

Integrated impact assessment (IIA) Template

Complete as a record of your assessment.

Read the IIA guidance before completing this template.

Title of proposal
Review of Employment Breaks Policy
Purpose of proposed work
As part of our regular Policy Review Programme, we are looking to review the current Employment Breaks Policy which was last considered in 2015. Following colleague engagement sessions, we are proposing the following changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Re-naming the policy from Employment Breaks to Career Breaks.- Reformat the policy to bring this in line with all other employment policies.- Providing clearer guidance for colleagues and managers.- Having 2 separate processes for LGE colleagues and Teaching colleagues to make the process clearer.
Lead officer, name, job title, service and department
Alana Baillie, Senior HR Consultant Employee Relations and Policy, Human Resources
Additional colleagues: name, job title, service and department
Vanessa Anderson, HR Consultant, Human Resources Olivia Reed, HR Consultant, Human Resources Charlotte Fleming, Senior Solicitor, Employment Law Team Andrew Burgess, Senior HR Consultant, Human Resources Nina Kwiatkowski, Senior HR Consultant, Human Resources Lizzie Brown, HR Consultant, Human Resources
Date
21/05/2026
Briefly describe public involvement in this proposal to date and planned
This is a colleague policy for internal City of Edinburgh Council use (the Council), therefore there has been no public involvement.

Impacts

1 Equality impacts

We want to ensure our proposals are fair for everyone. Consider potential positive and negative impacts of your proposal on groups/people with [protected](#)

characteristics. Assessment of impact means we consider the needs of everyone with an “intersectional lens.” This means looking at the impact that different protected characteristics and other factors can have on people.

Consider if your proposal will help:

- prevent discrimination
- advance equal opportunities by reducing disadvantage and meeting different needs, and
- foster good relations by encouraging inclusion and understanding.

Consider if your proposal could impact on groups/people with protected characteristics. Tick all that apply

	Negative impact	Positive impact	No impact
1. Age		x	
2. Disability		x	
3. Gender reassignment		x	
4. Marriage and civil partnership			x
5. Pregnancy and maternity		x	
6. Race			x
7. Religion or belief			x
8. Sex			x
9. Sexual orientation			x
10. Care experienced children and young people			x

Use the text box below to describe the differential impacts you have identified on each of the groups/people with protected characteristics. Consider any intersectional impacts.

The policy is likely to have a particularly positive impact on women. Workforce data shows that women are the main users of career breaks, accounting for 88 of the 109 breaks taken between October 2024 and March 2026. Career breaks can provide valuable support for childcare, caring responsibilities, wider family commitments and work-life balance. By enabling colleagues to take a temporary break rather than leave employment permanently, the policy may also contribute to the retention of women within the workforce.

The policy is also likely to benefit carers by providing a mechanism for remaining connected to employment while managing caring responsibilities. This can help reduce the need for colleagues to resign when facing significant caring commitments and may support their return to work when circumstances allow.

There may be positive impacts for disabled colleagues. Data indicates that disabled employees made proportionately higher use of employment breaks, with seven disabled colleagues taking a break during the reporting period. Career breaks can provide valuable support for colleagues managing long-term health conditions, recovery from illness, fatigue or broader wellbeing needs. A period away from work may allow individuals to focus on their health, review their circumstances and consider any adjustments or support required to facilitate a sustainable return to work.

The policy may also have positive impacts for older workers. Career breaks can provide flexibility for those managing age-related health conditions, caring responsibilities or considering a gradual transition towards retirement. This may support longer and more sustainable working lives while helping the organisation retain the valuable knowledge and experience of its older workforce.

Available data suggest that take-up of employment breaks among minority ethnic colleagues is lower than for some other workforce groups. However, interpretation of this finding should be treated with caution, as the number of employment breaks is relatively small, ethnicity disclosure is voluntary, and the available data may not fully reflect the experiences of all colleagues.

Evidence

Use the text box below to summarise what evidence you have used to inform this IIA. Where possible, include links if the documents are published. Show how you have used your evidence in making your assessment of potential impacts.

Example: A proposal to increase charges will impact women more than men as we know women are more likely to be vulnerable to poverty. The [Gendered Nature of Poverty briefing note](#) provides an overview of this issue and why it matters.

Evidence could include the results of any relevant consultation/engagement. If further evidence is required, please note how it will be gathered.

Data shared with the IIA Scoping Group included current demographics for the Council (as outlined below) as well as data on employment break uptake in the from October 2024 to March 2026. (unable to go collate data pre-October 2024 due to change in HR system and no access to archive data).

City of Edinburgh Council Demographics

Demographic	Workforce %	Approx. Workforce Number
Sex Status		
Female	70.6	15,540
Male	29.4	6,494
Ethnicity Status		
Minority ethnic	7.8	1,719
White	75.4	16,613
Prefer not to say	0.4	88
No info	16.4	3,614
Disability status		
Disabled	3.1	683
Not disabled	70.7	15,578
Prefer not to say	4.0	881
No info	22.1	4,892
Age Group		
<22	1.8	397
22-30	12.9	2,842
31-40	24.2	5,333
41-50	26.6	5,861
51-60	23.4	5,156
61-68	9.6	2,115

69+	1.5	330
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Oct 24 to Mar 26 Distinct Headcount (exc Zero Hour)

Impact	Total EEs	Female	Male	Minority Ethnic	Disabled	Age <21	Age 21-30	Age 31-40	Age 41-50	Age 51-64	Age 65+
Workforce stats	18,084	12,557	5,527	1,325	1,263	107	2,304	4,375	4,879	5,753	666
Workforce stats (%)	100%	69%	31%	7.30%	7.00%	1%	13%	24%	27%	32%	4%
Had an employment break in Oct 24 to Mar 26	109	88	21	4	7	0	21	41	28	19	0
Had an employment break in Oct 24 to Mar 26 (%)	0.60%	0.70%	0.40%	0.30%	0.60%	0.00%	0.90%	0.90%	0.60%	0.30%	0.00%

Teaching staff requests via LGE scheme or SNCT scheme – October 2024 to March 2026.

Grade Name	Employment Break-LGE	Employment Break-Teachers	Grand Total
Head & Depute Head Teacher		1	1
Principal Teacher			2
Teacher		13	28
Grand Total		15	30

Please record any mitigating actions for any negative impacts identified, at Section 10 of this template

2 Human Rights impacts

The Council must act compatibly with Human Rights legislation. Think about what kind of impact the proposal may have on people in terms of [Human Rights](#). Use the text box below to describe which Human Rights Articles are relevant, which groups are affected and what the potential impacts are.

The policy demonstrates the Council's commitment to flexible, supportive employment practices that promote employee wellbeing and work-life balance. By providing opportunities for employment breaks, the Council can foster a more inclusive and positive working environment in which colleagues feel valued and supported. This may contribute to improved employee engagement, strengthen the Council's reputation as an employer, and support the recruitment and retention of a diverse workforce.

Career breaks can support individual choice and provide colleagues with greater control over balancing work and personal commitments. They may enable individuals to pursue education, travel, family responsibilities, volunteering opportunities, creative projects, or other personal development activities. By offering flexibility at different stages of life, the policy can help colleagues manage changing circumstances while maintaining a connection to employment.

Career breaks may have a positive impact on health and wellbeing by allowing colleagues time away from work during periods of stress, pressure, or significant personal circumstances. This additional flexibility can support improved mental health and wellbeing and provide opportunities for individuals to focus on aspects of their health and personal development. Depending on individual circumstances, this may include activities that promote healthy lifestyles, such as improving diet and nutrition, increasing physical activity, addressing difficulties with substance use, developing life skills, supporting sexual health, and enhancing overall wellbeing. By enabling colleagues to prioritise these areas when needed, the policy may contribute to better long-term health outcomes and a more resilient workforce.

While employment breaks can provide significant benefits by supporting work-life balance, caring responsibilities, personal development and wellbeing, there is a risk that some colleagues may feel compelled to use them because other workplace support mechanisms have not adequately met their needs. This could indicate underlying issues that may be more effectively addressed through alternative forms of support, flexible working arrangements or workplace adjustments.

Employment breaks can also create operational challenges, particularly where extended absences result in staffing gaps and suitable backfill arrangements are difficult to secure. In addition, there is a risk of inconsistency in how requests are considered and supported across different teams and services. Where approaches vary between managers, colleagues may experience unequal access to opportunities, creating a perception of a "manager lottery".

For colleagues taking an extended employment break, there is also a risk of becoming disconnected from the workplace, colleagues and organisational developments. Without appropriate communication and reintegration support, this may affect confidence, wellbeing and the transition back into work following the break.

The proposed changes should have a positive impact to both colleagues and managers. Reformatting the policy in line with our other employment policies should improve consistency and accessibility. Providing clearer guidance for colleagues and managers and separating the processes for LGE and teaching colleagues should reduce confusing and support better decision making and access to the policy.

Evidence

Use the text box below to summarise what evidence you have used to inform this IIA. Where possible, include links if the documents are published. Show how you have used your evidence in making your assessment of potential impacts.

Evidence could include the results of any relevant consultation/engagement. If further evidence is required, please note how it will be gathered.

See above.

Please record any mitigating actions for any negative impacts identified, at Section 10 of this template

3 Children's Rights impacts

The Council must act compatibly with Children's Rights legislation. Think about what kind of impact the proposal may have on children and young people in terms of [Children's Rights](#). Use the text box below to describe which Children's Rights Articles are relevant, which groups are affected and what the potential impacts are.

Employment breaks may have a positive impact on children's rights where parents or carers use the break to provide additional care and support, helping to strengthen family relationships and promote children's wellbeing. They may also contribute positively to young people's aspirations and understanding of future opportunities by demonstrating that flexible career pathways and different approaches to work are possible in adulthood.

Evidence

Use the text box below to summarise what evidence you have used to inform this IIA. Where possible, include links if the documents are published. Show how you have used your evidence in making your assessment of potential impacts.

Evidence could include the results of any relevant consultation/engagement. If further evidence is required, please note how it will be gathered.

Feedback from colleagues within the IIA group.

Please record any mitigating actions for any negative impacts identified, at Section 10 of this template

4 Socio-economic disadvantage impacts

The Council has a duty to consider how it can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by [socio-economic disadvantage](#), when making strategic decisions. However, to support the Council's Business Plan priorities, the Council considers it best practice to consider the potential impact that all relevant proposals may have on people

experiencing socio- economic disadvantage and how inequalities of outcome can be reduced.

Consider if your proposal could impact on any of the below groups? Tick all that apply.

	Negative impact	Positive impact	No impact
Low income – cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing	X		
Low/no wealth – enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with unexpected spends and no provision for the future	X		
Material deprivation – being unable to access basic goods and services, ie home contents insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm winter coat			X
Area deprivation (including communities of interest and communities of place) – where you live, where you work, visit or spend a continuous amount of time can all have an impact ie rural areas, accessibility of transport, education and employment impact, people who have experienced homelessness and/or the asylum system, those who share an identity and/or protected characteristic			X
Socio-economic background – disadvantage that can arise from parents’ education, employment and income, social class in other words.			X

Use the text box below to describe the impacts you have identified on each of the groups above, and how you can reduce inequalities of outcome?

Employment breaks are unpaid, which may make them less accessible to lower-paid colleagues who are less able to absorb a temporary loss of income. As a result, the policy may have a disproportionate impact on groups that are more likely to experience financial constraints, including lower-paid workers, single parents, younger colleagues and women.

Evidence

Use the text box below to summarise what evidence you have used to inform this IIA. Where possible, include links if the documents are published. Show how you have used your evidence in making your assessment of potential impacts.

Evidence could include the results of any relevant consultation/engagement. If further evidence is required, please note how it will be gathered.

As above.

Please record any mitigating actions for any negative impacts identified, at Section 10 of this template.

5 Climate and nature impacts

The Council has a [duty](#) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to the impacts of climate change, incorporate the principles of sustainability into decisions and actions, and ensure a just transition (just transition only applies to climate mitigation or adaption projects).

Consider if your proposal could impact on any of the below? Tick all that apply.

	Negative impact	Positive impact	No impact
Climate Mitigation - opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions			X
Climate Adaptation - opportunities to prepare for future changes in our climate			X
Just Transition – opportunities to ensure a fair shift to a low carbon economy that doesn't disadvantage people or increase inequality			X
Nature Recovery Impacts			X
Overall Sustainability			X

Use the text box below to describe the impacts you have identified on each of the sections above and then consider how you can reduce greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to the impacts of climate change, incorporate the principles of sustainability into decisions and actions, and ensure a just transition. Also consider any cumulative effects of climate change on people.

No impact identified.

Use the text box below to describe the impacts you have identified on nature.

No impact identified.

Evidence

Use the text box below to summarise what evidence you have used to inform this IIA. Where possible, include links if the documents are published. Show how you have used your evidence in making your assessment of potential impacts.

Evidence could include the results of any relevant consultation/engagement. If further evidence is required, please note how it will be gathered.

Not applicable.

Please record any mitigating actions for any negative impacts identified, at Section 10 of this template

6 Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA)

Could your proposal result in significant environmental effects? If yes, you may need to complete a Strategic Environment Assessment? Information is available on the [Scottish Government SEA website](#).

Yes

No

7 Consumer Duty

The Council has a duty to consider consumers' interests when making strategic decisions. If this applies to your proposal, you may need to complete a [consumer duty impact assessment](#). Information is available on the [Consumer Scotland website](#).

Yes

No

8 Communications

Record how you will communicate information about this proposal change to those with different communication needs using [inclusive communications guidance and resources](#).

This is an internal colleague policy. The Policy will be written in Plain English. It is expected that line managers will also be responsible for the dissemination and promotion of this Policy and be able to explain the core components to colleagues.

We will work with Communications to ensure the Policy and the key principles are communicated at launch in a variety of mechanisms to ensure as much coverage as possible across all colleague groups.

9 Contractors

Is any part of this proposal to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors and if so, how will equality, human rights, children’s rights and climate and nature issues be addressed?

This is an internal colleague policy only.

10 Actions

Record your actions in the table below. Actions may include:

- mitigations to reduce or eliminate negative impacts
- advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations
- addressing cumulative impacts
- collecting additional evidence
- financial implications
- risks
- any other actions.

Actions	Who will take them forward (name and job title)	Deadline for progressing	Review date (add name and job title)
Future reporting should include approved, refused and why the employment break is being requested so the reasons for taking a break can be analysed and the appropriate actions and support can be put in place.	ER & Policy Team	Policy completion	After launch
Clearer guidance to explain pension implications and how to buy back pension and signpost to other relevant pension information.	ER & Policy Team	Policy completion	After launch
Enhance support through a career break, for example consider Keeping in	ER & Policy Team	Policy completion	After launch

Touch days as part of the policy change to allow colleagues to formally keep in contact during their career break.			
Promote alternative support options, for example flexible working, workplace adjustments, managing attendance etc.	ER & Policy Team	Policy completion	After launch
Raise more awareness of career breaks and the positives it can bring to both colleagues and the Council.	ER & Policy Team	Policy completion	After launch
Provide clearer guidance and strengthen the decision-making process	ER & Policy Team	Policy completion	After launch

11 Monitoring impact

Monitoring ensures that your proposal is effective and any issues are addressed.

Record your actions in the table below. Actions may include:

- how impacts on protected characteristics will be monitored, once the proposal has been introduced and implemented
- how IIA agreed actions will be monitored
- review process and timescales
- officer responsible.

Actions to monitor impact of proposal	Who will take them forward (name and job title)	Deadline for progressing	Review date (add name and job title)
Review use of career breaks to ensure they are not being used instead of workplace adjustments or wellbeing support	ER & Policy Team	1 year after policy launch	1 year after policy launch

12 Next steps

Elected members must have access to IIAs in order to scrutinise them before making decisions. You must:

- share the IIA with them (this can be at draft stage for an APM meeting)
- complete the [committee report](#) with:
 - a summary of the identified impacts at section 7 of the committee report template: key policies
 - actions to address them at section 5 of the committee report template: next steps
- provide a link to the published IIA or attach as an appendix.

13 Quality assurance and approval

Complete the quality assurance checklist.

Send the quality assurance checklist and your completed IIA to your Head of Service for approval.

14 Authorisation

Name and title
Nareen Turnbull, Service Director - HR
Date
23/06/2026

15 Publication

Send the approved IIA template to the relevant contact for publication. Ensure the title of the IIA is clear and concise, without acronyms and the content, layout and language style is [inclusive and accessible](#).

The City of Edinburgh Council:

- integratedimpactassessments@edinburgh.gov.uk to be published on the [Council website](#)

Edinburgh Integration Joint Board/Health and Social Care:

- sarah.bryson@edinburgh.gov.uk to be published on the [EH&SCP website](#)

Keep a copy of your template for a period of at least three years (longer if needed for business reasons).