

Office for Wales Relocation

Equality Impact Assessment

September 2011

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Introduction

In order to meet the Equality Act (2010) requirements, Jobcentre Plus, an agency of the Department for Work and Pensions, has carried out an Equality Impact Assessment on the proposal to rationalise non customer facing offices.

This process will help to ensure that:

- the Department's strategies, policies and services are free from discrimination;
- the Department complies with current equality legislation;
- due regard is given to equality in decision making and subsequent processes; and
- opportunities for promoting equality are identified.

Background

This Equality Impact Assessment is site specific and contains consideration of the equality impacts of the decision to exit from Companies House. Therefore, this Equality Impact Assessment will as far as possible, show how the Department has demonstrated it has paid due regard.

Brief outline of the policy or service

Purpose of the Companies House Exit Project

The main purpose of the Companies House Exit Project is to ensure, through the successful exit of Companies House, that the best use of the Welsh Jobcentre Plus estate is made by maximising occupation and minimising running costs, in line with current and future business needs and staffing levels.

The project should deliver upon the following key success criteria:

- Accommodation that will reduce the square meterage per person to meet Departmental guidelines.
- The realisation of a reduction in the existing real annual running costs for Jobcentre Plus.
- Successful relocation of all DWP occupants of the 4th Floor of Companies House.

Consultation and involvement

The Jobcentre Plus 'Delivering Efficiencies in our Estates' programme is co-ordinated at national level by an Estates Strategy and Efficiency Group (ESEG), which operates by delegated authority from the Jobcentre Plus Management Board.

ESEG have an established Single Point of Contact [SPOC] network for representatives from the Jobcentre Directorate, encompassing the seven Groups, including Scotland and Wales, which provides a forum for the co-ordinated deployment of the estates strategy and associated policies to ensure the national directives are applied consistently at a local level.

Consultation is an important part of the EIA process, and will be used as a valuable way of:

- checking out recommendations made
- obtaining feedback on areas where information may be limited
- producing an outcome that meets the needs of those it is intended to affect
- encouraging buy in and understanding from those affected
- judging the likely risk for the proposal being made
- making reasonable adjustments where necessary to mitigate any issues arising.

The following stakeholders have been identified whom we will be consulting:

Internal

- Wales Senior Management Team
- HR Business Partner
- Staff at Companies House – site identified for relocation
- Staff at Pontypridd and PDCS colleagues at Gabalfa – sites identified as relocation office
- Local Trade Union representatives
- Finance Business Partner

External

- This change will not directly affect Jobcentre Plus customers or external stakeholders, as it involves internal support services only. It is anticipated therefore that external consultation will not be required.

Service Partners

- Telereal Trillium

The consultation with internal stakeholders will be through formal meetings on a collective basis and through a one to one discussion with each member of staff at

Companies House in which individuals will have the opportunity to raise any issues regarding:

- DDA and reasonable adjustment requirements – the change of the duties and / or location an individual is currently undertaking may expose further or different reasonable adjustments;
- any training requirements – through the completion of a Learning Needs Analysis;
- any specific working pattern concerns.

Following the initial one to one discussion staff will continue to have the opportunity to raise subsequent individual concerns through the line management chain.

External stakeholders will be informed of the change in writing, providing information on the revised service delivery proposal.

Impact of the rationalisation of Companies House

Customers

There is no expected change to the standard of customer service. No face to face contact currently takes place at Companies House. It is a stand alone Regional office and does not have a customer base.

Workforce

The workforce is not reducing specifically as a result of the proposed relocation of Companies House, although the relocation of services to Pontypridd, Gabalfa and/or other sites will mean a change in location for all staff.

It is anticipated that up to 106 employees will be affected and efforts will be made to accommodate them at their preferred location, although the needs of the business will take priority and the current DWP mobility policy would be applied. This provides for employees with mobile status to be compulsory transferred to alternative locations of up to one and a half hours travel. Employees with limited mobility can only be compulsorily permanently transferred to posts within reasonable daily travelling distance of their home, considered to be one hour from home to office by public transport. Where employee's experience increased travel costs they will be able to claim re-imbursment for a period of up to three years.

DWP Diversity and Equality Policy Statement – our statement of commitment

“The Department is committed to providing services which embrace diversity and which promote equality of opportunity. As an employer we are also committed to equality and valuing diversity within our workforce. Our goal is to ensure that these commitments, reinforced by our Values, are embedded in our day to day working practices with all our customers, colleagues and partners”.

Table 1 – Employee Diversity Information (DWP)

Category	Companies House Actual	Companies House %	Wales Actual	Wales %
Full Time	222	74.0	4,397	64.0
Part Time	78	26.0	2,472	35.9
Female	178	59.3	4,808	70.0
Male	122	40.7	2,061	30.0
Disabled people	11	4.3	321	5.5
Ethnic minorities	*	1.9	102	1.9

Disability

As 4.3% of staff in Companies House have a disability, there is a potential impact, the extent of which is dependant on personal circumstances. As part of the re-location project, managers will hold a one to one discussion with employees to discuss the move and identify any Reasonable Adjustments. All Reasonable Adjustments will be put in place at the new location before staff are moved.

Race

Jobcentre Plus is committed to providing equality of opportunity on the grounds of race, which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins and policies are in place to ensure that employees are not disadvantaged in the workplace. No specific issues to race have been identified. There will be one to ones with individuals and every effort will be made to support employees and ensure appropriate action is taken.

Religion or Beliefs

No specific issues to Religion or Belief have been identified. If through consultation an impact is identified this will be mitigated. For employees who move location we will continue to allow reasonable rest breaks for religious observance, and religious festivals, in line with DWP policy. The one-to-one process will identify employees affected and ensure appropriate action is taken.

Sexual orientation

Data on the sexual orientation of employees is only available on a national basis due to the small numbers providing their information. This is to ensure staff cannot be identified.

At this stage no potential adverse impacts have been identified that would disproportionately affect employees due to their sexual orientation.

We do not believe that there is a disadvantage to employees working in Jobcentre Plus due to their sexual orientation. All affected employees, regardless of their sexual orientation, will be considered for relocation, or any other options which may arise, regarding the rationalisation of the JCP estate.

Transgender

The numbers of transgender staff are not monitored on the advice of a:gender.

At this stage no potential adverse impacts have been identified that would disproportionately affect employees due to their transgender.

We do not believe that there is a disadvantage to employees working in Jobcentre Plus due to their transgender. All affected employees, regardless of their transgender, will be considered for relocation, or any other options which may arise, regarding the rationalisation of the JCP estate.

Age

Table 1.1 – Employee Diversity by Age (DWP)

Category	Companies House Actual	Companies House %	Wales Actual	Wales %
16-29	39	13.0	922	13.4
30-39	55	18.3	1,391	20.2
40-49	95	31.7	2,250	32.8
50-59	91	30.3	1,896	27.6
60-65+	20	6.7	410	5.9

Jobcentre Plus is committed to providing equality of opportunity on the grounds of age and Jobcentre Directorate has not used age to make decisions about rationalisation plans. Having an age diverse workforce means that we are better placed to understand the needs and concerns of the customers of different ages who we are here to help.

All employees affected by the proposals, regardless of their age, will be considered for relocation, regarding the rationalisation of the Jobcentre Directorate estate. Any issues resulting from an employee’s age should be identified by the manager at the one to one discussion stage.

Monitoring and evaluation

The impacts on employees will be collated through the one to one discussion process and an analysis of any remedial actions undertaken. This will include the numbers of employees who require:

- Reasonable adjustment measures,
- Assistance with travel costs
- A change in working pattern.

Next steps

Having received the in principle decision on the relocation of Companies House, approval is required for funding. Following this, notice is served. Local consultation to continue to develop plans to relocating Jobcentre Plus employees into alternative accommodation in line with timetable to vacate the building.

This will include the completion of one to one discussions with staff to identify any specific impacts on individuals and establish appropriate mitigating actions together with engagement with local partner organisations.

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