

Employee Survey 2007

Equality Impact Assessment

1. Background

1.1 The Highland Council regularly carries out an anonymous survey of all employees to gather information on their experience of working within Highland Council. The fourth survey, which will be carried out in October 2007, will ask employees to give their views on a number of aspects of working with the Council including:

- The Council as an employer
- Working for the Highland Council
- Management Style
- Information and Communications
- Training, Development and Performance
- Change and the future

The data collected is measured, trends are monitored and analysis of these is used to inform policy making and action plans for future improvements. The ultimate aim is to maintain a motivated and productive workforce that provides the best services possible to the Highland communities.

1.2 The Council is committed to carrying out an Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) on any relevant major new policy or initiative. Initial screening of the 2007 Employee Survey indicated that the implementation of the policy had the potential to affect groups of employee differently based on their gender, race or if they had a disability. On the basis of this screening it was agreed that a full EQIA should be undertaken.

1.3 The EQIA was carried out in August 2007 by officers in the Chief Executive's Office.

2. Data and Research

2.1 The EQIA considered data returned by the previous three employee surveys. This data allows each question to be analysed by gender. It was recognised that similar levels of data on race and disability would facilitate further analysis

2.2 The preparation of the survey and the implementation plan were shaped by data collected from elected members, senior managers, the trade unions, service providers and equalities professionals.

3. Findings

3.1 The EQIA found that the fact that the questionnaire and supporting documentation was written in English may deter returns from employees whose first language is not English. In turn this group would not be fully represented in the statistics used to inform policy making and action plans for future improvements. This may have a detrimental impact on employees from a minority ethnic group.

- 3.2 The EQIA found that the language used in the questionnaire and supporting documentation might not be fully accessible and may deter responses from employees with a lower than average reading age or general difficulties with reading. In turn this group would not be fully represented in the statistics used to inform policy making and action plans for future improvements. This might have a detrimental impact on employees with learning disabilities or low literacy skills.
- 3.3 The EQIA found that the format of the questionnaire and supporting documentation might not be fully accessible to employees with certain types of disability. In turn this group would not be fully represented in the statistics used to inform policy making and action plans for future improvements. This might have a detrimental impact on employees with certain types of disabilities.
- 3.4 The EQIA found that the marketing and distribution of the employee survey could miss certain work groups who are made up of predominantly male or female employees. Given the large numbers of employees working in these groups, this could lead to either men or women being underrepresented in the statistics used to inform policy making and action plans for future improvements. This might have a detrimental impact on either male or female employees.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 The Adult Literacies Co-ordinator has screened the questionnaire for 'readability' and to assess if additional support may be needed for some staff.
- 4.2 Corporate Managers were consulted individually to assess the most effective way of reaching staff in their areas, particularly the 'hard to reach' staff.
- 4.3 Through the normal channels the Senior Management Team and Elected Members have had the opportunity to make comment on proposals.
- 4.4 The Highland Council Equal Opportunities Officer has been consulted.
- 4.5 An Employee Survey Reference Group representing all Services has been set up to oversee the Survey and to contribute to its design.
- 4.6 Proposals for the Employee Survey will be discussed with the Council's recognised Trade Unions through the JCG and LNCT.
- 4.7 The Employee Survey Service Contacts have been consulted regarding promotion of the survey to staff in general and in particular staff considered 'hard to reach'. Methods of additional support have been considered.
- 4.8 Staff views will be sought via a programme of 13 Focus Group meetings, organised
- a) by area with a cross section of staff from all services
 - b) specifically for manual staff in each of the corporate areas.

HQ	Monday 3 rd September	Inverness
Inverness Area	Tuesday 4 th September	Inverness
Nairn	Tuesday 4 th September	Nairn
Badenoch & Strathspey	Thursday 6 th September	Kingussie
Manual & Craft	Thursday 6 th September	Grantown-on-Spey

Grantown-on-Spey		
Caithness	Friday 7 th September	Wick
Manual & Craft Helmsdale	Friday 7 th September	Helmsdale
Sutherland	Monday 10 th September	Golspie
Ross & Cromarty	Monday 10 th September	Dingwall
Lochaber	Thursday 13 th September	Fort William
Manual & Craft Ardnamurchan	Thursday 13 th September	Ardnamurchan
Manual & Craft Mallaig	Friday 14 th September	Mallaig
Skye & Lochalsh	Friday 14 th September	Portree

4.9 Service managers for Social Work, Catering & Cleaning and Housing have been contacted with a view to arranging a series of briefing sessions to take place within their scheduled meetings.

5. Outcomes

5.1 The 2007 Employee Survey will be accompanied by supporting documentation that makes clear in three non-English but frequently used languages that support is available in these languages to complete the questionnaire. This service will be provided through interpretation services used by the Council.

5.2 The 2007 Employee survey will be analysed by Adult Basic Education to ensure that the reading age is within the grasp of as many employees as practicable. Supporting documentation will be clear that assistance in completing the form will be made available to employees who experience difficulties of this nature. This service will be provided by MORI, the Survey provider, through telephone questionnaire and support will also be available through Employee Development.

5.3 The 2007 Employee Survey will be accompanied by supporting documentation that makes clear in that the survey will be available in a number of written, Braille and non-written formats. Depending on the format required, this service will be provided by in-house or by specialist providers.

5.4 The implementation plan will ensue that every effort is made to market and distribute the survey to all employees regardless of geography, work pattern or employment type. A wide variety of communications including newsletters, email, web based material will be used but particularly emphasis will be out on face to face communication.

6. Monitoring

6.1 The implementation of the survey will be monitored through the response rate. An analysis of the response rate by key groups should reflect the representation of these groups within the Highland Council.

6.2 Response rates will be reported to Senior Management, Elected Members and all Highland Council staff.

6.3 Any under-representation by key groups will be investigated by the lead officer, Equal Opportunities Officer and findings reported to the Equalities Group.

- 6.4 Results of the Employee Survey will be reported to Senior Management, Elected Members and all Highland Council staff.
- 6.5 The analysis of responses to questions by key groups will be reported to the Equalities Group and in progress reports on the Council's Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes.