

Health Work and Well-being Directorate

**Health Work and Well-being
Challenge Fund**

**Equality Impact Assessment
July 2010**

Equality impact assessment for the DWP's Health Work and Well-being Challenge Fund

Introduction

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has carried out an equality impact assessment on the introduction of a Health Work and Well-being Challenge Fund for the DWP to meet the requirements of the:

- Race Equality Duty
- Disability Equality Duty
- Gender Equality Duty.

This process will help to make sure:

- The Health Work and Well-being Challenge Fund's strategy, policy and processes are free from discrimination.
- Due regard is given to equality (specifically disability, gender and race) in decision making.
- Opportunities for promoting equality are identified.

This equality impact assessment considers the impact of the approach to establish a Health Work and Well-being Challenge Fund in terms of disability, gender and race.

Background

In March 2008, Dame Carol Black's Review of the health and well-being of Britain's working age population "Working for a healthier tomorrow" was published. The Review estimated that sickness absence and worklessness associated with working age ill-health cost the economy over £100 billion a year. Of the 600,000 people annually who make a new claim for incapacity benefits, 200,000 suffer from mental health conditions indicating a connection between work and mental health issues. The Review made a number of recommendations and the Health Work and Well-being Challenge Fund was introduced as one of a number of measures to meet the challenges of improving the health and well-being of Britain's working age population.

The Health Work and Well-being Challenge Fund was established, in response to two of Dame Carol Black's recommendations. It is a competitive grant scheme to encourage initiatives that improve workplace health and well-being in small businesses and to help local partnerships kick-start health and work activity in their area. There is a particular focus on practical initiatives for mental health and well-being in smaller businesses.

The Health Work and Well-being Challenge Fund will be available throughout Great Britain. Small and medium sized enterprises and local partnerships will be able to apply for grants of between £1,000 and £50,000 for projects that improve employees' health and welfare at work.

The initiative will be administered by the Health Work and Well-being Co-ordinators in each English region and in Scotland and Wales. Building on existing business advice and experience each region and nation will have the opportunity to tailor the challenge fund to its local requirements. DWP will co-ordinate, and has overall responsibility for the policy.

Purpose of the Health Work and Well-being Challenge Fund

To encourage small and medium enterprises (businesses) and local partnerships to invest in innovative solutions that promote health and welfare at work such as those concerned with:

- alleviating stress and improving other mental health conditions;
- providing healthy activities;
- ensuring work life balance; and
- supportive management.

Who will benefit from the Health Work and Well-being Challenge Fund?

The Challenge Fund is a competitive grant scheme and so not all applications will be successful in receiving funding.

Employees of small and medium sizes enterprises will benefit from those projects that are awarded funding. Successful local partnerships will kick start health and work activity in their locality. These should contribute to employees' health and well-being at work. Since this is a proposal that is focused on workplaces it will affect people who are of working age.

However, as Dame Carol Black's Review says, "the health of the working age population is important for everyone:

- for individuals and their families because it impacts on the quality and length of life people lead, affecting their capacity to work and provide for their family;
- for employers because a healthier workforce is a more productive workforce; having healthier workers also provides an incentive to invest in their training and development, as such investment will yield a higher return; and
- for society as a whole because the consequences of ill-health lead to social exclusion, lower output and reduced tax revenues. Higher costs in terms of healthcare and social security benefits add to the burden on the taxpayer."

The aim of the Health Work and Well-being Challenge Fund is to help change culture so that all employers, especially small businesses, see the case for introducing health and well-being policies in the workplace. Applications should describe how projects will be made accessible to all employees, including disabled employees.

Consultation and involvement

During the development of the policy, and at the project stage, DWP engaged with a wide range of partners. These included the Devolved Administrations, Local Authorities, the Federation of Small Businesses, the TUC, and other Government Departments.

The Health Work and Well-being Co-ordinators, who are based with the Department of Health but funded by DWP, have responsibility for monitoring each successful project in their area. This is ongoing and the Co-ordinators contact the projects regularly to offer help and advice and to ensure that they are progressing in line with objectives and milestones specific to the individual project. DWP has overall responsibility.

Evaluation Criteria

The criteria used to assess applications to the Health Work and Well-being Challenge Fund do not include any criteria that could reasonably be considered to be discriminatory. The criteria are objective and apply nationally. Decisions are made by independent Local Assessment Panels which consist of representatives from employer groups, employee groups and Government departments in each English region and in Scotland and Wales. Training in the marking process which is obligatory for all Local Assessment Panel members will include consideration of issues around diversity and equality.

Employers and local partnership organisations that take advantage of the scheme are expected to comply with UK equality legislation. Ensuring compliance forms part of the detailed bid assessment process and will take place prior to funding being agreed on any applications to the Health Work and Well-being Challenge Fund. Those that are incompatible with the Government's duty to promote equality will be declined.

Gender equality

There is no evidence to suggest that the Challenge Fund will have a negative effect on gender.

The projects which are successful in receiving awards of funding will be those that offer inclusive solutions to problems involving health and welfare at work. These will be open to all employees so that all, regardless of gender, can benefit if they wish. This means that both men and women will be positively affected. DWP is encouraging organisations to engage their employees in developing their project.

Race equality

There is no evidence to suggest that the Challenge Fund will have a negative effect on any ethnic group.

The projects which are successful in receiving awards of funding will be those that offer inclusive solutions to problems involving health and welfare at work. These will be open to all employees so that all, regardless of ethnicity, can benefit if they wish. DWP is encouraging organisations to engage their employees in developing their project.

Disability equality

Research shows that poor mental health significantly increases the risk of poor health.

The projects which are successful in receiving awards of funding will be those that offer inclusive solutions to problems involving health and welfare at work. These will be open to all employees, including disabled employees so that all can benefit if they wish. The application should set out how the project will be accessible to all employees including disabled employees. DWP is encouraging organisations to engage their employees in developing their project.

The Challenge Fund gives priority to projects that include practical initiatives for mental health and well-being.

Monitoring and evaluation

The Health Work and Well-being Co-ordinators will monitor each project in their area. They will work with the projects to ensure that due regard is given to equality and diversity and that good practice is followed. DWP has overall responsibility for the Challenge Fund.

Conclusion

The Health Work and Well-being Challenge Fund is one initiative in a range of measures introduced to address the challenges of improving the health and well-being of Britain's working age population.

The impact assessment process has not identified any key areas of adverse impact at this stage

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