

EDI Issues to be taken account of for new Ways of Working:

Summary of key issues raised in the COVID Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Survey

Additional context – this is a report prepared for the FSE ‘new ways of working’ task and finish group by SR manager Daniele Atkinson, daniele.atkinson@manchester.ac.uk. The survey referenced is online at <https://apps.mhs.manchester.ac.uk/surveys/TakeSurvey.aspx?PageNumber=1&SurveyID=l8KM7585K>. Survey results below were analysed and summarised by Daniele Atkinson, SR Manager Emma Nichols, and admin intern Rachel Cox. At the time this report was prepared, 291 survey responses had been received, the majority from FBMH (161) or FSE (109).

This summary is intended to provide a brief overview of some of the key points – in addition to this we’re pulling out more detailed information about the impacts on specific groups and communicating this to relevant committees and leadership teams. If you require further information or you have questions you can email fsesocialresponsibility@manchester.ac.uk.

Context

The Faculty of Science & Engineering EDI team wanted to gauge the effect of the change in working practices caused by COVID and particularly any differential impacts. A survey was designed to gather EDI issues raised by academic staff (including PDRAs), PS staff and postgraduate researchers to make sure that these could be highlighted to those in decision-making positions so that they could make decisions in full knowledge of the types of issues facing our diverse staff. The survey was extended to all staff of the University, however we have only focussed here on those relevant to FSE.

These are things that should either be taken account of in decision making for future ‘Ways of Working’ or could be actions that we might want to consider taking. Please note, the Actions / mitigations are merely suggestions, there may be alternatives, or additional things that can be done. We should potentially engage with people in the specific concern groups to find out what support they need.

Where an issue directly or disproportionately affects certain groups (e.g. due to a disability or protect characteristic this is highlighted).

Themes

Working from home - wellbeing

Issue	Action Needed / Mitigation	Timeframe
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enabling working from home more frequently supports work-life balance e.g. being home for children arriving home from school, eating more healthily etc.• Using zoom to ensure financial sustainability and environmental sustainability i.e. continue allowing staff to work part-time from home	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider enabling more staff to have flexible working arrangements allowing WFH	For new academic year
For people with caring responsibilities, they may need to work outside of core hours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flexible working arrangements to take account of this• Guidance re: emails – accepted that due to flexible working that emails may be sent outside of traditional working days and times, but that a response is not expected outside of working hours.• Meetings should be no longer than one hour as for people with young children to care for / home schooling they can’t be left for longer than this	Guidance released asap

University support for mental health doesn't take into account increased workload so no time to access and increases anxiety	Be Aware	
Chronic illnesses affecting ability to work to full capacity e.g. due to fatigue, household task pressures	Be Aware	
Current working practices causing fatigue for people with chronic illness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be Aware • Potentially advise staff and managers to seek advice from Occupational Health 	Guidance released asap
Concern about how colleagues will treat staff with disabilities due to reduced productivity.	Be Aware	
No 'protected' work time, meetings all day every day. Focus difficult. Particularly difficult for people with mental health problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider 'Zoom Free' hours to enable focus either as a policy or guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance released asap

Working from home - Equipment / IT issues

Issue	Action Needed / Mitigation	Timeframe
Physical health conditions exacerbated or caused by inadequate home working setups	Review of DSE procedure for working from home	Guidance released asap
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not got right equipment / space in home. Some couldn't bring it home as don't have a car. • Low income staff's ability to fund workspace at home 	Identify how to support staff to get appropriate equipment	Guidance released asap
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of appropriate equipment for online teaching • Marking: difficult on screens, people don't have appropriate equipment, deadlines too short 	Being able to bring home equipment from the office (e.g. chair, keyboard and large monitor)	Process already in place
Decent broadband – access and cost	Consider how University can help	Discuss options asap
Access to University systems from home	Speak to IT	Asap
Lack of accessibility – eg Zoom meetings difficult to follow for people with hearing impairments (results in not being as well informed as can't attend open meetings)	All Open meetings for staff updates need to be either subtitled or transcribed afterwards to be inclusive.	Immediately
How to use Microsoft Teams & Office 365	Guidance from IT widely shared and communicated	Ongoing

Line Management

Issue	Action Needed / Mitigation	Timeframe
Inconsistent or poor pastoral support from line managers (raised particularly by people experiencing mental health problems)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Line managers encouraged to regularly reach out to all staff to 'check in' not just about work progress. • Offer people an alternative mentor to check in with if line manager not appropriate / supportive (be aware that this shouldn't automatically fall to female members of staff) 	Guidance released asap
Line managers (particularly academic) don't know what is able to be considered under 'flexible working rules'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some examples / case studies in Beeline • Guidance for managers on what is possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance released asap

Future

Issue	Action Needed / Mitigation	Timeframe
Research only staff could help out with teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research only staff could have their allocations reconsidered and help out with teaching demands Contact research staff to find out who is able (skill, time etc.) and willing to teach 	Now
Transport concerns when back to campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share University guidance on this Consider how flexible working can help people avoid peak journey times 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disproportionate effect of caring responsibilities on female staff and long term effect on career Effect on promotions and careers, particularly PDRAs, for people with caring responsibilities whose outputs will be reduced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider policies around promotion and career progression – how can this be mitigated? Consider creating a scaled assessment for promotion that factors in the time people with caring responsibilities had to spend away from research during lockdown 	For next promotions / PDR round
How severance / reduction in working hours will affect workload of staff remaining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be honest about the changes and how it will affect those left Line managers work with individuals to prioritise workloads 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BAME staff/students more at risk from COVID – impact on physical and mental wellbeing Staff over 60 & those who're clinically vulnerable, concerned about return to campus. 	<p>Share risk assessments</p> <p>Line Managers to discuss mitigations individually to take account of personal circumstances</p>	