appropriate disciplinary investigation.

The Council is required to maintain records of all expenses payments whether they are taxable or not.

This policy applies to employees only, Councillors are also entitled to claim for expenses, many of which are similar to those available to employees. Full details of those expenses that Councillors can claim are set out in the Members Allowances Scheme. All new employees will be advised of the rules relating to conduct, and where appropriate have the procedures relating to the claiming of expenses explained.

SCOPE

The policy will apply to all employees of Bracknell Forest Council including those on temporary and casual contracts of employment. School governing bodies are responsible for agreeing their own policy on expenses and may adopt this model if they wish.

The policy applies to all personal expenses incurred by an employee during the course of their duties, including those where the expense has been charged to a Council credit card.

The policy does not apply to the reimbursement of other costs that may have been incurred on the Council’s behalf e.g. goods purchased. The Council has instigated a policy of issuing Corporate Purchase cards to a wider base of officers in recognition of the change in purchasing habits (i.e. the great use of on-line ordering where there is no alternative to using a credit/debit card). As such expenditure incurred on the Councils behalf (and not in relation to employee expenses) should in the first instance be ordered using a purchase order or using a Corporate Purchase card. Expenditure of this nature should only be reclaimed through expenses on rare occasions where absolutely necessary. Budget holders authorising such expenditure should be aware of this element of the expenses policy and should ensure that such purchases are minimised.

Advice on how to reclaim these costs can be found in the section on Claiming Expenses on DORIS (<https://doris.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/page/claiming-expenses>).

MONITORING MEASURES

Expense claims and hospitality registers will be examined regularly as a part of the annual internal audit programme.

Failure to comply with this policy and/or the Code of Conduct for Employees may result in previously reimbursed expenses, or the costs of providing gifts or hospitality, being recovered from the employee responsible. Furthermore, gifts accepted contrary to the Code of Conduct for Employees must be returned.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES FOR WHICH CLAIMS CAN BE MADE

Car allowance and usage - Employees requiring the use of vehicles or other types of transport for the performance of their duties will be eligible to receive allowances or reimbursement for the use of their car or other types of transport on journeys directly relating to Borough business. Vehicles must be in a roadworthy condition and insured for business use.

- **Essential Car Users** – Entitlement to Essential Car User Allowance is dependent upon continuing to average 3 or more eligible journeys per week to deliver services or support directly to the community (e.g. to the public/schools/Council operated centres). Entitlement will be periodically reviewed, and those who do less than 3 eligible journeys per week will be re-designated as Casual Car Users upon review. Essential Car Users can claim mileage at the rate applicable at the time of the journey and also receive a monthly lump sum.
- **Casual Car Users** – All posts that are not defined as Essential Car User are designated as Casual Car Users and may claim business mileage at the Casual User rate for using their own car. Casual Users have the option to use their own cars or book pool cars but cannot claim mileage for these journeys undertaken in pool cars.

Journeys To and From Home - The majority of employees have their normal place of work stated in their terms and conditions of employment, as being a specific location or any other Council property. Travel between home and their work location will not be eligible to be claimed as a travel expense, even when the employee works at home. However, for those few employees whose contracts of employment state that their normal place of work is their home, claims for travel from home to a work location will be eligible for reimbursement.

Where employees journey from home to another location other than their normal place of work (e.g. when travelling from home to a training event or to an off site meeting), they cannot claim mileage if the miles travelled are less than that which would have been travelled on the shortest route from home to work. If the distance is more, then a claim for those miles additional to the shortest home to work mileage is allowable. The same applies to journeys from a location other than the normal place of work to the employee's home.

All records of business mileage must show the reason for the journey as well as the start, destination and finish points. For employees the start and finish points will normally be the normal permanent place of work or travel between different work related locations. If a claim is for additional mileage from a home start, the start and finish points shown on a claim form

should be the home address (where there is no claimable mileage, the employee is advised to record the journey for car allowance eligibility purposes, but to record 0 miles claimed).

For longer journeys of 50 miles or more (in a single journey), employees should seek approval from their line manager as to the most suitable means of transport taking into account the nature and purpose of the journey, the necessity to carry clients or equipment, etc. If the manager recommends the use of public transport and the employee decides to use his or her own transport, the claim approved must be based on the second class rail fare for that journey.

Car parking fees – Where used, can also be claimed against receipt. The payment for parking near to the employee's usual place of work, however, cannot be reimbursed.

Use of public transport – Where this is used, claims must be made against receipts/production of a valid journey ticket. The Council will usually only reimburse claims for second class/economy travel rates. First class travel rates may be claimed if there is a requirement to work during the course of the journey and prior approval is obtained from the relevant Director or Chief Officer. The Chief Executive, Directors and Chief Officers are expected to work during the course of their journey and may, therefore, claim reimbursement for first class travel rates without prior approval.

Air/Foreign travel – Where this is considered necessary and appropriate, in the performance of activities related directly to the running of or in furtherance of the work activities of the Council, the costs of economy travel only will be reimbursed. Claims must be made against receipts/production of a valid journey ticket.

Cycle Mileage – The Cycle Allowance Scheme is to encourage employees to use alternative methods of travel for their journeys between home and Council premises and journeys made in the course of their work. A cycle allowance will be paid to employees for business mileage, not home to work travel. Different rates apply to pedal cycles and motorcycles.

Training expenses – These must be claimed on the same basic principles as the above.

- **Residential courses** – frequently the non-travel expenses are included in the cost of the course itself, but where this is not the case, the rules explained in this Policy will apply.
- **Short courses and seminars** – meals are usually included in the price of a short course. Where they are not, claims for subsistence should be made (in accordance with published rates)
- **Day release courses** – these are normally qualification linked programmes which require attendance at a training location on a regular basis e.g. once a week. These shall be treated as though the training location is the normal place of work on that day and hence no subsistence allowances shall be payable. Where employees are attending college and travelling from home they may claim travelling expenses in excess of those normally incurred when travelling to work.

Overnight accommodation – All overnight stays must be authorised in advance. This approval will be given by the employee's immediate line manager. Overnight accommodation is only likely to be approved when the distance between the location and the employee's normal place of work exceeds 150 miles or where attendance at an early morning meeting in that location justifies remaining in the area overnight. If an employee stays in overnight accommodation that is less than 150 miles from the employee's normal

place of work the Council will be responsible for meeting the employee's liability to Income Tax.

Standard allowances for out of pocket expenses exist to cover the cost of small incidental expenses of staying away from home, e.g. purchase of a newspaper or short telephone call. If overnight accommodation in a specific hotel forms part of the fee for attending a conference or other event, the cost of this will normally be included within the booking fee payable to the event organiser.

Subsistence allowance – Actual expenditure can be claimed back supported by a valid receipt provided that it is both reasonable and necessary. The amount should not exceed published subsistence allowances. There is an expectation that the purchase of alcohol as part of a subsistence claim would not meet the above criteria, however it is recognised that there may be exceptions to this and as such any claims for the purchase of alcohol should be approved by the budget manager prior to its purchase.

Allowances should only be claimed when it is not practical for the person claiming the allowance to take their meal as normal at home or at work. For example, if a meeting is held in the afternoon a claim for lunch allowance would not be approved, if it had been possible for the person to have lunch before commencing their journey or attending the meeting.

For staff to be eligible to claim for subsistence claims, they must:

- Be away from home and work
- Be on Council business
- Be away over the duration of a normal meal time (unless claiming subsistence for evening meetings)

Evening meetings – Employees required to attend a meeting involving Councillors or external parties which is expected to last until at least 8.30 pm, qualify for payment of subsistence allowances. However, Revenue and Customs (HMRC) regards these expenses relating to evening meetings as taxable, and so they need to be administered separately from non-taxable expenses, through the Payroll system.

Alternatively, employees may claim mileage up to a total of 25 miles in order to return home for an evening meal. HMRC regards this mileage as taxable and must also be claimed through the Payroll system.

Mobile phones – These are issued to those employees who need one to ensure the efficient discharge of their duties. The cost (or reasonable estimate of the cost) of personal calls and text must be reimbursed to the Council. Inappropriate or improper use of a mobile phone will result in appropriate disciplinary action being taken against the employee.

TRAVEL CLAIMS/EXPENSES PAYMENTS

Mileage/expenses claims should be completed at least once every quarter (to 30th June, 30th September, 31st December and 31st March) and submitted for payment as soon after this date as possible. The reimbursement payable will be for actual expenditure up to a maximum which is the standard rates applicable at that time. These are subject to review each year and new rates usually apply from 1st April each year.

No reimbursement will normally be paid without an authorised claim form with valid VAT receipts attached. Businesses must supply a VAT receipt when specifically requested. The

only circumstances under which a VAT receipt is not necessary are where the amount is less than £25 and is one of the following:

- Telephone calls from public or private telephones;
- Purchase through coin-operated machines;
- Off-street car parking charges;
- Single or return toll charges.

For further details of what a VAT receipt should contain see the guidance on DORIS



1. Home (<https://www.gov.uk/>)
2. Money and tax (<https://www.gov.uk/browse/tax>)
3. Income Tax (<https://www.gov.uk/browse/tax/income-tax>)

Claim tax relief for your job expenses

1. Overview

You might be able to claim tax relief if:

- you use your own money for things that you must buy for your job
- you only use these things for your work

You cannot claim tax relief if your employer either gives you:

- all the money back
- an alternative, for example your employer gives you a laptop but you want a different type or model

This guide is also available in Welsh (Cymraeg) (<https://www.gov.uk/rhyddhad-treth-ar-gyfer-cyflogeion>).

You must have paid tax in the year. You'll get tax relief based on what you've spent and the rate at which you pay tax.

Example If you spent £60 and pay tax at a rate of 20% in that year, the tax relief you can claim is £12.

For some claims, you must keep records of what you've spent. You must claim within 4 years of the end of the tax year that you spent the money.

If your claim is for the current tax year, HM Revenue and Customs (**HMRC**) will usually make any adjustments needed through your tax code.

If your claim is for previous tax years, **HMRC** will either make adjustments through your tax code or give you a tax refund.

[Check if you can claim \(https://www.tax.service.gov.uk/claim-tax-relief-expenses/\)](https://www.tax.service.gov.uk/claim-tax-relief-expenses/)

2. Working from home

You may be able to claim tax relief for additional household costs if you have to work at home on a regular basis, either for all or part of the week. This includes if you have to work from home because of coronavirus (COVID-19).

You cannot claim tax relief if you choose to work from home.

Additional costs include things like heating, metered water bills, home contents insurance, business calls or a new broadband connection. They do not include costs that would stay the same whether you were working at home or in an office, such as mortgage interest, rent or council tax.

You may also be able to claim tax relief on equipment you've bought (<https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/buying-other-equipment>), such as a laptop, chair or mobile phone.

How much you can claim

You can either claim tax relief on:

- £6 a week from 6 April 2020 (for previous tax years the rate is £4 a week) - you will not need to keep evidence of your extra costs
- the exact amount of extra costs you've incurred above the weekly amount - you'll need evidence such as receipts, bills or contracts

You'll get tax relief based on the rate at which you pay tax. For example, if you pay the 20% basic rate of tax and claim tax relief on £6 a week you would get £1.20 per week in tax relief (20% of £6).

Check if you can claim (<https://www.tax.service.gov.uk/claim-tax-relief-expenses/only-claiming-working-from-home-tax-relief>)

3. Uniforms, work clothing and tools

You may be able to claim tax relief on the cost of:

- repairing or replacing small tools you need to do your job (for example, scissors or an electric drill)
- cleaning, repairing or replacing specialist clothing (for example, a uniform or safety boots)

You cannot claim relief on the initial cost of buying small tools or clothing for work.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

You cannot claim tax relief for PPE. If your job requires you to use PPE your employer should either:

- give you PPE free of charge
- ask you to buy it and reimburse you the costs

How much you can claim

You can either claim:

- the actual amount you've spent - you'll need to keep receipts
- an agreed fixed amount (a 'flat rate expense' or 'flat rate deduction')

Check if your job has an agreed flat rate expense (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/job-expenses-for-uniforms-work-clothing-and-tools>).

Check if you can claim (<https://www.tax.service.gov.uk/claim-tax-relief-expenses/>)

4. Vehicles you use for work

You may be able to claim tax relief if you use cars, vans, motorcycles or bicycles for work.

This does not include travelling to and from your work, unless it's a temporary place of work.

How much you can claim depends on whether you're using:

- a vehicle that you've bought or leased with your own money
- a vehicle owned or leased by your employer (a company vehicle)

Using your own vehicle for work

If you use your own vehicle or vehicles for work, you may be able to claim tax relief on the approved mileage rate. This covers the cost of owning and running your vehicle. You cannot claim separately for things like:

- fuel
- electricity
- road tax
- MOTs
- repairs

To work out how much you can claim for each tax year you'll need to:

- keep records of the dates and mileage of your work journeys
- add up the mileage for each vehicle type you've used for work
- take away any amount your employer pays you towards your costs, (sometimes called a 'mileage allowance')

Approved mileage rates

	First 10,000 business miles in the tax year	Each business mile over 10,000 in the tax year
Cars and vans	45p	25p
Motorcycles	24p	24p
Bicycles	20p	20p

Using a company car for business

You can claim tax relief on the money you've spent on fuel and electricity, for business trips in your company car. Keep records to show the actual cost of the fuel.

If your employer reimburses some of the money, you can claim relief on the difference.

Check if you can claim (<https://www.tax.service.gov.uk/claim-tax-relief-expenses/>)

5. Professional fees and subscriptions

You can claim tax relief on fees or subscriptions you pay to approved professional organisations (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/professional-bodies-approved-for-tax-relief-list-3>). This only applies if you have to be a member of an organisation to do your job.

You cannot claim tax back on fees or subscriptions for:

- life membership subscriptions
- fees or subscriptions you have not paid for yourself (for example, if your employer has paid for them)

Your organisation can tell you how much tax you're allowed to claim back.

Check if you can claim (<https://www.tax.service.gov.uk/claim-tax-relief-expenses/>)

6. Travel and overnight expenses

If you have to travel for your work you may be able to claim tax relief on the cost or money you've spent on food or overnight expenses.

You cannot claim for travelling to and from work, unless you're travelling to a temporary place of work.

You can claim tax relief for money you've spent on things like:

- public transport costs
- hotel accommodation if you have to stay overnight
- food and drink
- congestion charges and tolls
- parking fees
- business phone calls and printing costs

You may also be able to claim tax relief on business mileage. (<https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/vehicles-you-use-for-work>)

Check if you can claim (<https://www.tax.service.gov.uk/claim-tax-relief-expenses/>)

7. Buying other equipment

In most cases you can claim tax relief on the full cost of substantial equipment, for example a computer, you have to buy to do your work. This is because it qualifies for a type of capital allowance called annual investment allowance (<https://www.gov.uk/capital-allowances/annual-investment-allowance>).

You cannot claim capital allowances for cars, motorcycles or bicycles you use for work, but you may be able to claim for business mileage and fuel costs (<https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/vehicles-you-use-for-work>).

You claim in a different way for small items that'll last less than 2 years, such as uniforms and tools (<https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/uniforms-work-clothing-and-tools>).

You can only claim tax relief for equipment expenses if:

- you need it to do your job

- you use the equipment for work and there's no significant private use - this includes using the equipment according to your organisation's policy

If your employer gives you money for the item

Reduce the amount you claim tax relief on by the amount of money your employer gives you.

Check if you can claim (<https://www.tax.service.gov.uk/claim-tax-relief-expenses/>)

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Appendix 4

Home working health and safety advice

To comply with health and safety legislation the council has a duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of its employees irrespective of where they are based.

Employees also have a duty of care to themselves no matter where they are working for the council. They must still follow the same relevant safety procedures even though they are not actually working on council premises.

You will be asked by you manager to fill in and return a self-assessment form Your manager, will use this to assess any risks and the measures necessary to control them:

- make sure you set up a comfortable and safe place to work; kitchen chairs and tables may be suitable for short periods of work.
- check that there are no hazards from other domestic equipment
- only use ICT equipment provided by the council; for example, never write work related reports using your own IT equipment
- make sure your equipment is in good condition before using it; check that electrical leads and plugs are in good condition and do not use equipment that appears faulty
- to maintain good personal safety when dealing with work related matters, never give out your home address, telephone number or use your home telephone to make work related calls; make sure your office based phone number is diverted to your work mobile, and always give your office number and your office based address
- make sure that your work mobile phone is fully charged and switched on so service users and your line manager can contact you

If you have an accident or incident while working at home, notify your line manager who will make sure it is reported to the health and safety team.

If you need more information on health and safety matters, please contact the health and safety team.

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Home working self-assessment form

Name:

Job title:

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	Tick as appropriate			Any action required
	Yes	No	N/A	
Environment				
Is there adequate natural and room lighting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is the room temperature adjustable and is it comfortable?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is there adequate natural ventilation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Furniture and equipment				
Is the furniture you are using suitable for home-based work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is your work surface large enough to accommodate all the equipment, papers etc you need to work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Can the screen or laptop be positioned so that any glare or reflection from the window or lights is eliminated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are there enough power sockets for the equipment you need to use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

	Tick as appropriate			Any action required
	Yes	No	N/A	
Layout				
Does the layout allow easy escape in the event of an emergency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is the floor free from trailing cables? If not can they be tucked away.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you feel you have sufficient space in which to work?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
If others have access to the room where you are working, are there adequate security arrangements to lock away equipment or documents?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you have any health concerns or any other problems that you believe are related to using display screen equipment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Signed:

Date:

For your manager to complete:

Name of manager:

Job title:

I confirm that, on the basis of this self-assessment: (tick as appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/>	No further actions are required
<input type="checkbox"/>	Further action/investigation is required as detailed below:

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Details of actions / further investigations required	Timescale	Status

Signed:

Date:

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Incident Report Form (IRF 03/19)

Input data into Online Incident Form at: <https://www.reportincident.co.uk/bracknell>
 If for any reason the Online Form is inaccessible send a hard copy (retain original) to: Corporate H&S, 4th Floor, Time Square, RG12 1JD. Certain workplace incidents are reportable under RIDDOR to the HSE. For more information on RIDDOR contact a H&S Adviser: 01344 352000 or go to: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/riddor/index.htm>.



Was a Person Involved in the Incident? Yes / No (Yes will include: a near miss, threatening behaviour, verbal abuse, racial abuse etc.)

Your Details (Person completing this form)?

Title/First Name/Surname.....Tel No:

Address where the Incident occurred?

Building: Street:Postcode:

Where on the premises did the incident occurred? (E.g. stairs, playground, etc.):

The Incident

Date of Incident.....

Time of Incident:

Incident Type? (tick box):

Slip/Trip/Fall	<input type="checkbox"/>	Contact with Machinery	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exposure: fire	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fall From Height	<input type="checkbox"/>	Contact with Electricity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exposure: explosion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Handling / Lifting	<input type="checkbox"/>	Struck by vehicle	<input type="checkbox"/>	Verbal Abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trapped by Object	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exposure Hot Surface	<input type="checkbox"/>	Racial Incident	<input type="checkbox"/>
Struck against fixed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Contact Harmful Substance	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual Harassment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Struck by Object	<input type="checkbox"/>	Physical Violence	<input type="checkbox"/>	Medical issue/ill-health	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drowning	<input type="checkbox"/>	Road Traffic Collision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Near Miss	<input type="checkbox"/>
Injured by Animal	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asbestos Exposure	<input type="checkbox"/>	Runaway child	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finger Traps	<input type="checkbox"/>	Self Harm	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Describe what happened?

If the incident involved a person circle as appropriate:

Employee Pupil (Schools Only) Member of Public Contractor Volunteer

Was there an injury? (includes verbal abuse and a near miss) Yes/No

Injuries? (tick box):

Aches/Pains	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bruises	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cuts	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fracture	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spinal Injury	<input type="checkbox"/>
Amputation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Burns/Scalds	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dislocation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Head Injury	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sprain/Strain	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asphyxiation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Crushed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Electric Shock	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nausea	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unconscious	<input type="checkbox"/>
Back Injury	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chest Pains	<input type="checkbox"/>	Eye Injury	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poisoning	<input type="checkbox"/>	No Injury	<input type="checkbox"/>

Body part(circle as appropriate):

Ankle / Arm / Back / Ear / Elbow / Eye / Finger / Foot / Hand / Head / Hip / Knee / Leg / Neck / Shoulder / Trunk / wrist / Other

Severity of Injury? (circle as appropriate)

Minor injury / Major injury / Fatality / Taken to Hospital / Dangerous Occurrence / Other Incident

Has the Incident been Reported to the HSE? Yes / No

Did the Person? (tick relevant boxes):

Go to Hospital

Go home

Receive First Aid

Go for treatment elsewhere

Remain at work/school

None of above

If yes who administered First Aid?

What treatment was given.....

If referred to Hospital by what means(circle as appropriate):

Ambulance / Member of staff's car / Made own way / Taxi / Other

Time off Work (Employees Only):

Number of days off work were:

Details of the Person Involved:

Forename & Surname.....Address.....

.....Town.....Post Code..... Tel No

Gender: Male / Female

Age:

If a minor has the parent/guardian been informed Yes/No.

Was there any property damage? Yes / No

Description of item damaged:

How did the damage occur?

Have repairs been carried out Yes/No Have repairs been ordered Yes/No By whom.....

If no why not

Were there any witnesses? Yes / No

Name:

Name:

Address:
.....
..... Tel No:

Address:
.....
..... Tel No:

Remedial action taken by Headteacher / Manager to prevent reoccurrence?

Manager Please Print Name:.....

**BRACKNELL FOREST BOROUGH COUNCIL'S
FLEXIBLE/AGILE WORKING POLICY
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BRACKNELL FOREST BOROUGH COUNCIL'S FLEXIBLE/AGILE WORKING POLICY

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council has approved the implementation of agile and flexible working in its town centre offices, and agile working is now the norm. The key principles behind this, described further within this document, are:
- Work is about what you do, not where you are. Regardless of where the individual is working, they should be available to communicate and collaborate in person as required, during their working hours
 - Maintaining a clear desk policy to facilitate sharing workstations
 - Making best use of technology to ensure agile working is embraced fully, while maintaining the best level of service.
 - When meeting rooms are booked, they should be occupied within 10 minutes of the meeting start time, or the room will be released for someone else's use.
- 1.2 This document provides a framework for flexible working and covers the issues which need to be considered. You should use this document as a checklist of issues you need to consider. The particular circumstances and nature of work in a section will affect the specific way in which flexible working is applied.
- 1.3 For some employees whose work frequently takes them out of an office environment to make site visits, they can be enabled to do their office-based work flexibly, at home or at the Council Offices or at another work location. For other employees, some of their work tasks may lend themselves to being done at home or at another location, whilst others would require them to be at the office. Times of work, as well as locations, can also be key features of flexible working across a range of working styles – and each work location or function will present different opportunities and limitations compared to working traditional hours, according to the needs of the service.

2 WORKSTYLE DEFINITIONS

The following work styles will be referred to throughout this document:

Workstyle	Description
1 FIXED	This is primarily a desk bound role that requires the user to be in the office location for most of their working hours
2 HOMEFLEX	This is also a primarily deskbound role but it could equally be done for part of the week from home. For a 5:3 desk ratio this amounts to 40% of time away from a desk in the office – this may be working at home or another location or attending meetings or other activities away from a desk.
3 FREE	Roles which involve working in the field/attending meetings at workbase and other offices and/or working in other locations, eg schools, doctors surgeries <i>and</i> could in part be done at home or another location for a proportion of the working week For a 5:3 desk ratio this amounts to 40% away from the desk.

Relatively few staff would work exclusively at home.

When it has been agreed that a particular location will operate agile and flexible working, it is the responsibility of senior managers to assign one of the above workstyles for each of the roles within their area. Part time workers may fall into any workstyle. The manager concerned is ultimately responsible for agreeing flexible work patterns which will be mutually beneficial and cost-effective. There is no absolute right for an employee to adopt any of the work styles.

Jobs will be assessed by senior managers for the potential for flexible working where flexible working is first introduced to a work area; or when the job changes significantly enough to warrant a change in work style; or when a new post is created. The work styles will be recorded in the HR system, and any subsequent changes must therefore be notified to HR. There is a form which the manager should complete and submit to their Director for approval if they wish to change a workstyle, on the Flexible Working intranet page.

When a workplace adopts flexible working for the first time, the senior managers in the department will liaise with ICT. They can give practical advice on appropriate ICT equipment.

Please note it is the Council's policy to avoid duplication in issuing equipment. Only in exceptional circumstances would a member of staff have for example both a laptop and a fixed pc, or a mobile phone and a softphone; this would need to be agreed by the relevant Chief Officer and the Chief Officer: ICT. Similarly, where 3G connectivity is required, only one device will be 3G enabled.

3 SCOPE

This document applies to all those non-school based employees whose work location supports flexible working. Working at home will not be permitted in the following cases:

Employees being supported under the Performance Improvement/Capability Procedure, or employees for whom temporary close supervision is necessary to obtain data on work outputs, may be withdrawn from flexible working.

Employees subject to a formal Disciplinary warning for breaches of this procedure or other relevant misconduct may be withdrawn from flexible working.

Agency workers or work experience students not employed by the Council.

4 FLEXIBILITY OF LOCATION

4.1 Contractual Place of Work

For those who work either occasionally or regularly (but not exclusively) at home, their official principal place of work should remain a specific office location (eg Time Square). Their contract of employment would indicate that they may be required or permitted to work at any location within the Borough, following appropriate consultation, but it would still specify a principal work location. Employees are required to attend the principal work location regularly, at times and for purposes

agreed with their line manager. Only in an exceptional case where the employee is contractually required to work exclusively at their home will the place of work be shown as the home on the contract of employment.

For new employees, flexible working will be a contractual requirement unless the job is assessed as fixed. However, the ability to work at home should not affect the recruitment decision as other work locations could be used. The recruiting manager should assess and record any issues around the ability to work remotely or flexibly.

Employees who work flexibly will be expected to do so on a permanent basis or until operational requirements are redefined. It is not possible to allow employees to shuttle between “flexible”, “free” and “fixed” working. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where a manager may agree a change from “homeflex” back to fixed working and these would be assessed on a case by case basis and authorised at Director level. Where there are exceptional circumstances, the manager should record the working arrangements and requirements that apply in writing, and include a period after which the arrangements will be reviewed.

The facility to work from home is one based on the mutual consent of the employee and employer and must address the needs of the service; there is therefore no right to work at home.

At the beginning of a probationary period, a flexible employee may need to spend proportionally more time in the office to enable better training, induction, team-building and assistance; however, those who will be required to work flexibly should gradually be introduced to working away from the office so that, by the end of the probationary period, the manager can be confident of their ability to work under less direct supervision.

4.2 The Manager’s Role Where the Employee Regularly Works From Home

It is important to establish what measure of control the manager has on how much work is done at home and when. This is because the boundary between home life and work life can become blurred, and also because the manager must ensure the interests of the service are not prejudiced. The following principles apply:

- *Meetings/business visits* must not be held at the employee’s home.
- *The employer reserves the right to visit*, (for example to make a risk assessment), but reasonable notice will be given unless urgent access is necessary.
- The manager may *require the employee to work at the principal work location* in the interests of the service. This might be required for example if there was a need for closer supervision; if the task can be completed more efficiently using the resources at work; for cover in the office; for meetings; for a short period for a particular task or project or for operational reasons; or if the manager is not convinced that the home working environment is safe. The employee must always attend the office where the team is based when required. The employee may also be required to attend meetings, training, seminars etc at any appropriate location.
- *The manager may not insist that the home is used as a workplace* if the employee is unwilling to do so. If the interests of the service are not adversely affected by the employee working at home, *the manager should not unreasonably refuse home working for a proportion of the normal working hours.*

- The employee should not keep *files or information at home* beyond what is needed for the immediate tasks being worked on. Departments may wish to agree a booking out system for resources to be used at home or in other office locations, and some items may be designated as never to be removed from the office.
- The manager must ensure that staff have *appropriate training in Information Security* and should periodically check that standards are being adhered to. E learning packages are available.
- Working flexibly at home must not be seen as a substitute for other *childcare/dependent care arrangements*, and employees working from home should not do so whilst in sole charge of children or other dependents requiring care and supervision unless as an agreed “time out”.
- *On-line information* should be used where possible and files containing sensitive personal information should not be removed from Council premises. Always save sensitive information onto the Council network, do not save it on non-council computers. Connection of personal printers will only be done in exceptional circumstances and with a business case approved by the relevant Chief Officer. Restricted information may not be printed at home. Letterheaded paper should not be stored at home. Employees should not use personal email accounts for work purposes as these are not secure.
- Printed materials which are taken home must be kept securely when not in use, and returned to the office or disposed of confidentially when no longer required for a current task.
- If a memory stick is used it must be supplied by the employer and encrypted; however saving to the network will almost always be the preferred option, as memory sticks can be lost or stolen.
- Managers should agree *core times* at which employees should be contactable while working at home. They will be required to take a minimum of half an hour lunch break (unless only working half a day). The line manager may agree reasonable “time out” in core hours (eg to take the children to an after school activity or to attend an appointment) but these “time outs” should be agreed in advance and clearly indicated on the Outlook calendar as non-contact time. All hours worked should be recorded. The Council’s open calendar policy means that the Outlook Calendar should indicate availability clearly.
- When the employee is working they must be directly contactable. If they are temporarily unavailable (eg in a meeting or on a training course) there must be an appropriate way for voice messages to be left with another employee or on a voicemail, and these messages should be regularly passed on or checked.
- Proposed patterns of work must be discussed with the manager, as the manager is responsible for ensuring there is adequate cover whether in the office or from home. These patterns of work should, however, be flexible – for example on a day when the individual had planned to work at home, they may need to change their plans if needed for a meeting, for example.
- Managers should have a *clear expectation of the output expected* of an employee working from home and should monitor whether this level of output is being achieved. Normal performance management standards apply, and the Performance Improvement/Capability Procedure should be used if performance is not acceptable. The Disciplinary Procedure should be used to address misconduct issues. Remote working may be suspended to allow closer monitoring of work in these circumstances, with advice from HR.

- Employees may be required to come in eg for meetings in the office, even when they had planned to work from home. However please note that guidance on using the Conference calling facility can be found at <https://bfcouncil.sharepoint.com/SitePages/Conference-calls.aspx>: conference calling may on occasions be an acceptable alternative to physical attendance, as agreed with the manager or meeting organiser.
- Managers should arrange for any Home-flex or Free employees who work away from the office extensively to attend the office at least once per month, to ensure that they remain familiar with corporate systems and with the people they deal with at the office. Time should be devoted to regular communications, supervisions/one to ones, and team meetings, team building and team activities. Induction for new employees should include them meeting and building working relationships with team members including those who work outside the normal office location. It is also necessary to connect the council laptop to the corporate network to ensure policies, anti-virus software and software patches are kept up to date. This also should be done at least monthly.
- Home-flex and Free workers should have *maturity, trustworthiness, self-sufficiency, self discipline, good time management skills and good communication skills.*

Departmental managers are responsible for authorising the appropriate equipment for workstyles required in consultation with ICT. ICT will order and install it. The manager must ensure the ICT equipment represents a cost effective and appropriate solution for the specific work circumstances.

4.3 Flexibility of working hours – agree the boundaries

Working flexibly may mean increased flexibility in the hours worked - if they are not restricted by the opening hours of the office. However the options available must take account of the needs of the service and the availability of other colleagues, and the parameters must be agreed with the manager. The employee and manager should also consider the times when other services – such as ICT support – will be available (normally 8.00am – 5.30pm Monday to Friday, excluding Bank Holidays).

Employees should be contactable whilst working, so most working time should be at times when suppliers, managers and colleagues are also likely to be working and when customers will have an expectation of contacting a council officer. When working at home, employees should use their softphones and should log in to email and to Jabber (which will indicate their availability).

Managers will need to consider carefully what the requirements of the service are in terms of when employees need to be available to work and/or be contacted. The manager needs to be satisfied that the service will not be adversely affected by varying the hours of work; in some cases there may be a direct benefit to the service. The wishes of the individual, the team and the needs of the Council must be balanced. The Outlook Calendar must clearly indicate the availability of the employee; this will be reflected in Jabber.

4.4 Working from home

The individual should receive no increase in their basic pay in respect of working flexibly or working from a home location. Flexible working is about where, how and when we work, not about changing the work we do; there is no incentive payment to participate and no change to the rate of pay for the job, as the job remains the same wherever and whenever it is done.

Employees should be flexible about where and when they work to meet the needs of the service; a plan to work from home on a particular day should not rule an employee out from meeting work requirements. Employees should avoid letting regular patterns of home working (eg working at home every Monday) interfere with the best interests of the service.

- Phones. Employees should only use Council provided equipment – including softphones or smartphones.
- The employee will usually need to have a broadband connection in order to work from home; the majority of employees will already have a connection. If the employee does not have a broadband connection they will need to work from the offices.
- Subsistence allowances. The normal expenses rules will apply, but employees should note that subsistence allowances will not be paid for people working from home or at their principal place of work.
- Home to work journeys. If the home is not the principal/contractual place of work, journeys to that principal place of work will still be regarded as normal home to work travel and will not be claimable. Employees do not have to come into the office before an appointment elsewhere in order to claim mileage. See Expenses Policy for Employees for details.
- Home Workers. The relatively rare case of an employee contractually required to operate exclusively from home would differ in that their home would be recognised as their normal place of work. In this case, travel expenses from home may be payable if the individual is required to visit the offices; the circumstances of individual cases will be taken into account.

4.5 Working in an agile workplace

- A “fixed” worker will usually have a laptop and softphone to allow them to work from different desks in the office. In some exceptional cases where specialist equipment is required or where there are specific requirements under the Equalities Act as a reasonable adaptation to a disability, there may be a fixed desk, but this also can be used by others when free.
- A home flex or free employee will be supplied with appropriate mobile equipment (eg a laptop or tablet.)
- Staff will be expected to find a vacant workstation in the office. A team will usually have a team zone and in most cases the employee will work there, with colleagues. However any desk with a docking station can be used by an employee on occasions, if there are no operational reasons against this. Occasionally business needs will dictate working alongside colleagues in a different team zone.

Some standing and touch down desks will also be available. For those few employees with fixed PCs, a laptop loan service will be available for occasional use such as presentations etc.

ICT's Remote Access Policy should be consulted, particularly in respect of the security issues arising from working at home or remotely. ICT have a programme of work related to cyber security which includes home or remote working as this will be done on BFC ICT equipment. Further details of this are available on the intranet but some basic ways to minimise risks are –

- recognise that you may be an attractive target to hackers (do not think it will not happen to you)
- practice good password management (use a strong mix of characters and do not share your password)

- never leave your device unattended (including flash drive or external storage)
- always be careful when clicking on attachments in an email (if it's unexpected or suspicious for any reason, DO NOT click on it)
- be careful of what you are sharing on social networks.

Telephones. Telephone provision will be by issue of a soft phone, or mobile phone or smart phone. When working away from the office, either a softphone should be used or the office phone number should be diverted to the mobile phone. Under no circumstances should individuals give out their personal home phone number, personal mobile or home address for business use.

Teams and Jabber. Teams is used for online meetings, chat, calls and other collaboration within the council. Phone calls can also be placed using Jabber. Staff should ensure that their status on Teams and Jabber is kept up to date to allow enable effective collaboration.

Private email address. Use of private email addresses such as gmail or hotmail for work purposes is not allowed, as there are security implications. ICT arrange full remote access to Outlook and other systems. Personal data sent from home must be sent either via PSN or Secure emails.

Post. Sending and receiving Council post from a non-Council location is not permitted. (It may be scanned at the workplace and sent to you via email, to your Council email address.) There will usually be at least one "fixed" person in each team to handle distribution of physical post when required. Employees should use electronic means of distributing documents wherever possible, to reduce the volume of hard copies circulating within the organisation and outside.

Working area. The area in which the individual works at home must be conducive to work, sufficiently secure and safe, but need not be a specific office set-up. (See "Health and Safety" below.) The requirement to lock the screen when away from the desk still applies when working at home.

4.6 Equipment

Ownership. The equipment issued remains the property of the Council and will be withdrawn if its provision is no longer justified. ICT maintains an inventory of ICT equipment issued.

Personal use. ICT equipment issued is primarily for business purposes. Some minor incidental personal use is permitted (eg use of the internet during lunchtimes) but personal documents and images should not be stored on a council device. ICT equipment should not be used by friends or members of the family.

4G / 3G. Where wifi is available this should be used in preference to a 4G / 3G connection, as 4G / 3G connections are more expensive. In the exceptional circumstance where a Council device is taken overseas (with permission), the 4G / 3G data roaming should be disabled.

Be aware of your surroundings. If you are working in a public place, please ensure others cannot read your screen or overhear your phone calls. Further information about Cyber Security can be found on the intranet.

Passwords. Employees working remotely should ensure passwords are changed in a timely manner when a prompt is received and not allowed to expire. Once the

password expires, it can only be reset at an office location. For details, see the Council's password policy at

<https://bracknellforest.itpolicysystem.com/topicindex.html#P>

4.7 Flexible Workstations (shared desks)

Workstations are for any member of staff to work at and are not allocated to a particular person. Employees in an area which fully supports flexible working (eg Time Square) will no longer have a designated desk space. The provision of flexible workstations, which can be used by any of several employees, requires provision of individual locker spaces for storage of personal belongings and work in progress. Storage which others can access, such as bookcases or cupboards, should not be used for sensitive information or for valuables. Valuable items which have to be kept in the office should be in personal locker space; sensitive information should be kept in locked storage which is only accessible by those with a need to access the information.

If leaving a workstation for a short period, the screen should be locked. When the employee expects to be away from a particular desk for at least 90 minutes, they should clear the desk so it can be used by other staff and then when returning to a desk, use one which is free. Desks are not bookable. Leaving personal items such as photographs at a desk, or leaving a laptop, in-tray or other work materials on the desk for extended periods when it is not occupied, may imply it belongs to or is reserved for a particular employee, so this is not permitted.

Even if the individual employee has to revert to office-based working for a long period, they will not usually be given a desk which is exclusively theirs.

If a specialised chair is required, the individual should mark it clearly with a sign asking others not to adjust it; however, the chair can be used by others or moved to another desk to enable flexible use of the workstation.

Files and other paper resources should be held centrally accessible and appropriately stored.

All employees should respect fellow workers in the workplace: be aware of noise levels; seek a separate space for meetings; leave desks clean and clear for the next user, and free of any personal belongings that might be seen as "claiming" or personalising a desk space.

5 HEALTH AND SAFETY

5.1 Health and Safety: risk assessments for working at home

Employees working at home should refer to Health and Safety guidance (<https://bfcouncil.sharepoint.com/SitePages/Flexible-working.aspx>). The employee will be asked to fill in a self-assessment form and return it to the manager, who will use it to assess any risks and the measures necessary to control them. If issues are identified arising from this, a home visit may be necessary for the manager to complete a full risk assessment on site; the employee and manager should co-operate to ensure a safe and healthy working space at the employee's home. If the manager feels the working area is not satisfactory then he or she may require the employee to work from the principal office location until the home area is satisfactory. It should be noted that laptops are not intended for protracted use if they are not used seated at a table. If specialised equipment is required (eg special chair, a special

screen), consult HR for advice on a case by case basis; it may be that a return to fixed working is indicated, especially if special equipment would otherwise be required at multiple locations.

5.2 Health and Safety: risk assessments for Free employees

Free workers may be particularly likely to have lone working issues to address, as well as considerations of where and how they may be using any mobile devices. A risk assessment should consider steps to reduce the risks of theft of devices, the working environment in which devices are used (eg in a car) and most importantly reduction of the risks of lone working. See the Lone Working Policy for further information.

5.3 Health and Safety: accident reporting

An accident which occurs whilst working must be reported in the normal way, irrespective of where the accident occurs (at work, at home, at another location).

6 WORKING TIME REGULATIONS

In addition to meeting the requirements of the service, employees are asked to work within the requirements of the Working Time Regulations. Managers must be satisfied that the rules are understood and are being complied with.

The main points to be aware of are:

maximum weekly working time is not to exceed 48 hours per 7 day period when averaged out over a 17 week period (though an individual may opt out of this feature in writing).

rest breaks during the working day – the Regulations require a rest break of at least 20 minutes when an adult worker works for more than 6 hours per day, but the Council's policy is to require a minimum break of 30 minutes for every five hours worked.

length of daily rest (eg overnight) – daily rest of 11 hours per 24 hours for adults

length of the weekly rest (eg weekend) – usually 24 hours rest in each 7 day period (doesn't include the rest period from the previous day!)

An individual should not work in a pattern that denies them the right breaks. However, there are some flexibilities: consult HR for advice.

7 FLEXIBLE HOURS PATTERNS

Common forms of flexibility on hours include:

- *Flexitime*. This system already allows considerable flexibility; some creative use of the system's flexibility in agreement between the manager and the employee could give freedom to meet both work and personal requirements. (For example, where a great deal of flexibility is a regular feature of working patterns, the manager and employee may make a separate individual arrangement about cut-off dates, but excessive accumulation of flexi credit or debit must be carefully monitored and controlled.) Working outside the span times of 7.30am to 7.30pm should only be by prior arrangement with a manager and should be on an exceptional basis. The needs of the service should always be considered and the expectation will be that working will usually be within the rules of the Flexitime Scheme.

- *Time off in lieu.* If agreed in advance, this can be a form of flexibility. It is preferable for the manager to agree parameters in advance to avoid large positive or negative balances of time building up.
- *Average hours.* The employee and manager can agree to work contractual hours as an average over a number of weeks.
- *Fewer days.* Working the hours over a larger or smaller number of days on some weeks.
- *Annual hours.* This is less commonly used, as it affects those with distinct and predictable seasonal peaks in workload.

There are other forms of non-standard hours that are not necessarily flexible – for example a fixed arrangement to work part time, or term-time only. *Managers and employees should be wary of making regular arrangements for times and places of work that gradually become more fixed and inflexible than the arrangements they replace.*

8 PREMIUM PAYMENTS AND FLEXIBLE HOURS

Premium Payments should only be applied when the employee is required to work at a time that attracts premium payments. If the individual chooses to work at those times for his or her own convenience, normal payments only will be made. Similarly if the individual works additional hours on a given week as part of a time off in lieu or averaged hours arrangement, overtime payments will not apply.

9 SICKNESS AND ANNUAL LEAVE

Employees unable to work due to sickness must inform the manager in accordance with normal procedure, regardless of the location worked from. Employees are not under an obligation to perform any work related tasks while sick at home.

When agreeing the parameters for flexible working, the manager must clearly indicate how annual leave and sickness absence will be dealt with in cases where the individual is varying the number or length of days worked. The Council will credit any day of annual leave or sickness absence as being of a standard length if there was no pattern previously agreed to cover the days in question – any variation of this will need to be justified.

10 MORTGAGES AND INSURANCE

Individuals working at home must advise their Mortgage Providers and Home Insurance Companies in writing that they will occasionally work at home, and that the Council arranges third party public and private liability insurance (sample letter available in Useful Documents). This is highly unlikely to affect payments/premiums but if the company is not informed it may invalidate your policy or mortgage agreement.

ICT equipment issued is insured on the Council's policy and the Council will normally bear the cost if lost or damaged, provided the employee can show reasonable care has been taken. If reasonable care is not taken then the Council may initiate a Disciplinary Investigation and may take disciplinary action. The Council's insurance will not cover us if the laptop or other mobile device is left visible and unattended in a car. If the employee has to take the device with them as they travel, they should either take it with them when they leave the car or lock it out of sight in the boot.

Loss of, or damage to, equipment must be reported promptly both to the manager and to the ICT Helpdesk; the ICT Helpdesk will contact the Information Security Officer. If the equipment is stolen it should be reported to the police and a crime number obtained and reported to ICT Helpdesk.

11 REVIEW AND REVISION OF ARRANGEMENTS

Often reactions to our working environment can fundamentally affect how we regard our work, and the way we regard work can change over time. Agile working has a strong impact on the culture of the organisation and the performance and job satisfaction of individuals. It is particularly important that working arrangements are kept under regular review, discussed and revised as necessary, to ensure that the individual, the manager and the service all continue to derive benefit from the working arrangements.

GUIDANCE TO SUPPORT INTRODUCTION OF FLEXIBLE/AGILE WORKING

The following are elements to consider when determining work styles and how far service delivery can be maintained through changes of work location, work methods and working time:

1 Re-examine minimum office cover

Each section may already have formal or informal arrangements about the minimum number of people that must be in the office at any given time or on any given day, partly to provide “cover” for incoming calls and impromptu visits from internal and external customers. These should be periodically reviewed for flexible/agile working purposes.

2 Re-examine working times

Is it realistic to encourage use of the whole opening hours of your office building as potential working time – will this mean that staffing is spread too thinly over the peak period? It is important to ensure that service delivery at peak times will not deteriorate due to high numbers of staff choosing to work at off-peak times.

- What are the operating hours for support services necessary to get work done (e.g. ICT Helpdesk)
- What do the general public/internal customers expect as hours they can visit/phone/receive a service, and can you influence this? (are there published standards?)
- Are there any tasks which can only logically be done in certain places or at certain times?

3 Nature of the work – re-engineering the processes

It often takes more than one person to complete a piece of work – either because others have to be consulted, or because a number of successive people handle different phases of a piece of work. Managers should avoid “bottlenecks” in the process where only one key worker can deal with their part of a process and therefore their absence, or their preferred working times, builds a delay into the process. Use of electronic signatures wherever possible should reduce the dependence on people being available to physically sign off items.

Flexibility is important but the key driver remains for Council services to be delivered effectively. Flexible/agile employment practices support and complement this if used sensibly and imaginatively, but the manager must never lose sight of how service delivery is affected. Agile working can enable service to be delivered more effectively in the field and reduce the time taken for processes. The primary objective will always be to get the job done, and some re-engineering may need to be done to adapt the process to being done at a variety of locations and times.

4 Manager Development to Support Flexible/agile Working

Adopting flexible/agile working affects the culture of the organisation or section and the ways of managing work. Additional development may be required.

The Organisational Development team can give advice on development available in a range of areas, including:

- Work planning and project management skills
- Performance measurement and management
- Communications Team building and coaching
- Time management
- General health and safety issues, including lone working
- Using IT and remote working tools effectively
- Information Security
- Data Protection
- Agile working

More information is available on employee self service, and in the e-Learning zone.

5 Working with employees when introducing agile working to a workplace

Achieving a smooth implementation involves careful planning and good communication. Guidance must be sought at an early stage from HR and ICT to help plan the process.

- The Director and the senior managers in a Department will need to define the work style of posts, especially any fixed office workers who will need to be excluded from some facets of Flexible/agile Working, and they should also consider how agile working contributes to what the service should and might potentially provide.
- Early consultation with ICT Services is essential to plan for access to systems and appropriate provision of equipment.
- The communication process with staff is key. Meetings should be held with groups of staff to explain the mutual advantages of Flexible/Agile Working, and to make clear any restrictions which may need to be placed on the numbers who can participate or on their degree of flexibility in order to maintain an efficient service. Fixed Office Workers must still be involved in these meetings, as any changes to the working environment of their colleagues will affect them as well. A series of such group meetings should be planned as implementation continues, as employees will need to be consulted and informed about potential changes at every stage of the process.
- Individual employees should be given the ability to approach managers (over a specified period, and in private) to discuss how Flexible/Agile Working might be applied in their case. It should be stressed that it may not be possible to accommodate the wishes of every employee. The needs of the whole section must be considered before agreeing to individual arrangements.
- Managers should ensure that workers who work at home complete a self-assessment form about the Health and Safety aspects of their working environment. Employees whose working hours are to be variable should be made aware of how, for example, days of annual leave or sickness absence are to be treated. Changes to hours worked may have an effect on pro rata pay or annual leave. An assessment should be made of any development needs arising out of the new working practices.

- The manager and individual may agree to have a trial period on any significant changes to hours or working patterns before any change is made on a permanent basis. However, it is recommended that the manager records in writing the expectations of both parties about the trial period and what special arrangements will be in place.
- Managers should continue to meet with individuals and groups at intervals to assess, support and review the working arrangements and their impact on service provision and effective working through appraisals, one to ones and team meetings.
- Formal review should also take place when:

The employee moves to a new job role

The employee moves home

The work area is reorganised and jobs change – the work styles may need to be redefined.

The manager is responsible for reclaiming equipment when the employee leaves.

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Appendix 8

Flexitime scheme Guidance

Flexitime is available to most staff who are on Bracknell grades, who do not work a shift rota or set hours. Your statement of terms and conditions of employment will tell you if you are entitled to work under the flexitime scheme.

How it works

A normal working week under the flexitime scheme is 37 hours.

A standard time of 7 hours 24 minutes per working day has been agreed.

A flexible day is between 7:30am to 7:30pm. You may work outside this time with prior approval from your director.

Full time employees must work a minimum of 4 hours in one day.

Part time employees who normally work less than 6 hours per day, but work at least 4 hours per day, should regard their minimum day as 3 hours. If they work less than 4 hours, the minimum day is 2 hours.

Part time employees who work 6 hours and over use the 4-hour minimum.

Lunchtime

Lunchtime can be taken at any time provided that there is cover within the section, but an employee may not work any longer than 5 hours continuously without at least a 30 minute break.

Late start and early finish

If an employee wishes to arrive at work after 10am or leave before 3pm they must request permission from the manager in advance. This is to make sure operational requirements are met.

Sections are advised to make sure all members of staff are aware of such arrangements, for example by using a whiteboard to indicate the late start or early finish.

Homeworking and flexitime

Any arrangements for homeworking count as part of the day's hours in the flexitime scheme.

An employee can, by arrangement with their manager, leave work early and take work home to complete or work from home without coming into work. This work may be done outside the normal span time of 7:30am to 7:30pm.

Cover time

Cover time is for any department or section that has direct contact with the public. Adequate cover must always be provided between 8:30am to 5pm to maintain current service levels.

Settlement periods

The hours worked each week may vary but by the end of the 3 month settlement periods (ending June, September, December and March) no-one should be more than 10 hours in credit or 5 hours in debit.

Up to 10 hours credit and 5 hours debit may be carried over to the following quarter.

More than 10 hours credit or 5 hours debit may only be carried over by agreement with the department head in exceptional cases. Where such an additional carry over is agreed, the debit and credit times must be returned to the normal limits by the end of the following quarter.

Recording hours of work

All employees must record their times of arrival and departure.

No member of staff will sign the register for anyone but themselves. All entries are to be made at the time of arrival and departure.

Any member of staff who travels directly to a site or meeting from home, will be permitted to enter on the register for that day, the time when they left home as their start time. If travelling directly home from a site or meeting they will enter the time they left the site as their finishing time.

If an employee attends a conference or seminar with permission, then the hours of attendance each day must be agreed with the manager beforehand for recording purposes.

Recording absence

In all cases, the reason for absence must be noted against the relevant day on the register. A day's leave or sickness will be recorded as 7 hours 24 minutes. Half a day will count as 3 hours 42 minutes.

Credit hours will not be given for medical, dental and hospital appointments. However, in accordance with the national conditions, credit time will still apply to antenatal appointments and cancer screening.

Leavers

An employee who works flexible hours may do so even whilst serving out their notice, although the council is entitled to expect all contractual working hours to have been completed on termination.

Whilst the initiative in determining hours will be left to the employee, the final salary payment will be adjusted if all debit time has not been made up. Any additional hours owed will not be paid and must be taken.

Problems with flexitime

The success of the scheme hinges on trust and any member of staff who abuses the scheme will be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.

Similarly, any member of staff who believes they are not being fairly treated under the scheme may follow the grievance procedure if they so wish.

Your right to ask for flexible working

Eligible employees also have the right to ask for a change in their working hours or working arrangements. Any requests must be given careful and timely consideration by managers.

Further details are available in the employee's right to ask for flexible working.

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**BRACKNELL FOREST COUNCIL'S
LONE WORKING POLICY**

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BRACKNELL FOREST COUNCIL'S LONE WORKING POLICY FRAMEWORK CODE OF PRACTICE

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

The aim of this policy is to outline the Council's responsibilities towards staff working alone by:

- Defining what "lone working" is
- Taking action to reduce risk to lone workers
- Ensuring that all employees are aware of their responsibility to use Council systems introduced to assist lone workers.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Bracknell Forest Council employees, including temporary workers and individuals undertaking casual work.

Detailed guidelines and working practices consistent with this framework may exist within departments particularly where lone working is common, and these should also be followed. In addition, this policy should be read in conjunction with guidance from the Health and Safety Advisers Provided in the following link:

<https://schools.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/lone-working.pdf>

DEFINITION

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) defines lone workers as those "who work by themselves without close or direct supervision". They may include:

People working separately from others in a building

People who work outside "normal" hours

People who work away from their fixed base without colleagues, e.g. visiting people in their homes

People who work at home

The definition can cover employees in situations with varying degrees and types of risk. It is important to identify the hazards of the work and assess the risks involved before applying appropriate measures. This policy will refer to high risk and low risk activities.

Some employees may spend most of their working lives working with others, but find themselves working alone occasionally, for example, when working late. Others will work alone on a daily basis. This policy will refer to frequent lone workers and occasional lone workers.

POTENTIAL HAZARDS OF LONE WORKING

People who work alone will of course face the same risks in their work as others doing similar tasks. However, additionally they may encounter the following:

- Accidents or sudden illnesses may happen when there is no-one to summon help or first aid
- Violence or the threat of violence or abuse
- Fire
- Attempting tasks which cannot safely be done by one person alone, eg heavy lifting, or use of certain equipment
- Lack of safe way in or out of a building (e.g. danger of being accidentally locked in)

Steps can be taken to reduce the risks of all of these events.

The perception of these hazards or the actual risks may be different for different people. For example inexperienced workers may underestimate the risks of an activity; some workers may feel particularly vulnerable to violence away from the workplace or after dark; or a medical condition may make it unsafe for an individual to work alone.

The Manager must consider these factors when doing risk assessments. If there are lone workers within an area the manager must take appropriate steps to reduce the risk, particularly for frequent lone workers or lone workers engaged in high risk activities. They should consider:

- Does the workplace present any special risk to a lone worker?
- Can all the equipment, substances and goods used on the premises be safely handled by one person? Is any manual handling involved safe for a single person?
- Is there a risk of violence or the threat of violence? Is the nature of a visit or the person being visited likely to increase the risk? Will the employee be alone in a dark or remote location?

MEASURES TO REDUCE THE RISK OF LONE WORKING

Supervision

Lone workers are by definition not under constant supervision. However, supervisors can ensure, through the initial induction process, that the employees understand the risks associated with their work and the relevant safety precautions. They can put into place arrangements for the individual to contact a supervisor if they need additional guidance. Occasional site visits may be appropriate, particularly if there are high risk activities. Employees new to a job or undergoing training may need to be accompanied initially. Regular contact by phone may be appropriate. The manager should assess what level of supervision is required.

Reporting back

A system should be in place to ensure that a lone worker returns to their base or their home at the completion of a task away from the normal workplace. For high risk or frequent lone workers, the Manager may stipulate that the employee must use the Council's emergency system Forestcare to achieve this. The system involves lodging details of whereabouts and the expected duration of the visit so that if the

employee has not reported in or cancelled the call by the expected hour, a call will automatically be triggered to check the employee is safe. Training on the use of the system will be given where appropriate, and managers should ensure that employees use the system if instructed to do so. Further guidance on the system is available from Forestcare Control Centre: 01344 786599

For occasional lone workers or low risk lone workers, the use of the full Forestcare system may not be appropriate. In these cases, managers may wish to implement an alternative method of ensuring the lone worker returns safely from a lone visit away from the workplace. This may be as simple as telling a colleague where they are going and when they are expected back; arranging to ring the office at the conclusion of a visit or call; issuing a mobile phone to enable the office to contact the employee if the employee's return is overdue. Use of diary systems or noticeboards to indicate whereabouts will perhaps form part of this system. However, the system should ensure that the return of the worker or a call from them is actively expected and waited for, and that action is taken to contact them if they do not return or the call is not made. All employees involved share a responsibility to maintain such informal processes for safe lone working.

Managers should also consider the members of staff who meet with customers or clients on a one to one basis on council premises. Whilst they are not alone in the building, they may be alone with the client in a place where other colleagues cannot see them. Managers should consider systems for ensuring that they have emerged safely from such a meeting and systems for raising an alarm if necessary (eg panic alarms).

Forestcare operate a 'Lifeline' alarm system. The system is connected to the phone line and a red button can be worn around the wrist or placed out of sight under a desk etc. It will work anywhere in the building and by pushing the button it will ensure assistance is quickly provided. Further guidance on the system is available in the following link: <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/forestcare>

Accidents and emergencies

Lone workers should be capable of responding correctly to emergencies. This should include being made aware of special arrangements for out of hours incidents. First aid may be available from building officers, or it may be prudent for an individual frequently working away from the base to carry a basic first aid kit if there is a foreseeable risk of injury. It is also necessary for employee working alone in a building or part of a building to let the building security know they are there, so they can be accounted for in case of fire.

Tasks not suitable for lone working

Risk assessment will identify the hazards of work. When risk assessment shows that it is not possible for the work to be done safely by a lone worker, arrangements for providing help or back up should be put in place, or the work reassigned to another worker or done in hours when the worker is not alone. For example, a worker who arrives before other colleagues may be instructed not to attempt heavy manual lifting until other colleagues arrive to assist.

Violence at work

A separate detailed policy on violence at work details ways to identify the risks of violence and suggests methods to reduce the risk. The Alert system provides a

method of sharing information about properties where potentially dangerous situations have previously been noted, so that appropriate measures can be taken. Employees who undertake home visits must use this system to check addresses they are due to visit so they can take advice on how to reduce the risk (e.g. not visiting alone, meeting the person at another location). Employees must ensure that violent incidents are reported to ensure that the risk can be communicated to employees in other areas of the Council who may visit the same address for an unconnected reason. Full details of the Alert system are available in the following link: <https://bfcouncil.sharepoint.com/SitePages/Bracknell-Alert.aspx>

The risk of violence may not be directly related to a particular property. It may be associated with environmental issues like working alone outside after dark, or a situation may arise where there was no previous history of incidents. Employees likely to be lone workers in such situations should be trained in dealing with difficult people, in ways to recognise a risk and in behaviours which may reduce the risk (up to and including terminating the visit.) See also the Council's policy on Violence/Abuse at Work <https://bfcouncil.sharepoint.com/SitePages/Violence-at-work.aspx>

Guidance from the Corporate Health and Safety Advisers is also available in the following link: <https://schools.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/violence-at-work.pdf>

CONCLUSION

Establishing safe working for lone workers is no different from organising the safety of other employees, but the risk assessment must take account of any extra risk factors. Managers must ensure that they have not only introduced measures to reduce any risk but must also ensure that they have communicated their expectations to lone workers and trained them appropriately. All employees, including lone workers, are responsible for following safe systems of work and all employees can take simple steps to reduce the risks associated with their normal working life.

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Harmony Counselling



A Counselling Service for Employees at Bracknell Forest Borough Council

Why provide a Counselling Service?

There are times in all our lives when we are faced with problems and difficulties and sometimes we find it difficult to cope.

Counselling can provide a safe space in which you are able to talk through your concerns and help you find your own solutions.

Who are Harmony Counselling?

Harmony Counselling Service is a confidential, independent counselling service. The service is designed to help you as an individual deal with difficult or stressful situations which may impact on your personal or professional well being. The Harmony Counsellors are professionally trained and fully qualified under the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy.

Who does it cover?

It is open to permanent and temporary employees of the Council who are not Teachers. School based staff should check eligibility with Harmony Counselling or the Children, Young People & Learning HR team. You will be asked to provide your Council ID badge or recent payslip as proof.



Will Harmony help me only if I have a work problem?

The service is about helping you as an individual so counselling and guidance can be related to personal or work situations.

What will Harmony offer me?

This will depend on the level of need and what it is assessed would be the best response. You will receive one to one sessions with one of the counsellors. You will be eligible for up to 6 counselling sessions as needed, at times agreed with Harmony and within normal office hours.

Does my manager need to know?

You can contact Harmony direct (see below) so no-one else has to know if you don't want them to. Either way no information will be given to a manager unless you wish it to be.

Harmony's counsellors will discuss cases only with the professional body who "supervise" Harmony's caseload and provide professional expertise and advice. The "supervisors" are also required to maintain strict confidentiality and will not be in contact with the Council. Harmony lets BFC know how many people it is helping but does not identify them.

What if I've arranged a session and cannot attend?

If an appointment is cancelled with less than 48 hours notice, the appointment will count as one of your sessions. The same will apply if you do not attend an appointment.

How do I make contact?

Individual members of staff can contact staff support in two ways:

E-mail: bfb.harmony@btinternet.com

Or telephone: 01252 712281

There will be the "Call Minder" facility on this line with an answerphone message from Harmony Counselling Service which allows clients to leave a message. Both Counsellors can access these messages and will contact you within 24 hours to discuss your needs.



**(BFBC) EMPLOYER'S LIABILITY AND PUBLIC LIABILITY
INSURANCE COVER**

Helen Rogers – 01344 352094

Our ref: HR/Liability 2020

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

April 2020

**Bracknell Forest Borough Council Employees
Working from home – Liability Insurance Cover**

This letter confirms that the Council holds liability insurance cover in respect of approved homeworking by Council employees.

Insurers:

Risk Management Partners
The Wallbrook Building
25 Wallbrook
London
EC4N 8AW

Employers Liability Insurance:

Policy Y103689QBE0116A
Renewable 1 April 2021
Limit of Indemnity £50,000,000; any one event, in respect of legal liability arising against the Council in respect of injury to an employee.

Public and Products Liability Insurance:

Policy Y103689QBE0116A
Renewable 1 April 2021
Limit of Indemnity £50,000,000; any one event, in respect of legal liability to third parties arising from those employees actions or from fixtures and fittings installed by the Council for the purpose of working from home.

**Helen Rogers Dip CII
Insurance Manager**

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To: **Employment Committee**
10 February 2021

Reform of Local Government Exit Pay **Director of Resources**

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 With the Government's recent introduction of a cap on Public Sector exit payments, this report outlines the legislative changes already passed and the subsequent effect on discretionary compensation payments and Local Government Pension scheme regulations.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Employment Committee note the contents of the report which provides an update on national changes affecting severance entitlements for local government employees.
- 2.2 Endorses the view of the Corporate Management Team that any significant restructure proposals be temporarily put on hold in the current financial year to ensure that individual employees are not adversely affected by the current uncertainty around exit cap implications for LGPS employees.

3 Supporting Information

£95k cap on exit payments

- 3.1 Members will recall that the Exit Payment Cap (£95k cap) has been a topic of Government discussion since 2015. There was little movement on the details until they were reconsidered in 2019/2020, which led to changes being officially passed by parliament in October 2020, with new arrangements coming into law from 4 November 2020. The changes were passed with an element of speed leaving employers with a very short notice period for implementation.
- 3.2 The Exit Payment cap has introduced limits to the total exit package which is payable by Public Sector employers to £95,000. This is relevant to exit packages for Severance, Efficiency of Service and most Settlement agreements. It does not apply to Ill Health Retirement or Flexible Retirement.
- 3.3 The Cap applies to the total amount paid to the employee, including the pension strain cost (capitalised cost) and notice periods in excess of three months. It will not include the employer NI contributions.
- 3.4 The potential changes and challenges have been outlined in previous reports from Human Resources, however not all elements of the reforms have been implemented. Most notably, the initial proposals raised in 2015 included a requirement for high earners to repay exit payments, if they return to Public Sector employment within a defined period. There has been no indication to date if and when this will be implemented.

Subsequent impact

- 3.5 The original intention of the exit cap was to curtail perceived excessive severance arrangements for senior public sector workers, following some high profile instances around that time. Although the figure of £95,000 initially appeared to be relatively high, feedback to Government from many parts of the public sector including local government was that it could easily be reached by employees on average salaries with long service, since it included the capitalised costs of unreduced pension payments. It could therefore affect a much broader range of staff than the senior employees who were understood to be the target of the measure.
- 3.6 A specific challenge of the legislation coming into effect on 4 November 2020 is the conflict with the terms of the national Local Government Pension Scheme and statutory redundancy pay. There is also a potential impact at local level with the discretionary redundancy policy used by the Council.

National Impact – Local Government

- 3.7 Currently the Local Government Pension scheme regulations require that where an employee is over age 55 and is made redundant, their pension is automatically released (unreduced), with the employer liable for the capitalised cost. There are also statutory redundancy entitlements for employees. Should the sum of both entitlements be greater than £95,000, this causes a problem for the employer as well as affecting the employee and has resulted in the current position of having pension scheme rules that appear at odds with the Exit Cap regulations.
- 3.8 This conflict has been recognised by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) who have been consulting on further changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme to allow release of reduced pension, or for an employee to defer their pension. The consultation ended on 9 November 2020. The Director of Resources submitted a response on behalf of Bracknell Forest Council, following a discussion with the Chairman of Employment Committee, which is attached as Appendix B. This highlighted the challenges and potential impact of the proposed arrangements, which have also been raised by Solace, who have threatened the Government with legal action.
- 3.9 The Government's response to the consultation is awaited. If introduced, the proposals outlined by the MHCLG would introduce further limitations to restrict exit payments below £95,000. The proposals are extremely complex and the table below seeks to provide a simplified summary.

	Current position	Proposed position
Employees below 55 (not entitled to immediate payment of LGPS pension)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory redundancy pay • Discretionary payment (BFC enhancement = actual weeks' pay and 1.75 multiplier) <p>Will also have a deferred pension if in the pension scheme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory redundancy pay • Can be enhanced (discretionary payment) but limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Max of 3 weeks' pay per year of service (ours is not over this) b) 15 months' pay c) Max Salary of £80k to be used in calculation (limited to whichever is the lower of b and c) <p>Total is capped at £95k</p>
Employees 55 and over (entitled to immediate payment of unreduced LGPS pension)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory redundancy pay • Discretionary payment (BFC enhancement = actual weeks' pay) • Immediate payment of LGPS with no adjustment for early payment • Employer funds "strain" cost calculation, set locally by each LGPS fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard strain cost calculation across all LGPS funds. <p>Total cost is limited to the GREATER of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Strain cost (max £95k) OR b) Discretionary redundancy payment within the new limits above (max £95k)

3.10 The current situation is very unclear. There appear to be 3 options for a pension scheme member whether or not the £95k cap has been breached:

Strain cost is UNDER £95k	
Option 1	<p>Employee receives Statutory redundancy payment (SRP) and LGPS pension REDUCED based on SRP amount) or Employee gives up SRP in exchange for unreduced LGPS pension</p> <p>* Where the strain cost is less than the discretionary payment (rarely the case) the employer will be able to pay the strain cost and make a cash payment to the employee equal to the difference between the strain cost and discretionary payment.</p>
Option 2	<p>Employee receives SRP and discretionary payment based on new limits but defers LGPS therefore no immediate release of pension and no strain cost payable</p>
Option 3	<p>Employee receives SRP and discretionary payment based on new limits (as with option 2) but has immediate release of ACTUARIALLY REDUCED (full reduction) pension LGPS therefore no strain cost payable</p>

Strain cost is OVER £95k	
Option 1	Employee receives SRP plus immediate release of pension PARTIALLY reduced so that strain cost is £95K less SPR (so if SPR was £10k the pension would be reduced so that the strain cost was £85K) – BUT the employee can give up their SRP and use their own funds to lower some or all of the reductions.
Option 2	Employee receives SRP and discretionary payment based on new limits but defers LGPS therefore no immediate release of pension and no strain cost payable
Option 3	Employee receives SRP and discretionary payment based on new limits (as with option 2) but has immediate release of ACTUARIALLY REDUCED (full reduction) pension LGPS therefore no strain cost payable

- 3.11 The table in Appendix A shows the current percentage reductions for early release of pension.

A worked example:

Employee strain cost is £65k and their Statutory Redundancy Pay (SRP) is £30k. The total is £95k but the total the employer can pay out is £65k.

The member must choose to either take an unreduced pension with no SRP or a reduced pension with the SRP. The total that the employer can pay out is £65k so if the employee takes their SRP we need to reduce the strain cost of £65k to £35k and pay the £30k SRP to the employee. There remains the balance of a £30k strain cost that the employee cannot pay and so there is a reduction to the pension benefits actuarially calculated to the value of £30k.

More simply put:

Option 1 – Employee chooses unreduced pension with no SRP – employer pays £65k strain cost to the Pension Fund OR Employee chooses to take SRP of £30k. This is taken from the strain cost and the employer pays the Fund £35k as a strain cost. £35k is not sufficient to cover the loss in funding, the difference being £30k (£65k - £35k). The pension benefits are reduced by an equivalent actuarial value to the sum of £30k.

Option 2 – Employee chooses to defer pension and receive £35k redundancy payment

Option 3 – Employee receives SRP and discretionary payment but opts for actuarially reduced pension

- 3.12 In certain restricted circumstances, the employer can apply for a Waiver of the cap. However, this is tightly controlled and a lengthy process. Indications from the Local Government Association are that waivers will only very rarely be considered.

Local impact

- 3.13 A restriction on early release of pension will have a fundamental effect on the Council's severance policy, which is based around access to pension. It will therefore be necessary, once the proposed national policy changes are finally confirmed, to review the severance policy.
- 3.14 Currently the Bracknell Forest Council redundancy policy is as follows:
- Access to pension on redundancy (over age 55 and in the pension scheme) = Statutory redundancy pay using Actual weekly pay rather than the capped pay of £538
 - No access to pension (under 55 or not in the pension scheme) = 1.75 multiplier of the Statutory redundancy pay using Actual weekly pay rather than the capped pay of £538
- 3.15 The difference in the Council's redundancy calculation has been scrutinised in the past during organisational changes and has been justified by the Capitalised Cost being made to the pension scheme to release pension before normal retirement age, instead of an enhanced redundancy calculation. Where this is no longer being paid there is little justification for the two different redundancy calculations.
- 3.16 Whilst the redundancy policy does not stipulate that the distinction in redundancy calculations are based on unreduced pension and simply that there is access to pension, it could leave the Council open to challenge on grounds of age discrimination, especially should someone choose to defer their pension and not have it released – which is one of the proposed options.
- 3.17 In addition, as the current pieces of legislation are conflicting and could lead to a position which leads to financial risk for the employee or pension fund, the Berkshire Pension fund have made a policy decision to suspend all cases of unreduced pension entitlements. Instead, employees will be given the opportunity to:
- Defer their pension to normal retirement age
 - Receive a fully reduced pension
- 3.18 The lack of clarity and conflicting legislation means that the Council is currently unable to release any redundancy calculations, as these could be misleading to the employee. Although there are no new staff savings in the 2020/2021 budget proposals, there are in-year restructures in the People Directorate which could potentially be affected.
- 3.19 The Council has previously considered standardising redundancy calculations, with the potential to remove the 1.75 multiplier used for staff who do not have access to pension. It is now imperative that this is considered again once the national policy changes have been fixed. A further report will be brought to Employment Committee at that time, outlining costs and implications.

Impact on Teachers Pension scheme

- 3.20 The Teachers' pension scheme does not have the same regulatory processes as the Local Government Pension scheme, as pension is not released in the same way when an employee is made redundant. It is anticipated that the Department for Education (DfE) will be providing guidance for employers in scope of the

Compensation Regulations, in due course. This will need to be considered further and, where appropriate, a report submitted to the Education Employment Committee.

4 Consultation and Other Considerations

4.1 Legal Advice

The government introduced powers to cap exit payments in the public sector at £95,000 in the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 (as amended by the Enterprise Act 2016). This cap was brought into effect on 4 November 2020 by the Restrictions of Public Sector Exit Payment Regulations 2020 (“the Exit Cap Regulations”). The cap applies to the total amount payable when someone exits and so applies to the total of severance payments, any pension strain cost and notice payments in excess of three months.

As the £95,000 cap has come into force before corresponding amendments are made to the Local Government Pension Scheme, there is an uncertainty as to how this impacts on employees who are already in the process of exiting employment from local authorities. The MHCLG’s consultation on changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme rules required to accommodate the £95k cap was not concluded before the cap came into effect. This means that the Authority could be faced in, certain circumstances, with an obligation under the LGPS rules to make a pension strain payment which exceed £95,000 to an LGPS Fund to cover the cost of early retirement on redundancy, but, at the same time, local authorities are prevented by the Exit Pay Cap Regulations from making that payment. It means that from 4 November 2020 up to the enactment of the MHCLG further reform proposals there is a position of legal uncertainty due to the apparent discrepancy between the obligations on LGPS scheme employers under the Exit Cap Regulations to limit strain cost payments, and the requirement for administering authorities to pay unreduced pensions to qualifying scheme members under existing LGPS regulations. There is currently no guidance on this matter from the government, although this is awaited. Recommendation 2.2 seeks to mitigate this possibility.

4.2 Financial Advice

There are no direct implications at this time, since this report provides an update on proposed national changes to severance payments that have not yet been confirmed. If introduced, the changes will reduce severance payments which may save the Council some one-off moneys, but may well result in any organisational changes becoming more difficult to implement in the future.

4.3 Other Consultation Responses

None at this stage.

4.4 Equalities Impact Assessment

None at this stage.

4.5 Strategic Risk Management Issues

The national changes to Local Government Exit Pay arrangements can be expected to have a significant impact on the Organisational Change process for the Council.

Background Papers

- Appendix A – Early Retirement Actuarial Reductions matrix
- Appendix B – Exit pay reform MHCLG exit pay response from Bracknell Forest Council
- LGA Guidance [Reform of Local Government Exit Payments | Local Government Association](#)
- Berkshire Pension Fund Statement of Policy Concerning payment of Pensions where the £95K Exit cap is breached.

Contact for further information

Stuart McKellar: 01344 352180

Stuart.Mckellar@bracknell-forest.gov

Melissa Berry: 01344 352056

Melissa.berry@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Early Retirement Reductions

The actuarial percentage reductions from the age of 55 onwards are as follows:

Number of years early	Annual Pension	Lump Sum
0	0%	0%
1	5.1%	2.3%
2	9.9%	4.6%
3	14.3%	6.9%
4	18.4%	9.1%
5	22.2%	11.2%
6	25.7%	13.3%
7	29.0%	15.3%
8	32.1%	17.3%
9	35.0%	19.2%
10	37.7%	21.1%
11	41.6%	N/A
12	44.0%	N/A
13	46.3%	N/A

For example, if a male scheme member retired at age 60, a full 7 years before his Normal Retirement Age of 67, his annual pension would be reduced by 29% and his lump sum by 15.3%.

The above actuarial percentage reductions are set by the **Government Actuary's Department (GAD)**.

The current factors quoted in the above table are effective from **8 January 2019**.

Exit Pay Reform Consultation Response Bracknell Forest Council

Question 1

Are there any groups of Local Government employees what would be more adversely affected than others by our proposed action on employer funded early access to Pension?

If so, please provide data/evidence to back up your views

How would you mitigate the impact on these employees?

Response

Clearly the proposals impact all members of staff who come to be made redundant who are over 55 and in the LGPS as they will no longer be eligible for an unreduced pension and redundancy payment. More specifically:

- 1) The proposals to change employer funded early access to pension will adversely affect those on low incomes who are relying on their unreduced pension if they are made redundant. If their pension is reduced it may force them to investigate other sources of benefit from the Government. This is especially likely if they can no longer receive an unreduced pension **and** redundancy payment together and are required to choose between then.
- 2) As the reduction to pension is calculated on a graduated basis, those people who are aged 55 will be more adversely affected than those nearer normal retirement age, eg 65/66, as their pension will potentially be reduced by 46% and have a larger strain cost, whereas those who are aged 65/66 may only have a 5% reduction and smaller strain cost. (table of actuarial reductions can be found at <https://www.berkshirerpensions.org.uk/bpf/members/active-members/retirement/bpf/retirement/early-retirement>)
- 3) Those employees with longer Local Government service are likely be more adversely affected as their pensions are traditionally larger (based on length of service) and therefore the strain cost will be higher.

More specifically, the proposals would lead to local government staff in the LGPS receiving differential and significantly less favourable settlements in redundancy situations that other local government staff in different pension schemes, e.g. Health (public health and other staff) and teachers. Such differential treatment for different groups of staff employed by the same organisation, solely due to the different funding arrangements for their pensions schemes over which they have absolutely no choice over, would be inexplicable and unjust.

Question 2

What is the most appropriate mechanism or index when considering how the maximum salary might be reviewed on an annual basis?

Response

We would firstly contend that it is inequitable that the proposed maximum salary has

remained unchanged since the exit cap proposals were first announced in 2015. The starting point should be increased to reflect pay increases since that point, equating to around £88,000.

Although the Local Government pension scheme uses CPI each year as their percentage increase, it would be more appropriate to review the capped salary in line with Local Government pay award to ensure salary data is being reviewed consistently. CPI 12-month inflation rate was 0.2% in August 2020 whereas the national pay award was 2.75%. It is recognised that not all Local Authorities utilise the NJC / JNC Chief Officer pay scales, however it would seem appropriate to base any increase on the “maximum salary” proportionate to the national salary increase and pay data.

It would be useful to understand whether the proposed maximum salary is intended to include any additional payments such as London Weighting. With salaries being traditionally higher in the south of England, to reflect the additional cost of living in and around London, a fixed blanket approach would be more generous to staff working in local government in other regions.

Question 3

Are there any groups of local government employees that would be more adversely affected than others by our proposed ceiling of 15 months or 66 weeks as the maximum number of months’ or weeks’ salary that can be paid as redundancy payment?

If so, please provide data/evidence to back up your views

How would you mitigate the impact on these employees?

Response

When calculating redundancy payments for those employees over age 55 who have access to their pension, the maximum number of weeks Bracknell Forest Council uses is 20 weeks pay. Therefore, this area of the proposal would not affect Bracknell Forest employees in this age bracket.

For staff who would not be entitled to draw their pension in a redundancy situation (i.e. those under 55) the proposal would most affect those on the highest salaries. Further commentary on this is provided in our response to question 4.

Question 4

Are there any groups of local government employees that would be more adversely affected than others by our proposal to put in place a maximum salary of £80,000 on which an exit payment can be based?

If so, please provide data/evidence to back up your views

How would you mitigate the impact on these employees?

Response

The proposals purely relate to staff in the Local Government Pension scheme and therefore would not affect those staff in the Teachers (including Soulbury staff) and NHS pension schemes. As we have noted in our response to question 1, this situation is a

consequence of historic Government decisions on how different pensions schemes will be funded and it is inequitable that some staff should be disadvantaged on this basis.

The proposals to apply a maximum salary, exacerbated by a proposed maximum number of weeks redundancy payable, will most adversely affect Senior Managers. Whilst this forms a very small proportion of the local government workforce, these staff are more at risk of facing redundancy situations due to the continual requirement to seek efficiency savings through reducing management costs as a consequence of reduced funding and increased demand for local government services. Such staff are also facing increased public and Political pressure and scrutiny and there are regular instances of Chief Executives and Directors being pushed to leave their positions as a result of local Political tensions. These staff are already adversely impacted relative to others by the £30,000 tax free cap on redundancy as many Directors / Assistant Directors / Heads of Service have long Local Government service, and may be paying 50% income tax. A further cap on these staff therefore seems to be unreasonable.

It is worthwhile highlighting that the current statutory redundancy pay is capped at £538. We would suggest that consideration be given by Government to increasing that amount and introducing one redundancy calculation for all Local Authorities. This would help mitigate the perception of some people that there are regular, large golden handshakes to retiring senior local government staff. While there have been a few high profile instances of this, in reality these payments are very much the exception and should not be used as justification for significantly reducing financial protection for the vast majority of senior staff who undertake high profile and challenging roles for a fraction of the rewards received by their equivalents in many sectors.

Local government simply will not be able to attract and retain talented leaders into the future if its rewards and protections fall even further below those of private and other public sector organisations, which the cumulative impact of the exit cap and further proposals in this consultation will lead to.

Question 5

Do you agree with these proposals? If not, how else can the Government's policy objectives on exit pay be delivered for Local Government workers?

Response

No. We believe that the cumulative impact of the exit cap and the current proposals that are the subject of this consultation are unjust and inequitable for staff in the LGPS, compared with other local government and public sector workers.

Whilst it is recognised that the exit payment reforms are necessary to comply with the £95K exit Cap and managing tax, these proposals are overly complex, draconian and will affect the vast majority of local government staff aged 55 and over in a redundancy situation. This significantly contradicts what Local Authorities were expecting from the cap, which was intended to limit excessive exit settlements.

The proposals significantly reduce the amount all LGPS employees may be eligible for under the current arrangements, which in simplistic terms seems to be a choice of pension or redundancy pay. These measures were not suggested during the significant amount of time the £95k cap has been discussed (2015 to date) and are now being consulted on very quickly and without allowing employers to prepare for the changes.

Any perception that Local Government employees all receive a gold-plated pension and

redundancy payment is simply incorrect. The vast majority of staff do not have a large pension and redundancy payment when they leave.

A large number of councils practice the option of voluntary redundancy – especially when an organisation change is being followed, which has become a regular and almost constant situation in recent years. An “attractive” but by no means “excessive” exit package can help reduce the management time spent on such organisational changes, as some staff opt to leave voluntarily. These proposals will significantly reduce the number of volunteers and therefore mean additional cost in management time as well as most likely placing additional pressure on employment tribunals from appeals against perceived unfair dismissal.

Not only would the impact of this be costly to the public finances overall, it would significantly delay councils’ efforts to transform services in order to reduce costs and remain financially sustainable. Whilst the reforms are stated as being intended to balance tax payer expectations, there should be the awareness that most councils (including Bracknell Forest) only justify making severance payments under existing arrangements by having regard to the payback period of the one-off costs against the recurring, resulting savings.

The removal of an unreduced pension may ultimately force local authorities to increase their redundancy payments to the maximum allowed under the proposals in recognition that a strain payment (capitalised cost) would not be paid by the employer. The proposed maximum 66 week redundancy calculation could become the norm, which could place a greater strain on the public purse in many situations.

The Council agrees that Ill Health dismissals and Flexible retirement are not included in the reforms. However further discretion should be applied to settlement agreements which may otherwise go to an Employment Tribunal (at the moment it seems these are limited to whistleblowing and discrimination claims) allowing for matters to be settled outside a tribunal

Question 6

Do you agree that the further option identified at paragraph 4.8 should be offered?

Response

The option to defer pension would be welcomed as the Council has had staff who have been made redundant around 55/56 years of age, who would have preferred not to take their pension automatically.

Many employees wish to carry on working rather than access their pension, therefore this option would be a good measure to introduce to widen the potential choice for Local Government staff, with the redundancy payment bridging the gap whilst they are looking for another role.

Question 7

Are there any groups of local government employees that would be more adversely affected than others by our proposal?

If so, please provide data/evidence to back up your views

How would you mitigate the impact on these employees?

Response

As with question one, the proposals impact all members of staff who are over 55 and in the pension scheme but especially those on the lower incomes and part time salaries, which are traditionally women, will be more adversely affected as they would no longer be eligible for an unreduced pension and redundancy payment together. Based on data in December 2019 82% of the council's workforce are Women

Similarly, those people who are only just eligible for pension release under the current arrangements are adversely affected as there would be a large reduction to their pension. Based on data in December 2019, 27% of the Council's workforce are aged 50-59 which is a large proportion of the workforce (37% are over age 50).

In addition the most experienced employees with long service with the Council would be most adversely affected. These proposals therefore remove the incentive to remain in local government service, meaning a potential loss of skills which can have a significant impact and be expensive to replace – with suitable skills often only available in very expensive private sector contractors. This is a significant risk to Local Government and whilst the aim is to reduce costs, the indirect impact may be to increase costs by increasing turnover with a subsequent impact on recruitment and onboarding costs.

Question 8

From a local government perspective, are there any impacts not covered at Section 5 (impact analysis) which you would highlight in relation to the proposals and/or process above?

Response

Section 5 of the impact analysis touches on the additional administrative cost of implementing the new changes into the redundancy and compensation arrangements. However, this does not take into account the significant changes necessary to amend the pension scheme database which provides the calculations. In addition it does not take into account the significant time which will take to communicate and explain the complex options that staff will now have to take.

Section 5 does not take into account that it is likely most staff will now need to source independent financial advice as to which option would be better for them. This is an additional source of pressure and cost for the employee to bear whilst potentially creating a delay and therefore additional costs for an organisational change.

Question 9

Are these transparency arrangements suitably robust? If not, how could the current arrangements be improved?

Response

The transparency arrangements outlined are suitably robust however this is only relevant where a Chief Officer is made redundant from the same Local Authority and potentially re-employed.

The Council will not know the personal financial arrangements of a candidate who has voluntarily applied for a role. For example - there may be an occasion where Chief Officers may have taken Flexible Retirement at a previous Authority, but move Authorities and therefore will be receiving a pension and salary.

Question 10

Would any transitional arrangements be useful in helping to smooth the introduction of these arrangements?

Response

In relation to the pay policy statement and transparency, there is not necessarily a need for transitional arrangements to be introduced. However there should be clear guidance as to how and what information should be included in the pay policy statement.

In terms of the wider proposals, there should be a period of delay before these proposals are implemented, if Government decides after the consultation period that this remains its intention. The uncertainty for employers and employees caused by the current proposed timing relative to the introduction of the exit cap should not be underestimated.

Question 11

Is there any other information specifically to the proposals set out in this consultation which is not covered above which may be relevant to these reforms?

Response

As above, transitional arrangements are essential as many employees may already be being consulted regarding organisational changes and may have received exit package figures. Organisational Changes can be a difficult time for staff and it would therefore cause additional pressure and stress to significantly change those figures and expectations

Question 12

Would you recommend anything else to be addressed as part of this consultation?

Response

In terms of the overall exit package reform, transitional arrangements are essential to allow a period of time where staff who are already being consulted regarding organisational changes and may have received exit package figures, retain the option to have the figures rather than having this withdrawn. Organisational Changes can be a difficult time for staff and it would therefore cause additional pressure and stress to significantly change those figures and expectations.

In terms of a transition period this should take into account the further process changes that are required for Local Authorities to implement the changes in their own severance policies – in other words there is a requirement for a period of adjustment. This should take into account the modification of the pension scheme databases which are not currently able to adjust to the changes and will take some time to develop.

Consultation responses to be completed online

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=EGg0v32c3kOociSi7zmVqDX2xIA9hPhJv2EHTx_8-ZUQTdZUklxOFBJTjU2RjFEQzY4WIIHSUoyNy4u

or sent by email to LGExitpay@communities.gov.uk

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