

# Equality Impact Assessment



## Equality Impact Assessment form - Refurbishment of Audit Scotland's Glasgow office

<b>Date of assessment</b>
26 September 2017 and post project assessment January 2018.
<b>Title of policy, practice/procedure or decision to be created (or changed)</b>
Refurbishment of the Audit Scotland office: 4th Floor, South Suite, The Athenaeum Building, 8 Nelson Mandela Place, Glasgow, G2 1BT. During 2016 and 2017 staff were invited to attend exploratory sessions to discuss how the Glasgow office could be adapted to increase capacity as well as considering other modifications that could be made that would make the working area better.
<b>What is the policy, practice/procedure or decision)intended for?</b>
The office has been refurbished to improve the working environment, make the workspace more flexible and increase the number of workspaces available. The adjustments have been made taking into account user experience feedback and suggestions. The Glasgow office has been improved by creating additional flexible working areas, extra desk space, a 'drop-in work-zone', and improved break and kitchen areas. The adjustments have been intended to benefit all staff working from this base.
<b>In relation to the general equality duty and the protected characteristics, which issues or groups do you think would or could be affected and how? Be specific. Protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex (gender) &amp; sexual orientation.</b>
It is anticipated that the refurbished office will benefit all staff who work from the Glasgow hub however particular benefits for people who share protected characteristics include:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Age: The introduction of height adjustable desks is particularly suitable for people with back problems. There are proven health benefits whilst standing at height adjustable desks, such as improved posture and circulation.</li><li>• Disability: An accessible toilet is available in the Glasgow office. The addition of height adjustable desks are also beneficial for anyone who uses a wheelchair or prefers to stand whilst working due to a disability.</li><li>• Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership: A modesty/privacy panel has been placed alongside the toilets to ensure anyone entering toilets can do so in privacy. This is particularly important where anyone is undertaking gender re-assignment and may wish to choose their preferred toilet with some degree of privacy.</li><li>• Pregnancy and Maternity: Having comfortable and ample break out seats and tables gives a suitable place for</li></ul>

pregnant women to rest or who may need to move away from their desk for a break. In addition, the introduction of height adjustable desks will also help/aid pregnant women who may prefer to stand at work for periods during the day. The office has enclosed office space where women returning from maternity leave could book if they wished to express milk or breastfeed in private during office hours.

- Race, religion and belief: The office has enclosed office space where anyone wishing to privately book a room to observe any religious practices could easily do so. The use of security ID badges also allows staff to access the office outwith normal office hours which would also be helpful during religious festivals where normal working hours are not suitable.
- Sex: Audit Scotland has a fairly even split of male/female employees (49.5% are male and 50.5% are female). The refurbishment of the office should enhance the working experience for both sexes equally.

The office is accessible to all Audit Scotland employees and is also used for meeting with external stakeholders and visitors. As a result, the changes and modifications to the Glasgow office will ensure visitors with protected characteristics also have improved access and improved facilities.

The office building is accessible to all floors and our office already had an induction loop in advance of the refurbishment.

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

In the scope and design phase of the project we held consultation workshops with colleagues to discuss the priorities for the refurbishment and what was most important to the people who work from the Glasgow office. Colleagues were invited to prioritise what was most important for them and options within the budget constraints.

Colleagues prioritised increased desk capacity as the most important feature for the refurbishment. Views were considered from all colleagues, which included a good balance of male/female, ethnicity, age and experience.

We appointed Haa Design, an external architect/design company to develop refurbishment options and designs. We also consulted with an external Health and Safety Advisor to specifically give advice on statutory regulations and good practice.

#### **Please summarise the relevant evidence you considered.**

The project involved extensive consultation with colleagues in terms of the initial 'wants and needs', the initial design options and at every subsequent stage of the process, including the timing of the refurbishment work and options for alternative workplaces during the period of refurbishment.

#### **What do you conclude is the potential impact on these areas?**

The overall objective was to provide additional workspace capacity and a better working environment. This has been achieved. The refurbishment provides:

- additional workspaces/desk space - this is valued by colleagues, particularly at times when the office is busy
- greater flexibility in how the office is used, with more floor space that would make wheelchair access and movement much easier.
- more meeting space in the newly created business lounge to accommodate informal and ad-hoc meetings and a better environment for people taking a break/ having lunch.
- touchdown desks for people who only want to work in the office for a short time and also height adjustable desks being available for people who may have a preference, disability or medical requirement.
- space/layout which is suitable for colleagues and visitors to the office who may have restricted mobility. Access routes are wide enough to ensure wheelchair users can easily move around the office.
- We introduced table top sockets where small electrical items could be charged such as mobile phones. Again this avoids anyone who may have mobility issues having to find power sockets in out of reach places.

We consider that the above improves the flexibility of the workspace and provides colleagues with more choice in terms of how they work and the set-up of the workstation they choose to use.

A colleague survey provided very positive feedback on the refurbished office and the implementation group held a lessons learned review/ closedown session. This also provided positive feedback.

#### **What will you do now?**

- Layout - we will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the office layout and identify any accessibility issues.
- Accessibility - we will consider any further requirements to improve accessibility as and when they arise.
- Improving disabled access and experience - our front of house team are identifying ways in which they can support visitors with disabilities and are currently looking to undertake a sign language course. We have also updated our front of house directory with key information on where to get support for signing if required.

***Lynn Scott***

***Business Support Manager***

***February 2018***