

# Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

## Winter Heating Strategy Trial

### Details of requester

Name	[REDACTED]
Section/Project	Estates / Winter Heating Strategy

### Details of accountable Director

Director name	Billy Harkness
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### Document control (to be completed at each iteration)

Date	Author	Notes	Version number
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08/12/2022	[REDACTED]		V0.2
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## Summary

<b>Date</b>	19/12/2022
<b>IG Casework ref</b>	CW-2022-440
<b>Summary</b>	
<p>This EQIA relates to a trial in MBH of the proposed reduction of office temperature 19°C. Following the completion of the trial the EQIA will be reviewed and updated as required ahead of any proposed live roll out.</p> <p>There is evidence of potential negative impacts of cold temperatures against the protected characteristic of age, disability and pregnancy. There is no specific evidence of the impact of a reduction in temperature to 19°C, so this will have to be gathered through consultation as part of the trial.</p> <p>Beyond equalities considerations, office temperature is often very subjective and careful consideration of colleague feedback from the proposed trial will be required before implementing this proposal. Local temperatures across both buildings will also have to be examined thoroughly, to ensure that they do not fall below the agreed minimum</p>	
<b>Impact summary</b>	
<b>Impact</b>	<b>Recommended Actions</b>
Age - negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trial in single wing</li> <li>• Clear communications of trial required</li> <li>• Review of local temperature across offices</li> <li>• Consideration of partial implementation</li> </ul>
Disability – negative	
Pregnancy – negative	
<b>Review date</b>	<b>July 2023</b>

## Senior staff approval or oversight required

<b>Role</b>	<b>Approval/oversight/none</b>
Keeper	None
Accountable Officer	None
Director - Registration	None
Director – Business Development	None
Director - Corporate	Approval
Other (specify)	

## Section 1: Framing

### 1. Proposal Outline

What is the scope of this Equality Impact Assessment (change phases/stages)?

Brief background information can be included if this is necessary to frame the proposal

Scottish Government recently announced their Winter Heating Strategy, which is to control building temperatures at 19°C during the Winter months. This aims to deliver an energy efficiency saving, whilst electrical and gas supplies are under pressure and the UK is at risk of energy blackouts in January / February 2023, and a cost efficiency saving.

RoS temperature control setpoint at the time of SG announcement was 21°C. The building temperature control setpoint was reduced to 20°C on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> November in response to the announcement (following approval via Project Evolution Board).

This EQIA is to assess a trial of the adjustment of building temperature controls to 19°C at both MBH and SVP in line with Scottish Government announcement. The assessment is to consider whether there is a significant disproportionate impact on any specific group(s) because of this proposed change.

1 West has been proposed for the trial. This wing will be advertised as a 'cooler wing' for colleague occupation. Wing selection is deliberate, as it remains one of the only flexibly occupied wings that is boiler fed so that it provides both gas and electrical efficiency savings for the duration of the trial.

Impact: full building temperature setpoint adjustment would impact on RoS colleagues, third party tenants and visitors.

Timescales: Proposal is to trial 19°C temperature control setpoint within a single wing at MBH from December 2022. Trial to be run via Project Evolution and monitored with a review completed in January 2023 ahead of further action. Building setpoint changes (if approved) to be rolled out from January 2023 for at least a further four months through to May 2023, based on average temperatures.

Risk: this is a high occupancy wing and one that is currently used to support team / project working as desks are positioned closer together.

Output: Building Heating Strategy to be updated to reflect the organisational approach once finalised to inform future years.

What are the aims or purpose and anticipated outcomes of the change (such as a new policy, decision, procedure or relevant practice)?

Purpose of the change: to deliver energy efficiency savings for the organisation in line with our Corporate Strategic Objective for sustainability. Proposed changes bring RoS in line with wider SG commitments and delivers energy efficiency saving, whilst electrical and gas supplies are under pressure and the UK is at risk of energy blackouts in January / February 2023, and a cost efficiency saving.

Please indicate who is most likely to be affected by the change?

*For example: Employees, visitors, contractors, women, men, young people, older people, people with disabilities etc*

In principle, this change impacts all building attendees equally but groups potentially adversely impacted by colder temperatures include older individuals, those with disabilities and pregnant women.

Which aspects of the change are particularly relevant to any element of the general equality duty?

Equality of opportunity – if a particular group is disproportionately impacted by this change, it could affect their ability to benefit from coming into the office and making the most of hybrid working

## Section 2: Impacts Identification and Evidence

Does evidence suggest any potential contribution of the change against the needs of the general equality duty? Consider each aspect in the table below.

Public Sector Equality duty	Aspects of change which contributes to or influence duty	Explanation/Evidence of contribution or influence
<b>Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation</b>		The proposed initial trial and gathering of feedback, consultation with colleagues through the EDI forum and this EQIA should ensure that this change is implemented in an equitable and fair manner.
<b>Advancing equality of opportunity</b>		More broadly, the change aims to deliver energy efficiency savings at a time of extreme pressure on supply, and contributes to the cutting of carbon emission, both of which benefit all RoS colleagues and society more widely.
<b>Promoting good relations</b>		

Does evidence suggest any potential for impacts on the following groups? Consider each characteristic in the table below.

Protected Characteristic	Impact (positive or negative)	Explanation/Evidence of Impact	Proposed Actions/Modifications
<p><b>Age</b> (e.g. older people, children and young people)</p> <p><b>Disability</b></p> <p><b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b></p>	<p>Negative – elderly individuals, those with disabilities and pregnant women are more likely to be negatively impacted by cold temperatures</p> <p>This negative impact could lead to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People being unable to work at their best</li> <li>• People being unable to participate in hybrid working</li> <li>• People needing to take sick leave – could tip them over into a managing attendance type situation</li> </ul>	<p>The NHS (<a href="http://www.nhs.uk">www.nhs.uk</a>) states that people likely to be most affected by cold temperatures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People aged 65+</li> <li>• People with disabilities</li> <li>• Pregnant women</li> </ul> <p>The following specific health conditions can be worsened by cold temperatures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autoimmune diseases</li> <li>• Heart conditions (Public Health Scotland states that in 2019 15% of adults in Scotland has a heart condition)</li> <li>• Breathing problems</li> <li>• Diabetes</li> <li>• Kidney problems</li> <li>• Raynaud's</li> </ul> <p>These are further impacted where the person is 65 or over</p> <p>It has been confirmed that there are a number of colleagues at RoS with Raynaud's disease, who feel the cold especially in their fingers and toes.</p>	<p>Consult with the EDI forum and consider feedback</p> <p>Proposal is to trial 19°C temperature control setpoint within a single wing at MBH from December 2022. Trial to be run via Project Evolution and monitored with a review completed in January 2023 ahead of further action.</p>

<p><b>Gender Reassignment</b>  <b>Race, ethnicity, colour, nationality or national origins</b>  <b>Religion or belief</b>  <b>Sex/Gender</b>  <b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>  <b>Sexual Orientation</b></p>	<p>No evidence to suggest disproportionate impact</p>
<p><b>Other</b></p>	<p>Colleagues experiencing adverse socio-economic circumstances may benefit more from a warmer office temperature, however as noted below the proposed reduction to 19°C is not a cold temperature.</p>

<p><b>2.2 Evidence gaps</b></p>
<p>Are there any gaps in the evidence you currently hold?  Is any action planned to fill these gaps?</p>
<p>There is no specific evidence in relation to the impact of a reduction in temperature from 20°C to 19°C. The NHS and other sources state that 18°C is the minimum temperature that a building should be heated to, while the World Health Organisation (WHO) state that 20°C is a more 'optimal temperature', especially where people have underlying health conditions.</p> <p>Office temperature can be very subjective, and a range of responses to a proposed reduction is likely. The trial implementation will be a key opportunity to gather and consider specific feedback before implementing this proposal more widely. Further, it will be critical to review temperature across RoS offices, particularly MBH, ensuring that it is consistent in working areas and thermostat equipment is operating correctly.</p>

### Section 3: Impact Assessment and Actions

Relevant Protected Characteristic	Impact	Mitigating Actions Included and Required	Owner
Age	<p>Negative</p> <p>Cold temperatures are more likely to impact older individuals, those with disabilities and pregnant women.</p> <p>Among these groups this could result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower performance</li> <li>• Reluctance to attend office, therefore unable to benefit from hybrid working arrangements</li> <li>• Higher absence rates</li> </ul>	<p><b>Included:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trial implementation in specific wing</li> <li>• Consultation with EDI forum</li> </ul> <p><b>Required:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of temperature across offices to ensure consistency</li> <li>• Clear communications around trial, and any subsequent change</li> <li>• Collection and review of feedback from trial</li> </ul>	Estates
Disability			
Pregnancy			

Review date	July 2023
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