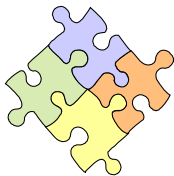


**IMPACT ASSESSMENT****Northern Ireland**

Location	Windsor House, Belfast, BT2 7UX.
Original Proposal	To withdraw from Windsor House and relocate staff to other HMRC offices within reasonable daily travel.
Decision	The intention is to withdraw from Windsor House, relocating staff to Dorchester House, Belfast by spring 2010.
Risks/Issues	None identified.
Mitigating Action	Further examination of individual circumstances will be undertaken through one to one discussions between managers and staff. No staff will be required to relocate beyond reasonable daily travel.



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**IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

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## **1 SUMMARY**

### **1.1. Background**

HMRC proposes to rationalise its estate in the Belfast urban centre with the aim of making more effective and efficient use of office space and to integrate teams within and across business units. As part of this proposal HMRC has reviewed its business requirement to remain at Windsor House.

### **1.2. Enquiry Centre Customers**

Enquiry Centre services are not provided at Windsor House. The impact on customers is expected to be minimal.

### **1.3. Socio-Economic**

The Windsor House office is situated within the local authority of Belfast District Council. The unemployment rate in the Belfast metropolitan area is 4.2%, against the UK national average of 5.3%. There are around 6,265 VAT registered businesses in Belfast, employing approximately 192,300. There are 112 HMRC employees located at Windsor House, which is less than 1% of those employed within the local authority area. It is therefore reasonable to infer that the local economy is not dependent on the HMRC presence.

### **1.4. Staff**

Windsor House accommodates a total of 112 staff. Concerns around additional travelling for staff have been raised. Further examination of individual circumstances will be undertaken through one to one discussions between managers and staff. No staff will be required to relocate beyond reasonable daily travel.

### **1.5. Staff Diversity**

The gender ratio of staff is 64% female to 36% male. 23% of staff work part-time and of those 93% are female. 4% of staff are recorded as having a disability and 1% of staff are recorded as being from an ethnic minority group. 53% of staff come from a Catholic community background and 40% come from a Protestant community background.

Workforce Change has undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on the proposal for the Belfast urban centre, inviting members of the public, HMRC staff and unions to contribute their views at an early stage in HMRC's planning process, prior to any final decisions being taken. HMRC staff will also have an opportunity to raise any particular concerns with their manager during the one to one discussions.

The Equality Impact Assessment for Consultation, outlining the proposals for the urban centre, and a summary report of the consultation responses received have been published on the HMRC intranet and internet sites.

### **1.6. Business Units**

The Tax Credit Office business unit will relocate to Dorchester House, Belfast.

## **1.7. Finance**

Estates related savings of approximately £363k per year will be realised through the full vacation of Windsor House. More detailed information on savings will be available when the closure timetable is announced.

## **2 OFFICE PROPOSAL AND BUSINESS PLANS**

### **2.1. Office Proposal**

HMRC proposes to rationalise its estate in the Belfast urban centre with the aim of making more effective and efficient use of office space and bringing teams closer together within and across business units. It is proposed to withdraw from Windsor House and relocate staff to Dorchester House in Belfast.

### **2.2. Business Plans**

Windsor House is occupied by staff from the **Tax Credit Office** business unit.

**Tax Credit Office** plans to relocate to Dorchester House in Belfast.

For most staff this will present an opportunity to co-locate with teams already there or who will also move there from other buildings in the Belfast urban centre.

## **3 ENQUIRY CENTRE CUSTOMER IMPACT**

### **3.1. Enquiry Centre Summary**

Enquiry Centre services are not provided at Windsor House. The impact on customers is expected to be minimal.

## **4 SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT**

### **4.1. Member of Parliament and Constituency**

Windsor House is within the parliamentary constituency of Belfast South. The Member of Parliament is Dr Alasdair McDonnell (SDLP)

MP's who have written in about Belfast urban centre are Eddie McGrady, Ian Paisley, Jeffrey Donaldson, Gerry Adams, Lady Silvia Hermon and Sammy Wilson. These MPs raised concerns about the potential impact the proposals may have on staff, customers, the local economy and that HMRC continued to comply with all obligations under section 5 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Gregory Campbell called a Westminster Hall debate and concerns were raised about public transport difficulties, potential increased travel for staff, the centralisation of work in Belfast and HMRC's Regional Review process for Northern Ireland. Workforce Change representatives held an MP meeting in Belfast on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2008 and it was attended by Jeffrey Donaldson, William McCrea and Alasdair McDonnell.

## 4.2. Local Economy

Windsor House is situated within the local authority of Belfast District Council. The unemployment rate in the Belfast metropolitan area is 4.2%<sup>1</sup>, against the UK national average of 5.3%<sup>2</sup>. The table below shows the relative job density for Belfast District Council, the Northern Ireland Region and the UK as a whole. Job density is a ratio of total jobs to working-age population and provides a measure of the economic health of an area<sup>3</sup>.

**Table 1 - Job Density**

Belfast District Council	Northern Ireland	UK
1.36	0.79	0.84

There are around 6,265 VAT registered businesses in Belfast employing approximately 192,300<sup>1</sup>. There are 112 HMRC employees located at Windsor House, which is less than 1% of those employed within the local authority area. It is therefore reasonable to infer that the local economy is not dependent on the HMRC presence.

There may be some impact on local businesses which at present benefit from the custom of HMRC staff based at Windsor House. Any negative impact that may be caused by HMRC withdrawal from this location is expected to be temporary, lasting until such time as the building is reoccupied by another employer.

## 4.3. Sustainable Development

The intention to vacate Windsor House assists HMRC in meeting its Sustainable Development Action Plan objective to provide office space of the right size and quality to meet long term business needs. Through the Sustainable Development Action Plan HMRC has also committed to improving the energy efficiency of all retained offices and the Corporate Responsibility Unit will work with Estates and Support Services (ESS) and IMS to meet this objective.

## 4.4. Media Activity

There have been local and regional press articles on the plans to reshape HMRC in Belfast urban centre but no specific media coverage around the future of Windsor House.

<sup>1</sup> Source: [www.belfastcity.gov.uk](http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk)

<sup>2</sup> Source: [www.nomisweb.co.uk](http://www.nomisweb.co.uk)

<sup>3</sup> Source: Dept of Enterprise, Trade & Investment, Monthly Labour Market Report, Jan 2008. Data as at 2005.

#### 4.5. External Engagement

The three local authorities in Belfast urban centre were contacted on 18th September 2007. A six week period for responses was given and comments sought on various issues including local/regional economic factors, regeneration plans, wider employer activity and plans for new or improved transport links. Responses were received from two local authorities, Lisburn City Council and Antrim Borough Council. Responses included concerns about the impact on the local economy and jobs.

### 5 STAFF & STAFF DIVERSITY IMPACT

#### 5.1. Business Unit Headcount

The table below shows the business units occupying Windsor House<sup>4</sup>.

Table 2 - Staff in post by business unit

Business Unit	Staff numbers
Tax Credit Office	112
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>112</b>

#### 5.2. Staff Diversity

The following diversity data has been provided by background HR systems and staff completion is not mandatory. The information is therefore incomplete for ethnicity and disability<sup>5</sup>.

Table 3 - Staff diversity<sup>6</sup>

Ethnicity	%	Disability	%	Age Group	%
White	63	Disabled	4	15 - 24	11
Ethnic minority	1	Not disabled	36	25 - 34	44
Chose not to declare	4	Chose not to declare	0	35 - 49	35
Not known	32	Not known	60	50 - 59	10
				60+	0
Gender	%	Working Pattern	%	Part Time Gender	%

<sup>4</sup> Source: Latest headcount data provided by HMRC business units

<sup>5</sup> Source: HR data at 1/10/06

<sup>6</sup> Figures omitted in accordance with Code of Practice on ethnicity and disability monitoring

Male	36	Full time	77	Male	7
Female	64	Part time	23	Female	93
<b>Community Background %</b>					
Catholic	53				
Protestant	40				
Other faiths and philosophies	0				
Not Known	7				

### 5.3. Equality Screening

Workforce Change has undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on the proposal for the Belfast urban centre, inviting members of the public, HMRC staff and unions to contribute their views at an early stage in HMRC's planning process, prior to any final decisions being taken. This invitation has included HMRC staff based at Olivetree House. Staff will also have an opportunity to raise any particular concerns with their manager during the one to one discussions.

The Equality Impact Assessment for Consultation, outlining the proposals for the urban centre, and a summary report of the consultation responses received have been published on the HMRC intranet and internet sites.

### 5.4. Staff Consultation

HMRC undertook a 10 week period of consultation between September 2007 and November 2007, inviting staff and unions to comment on the proposal to reshape HMRC within the Belfast urban centre. During this period 120 responses were received, representing the views of 524 of the 1,700 staff within the urban centre. In addition both the PCS and ARC unions made comments on behalf of their members.

The Summary Report of the Consultation Responses for the Belfast urban centre was published on the staff intranet site on 24 January 2007.

Comments were constructive and covered a range of topics, the main themes being travel, customer consideration and diversity. The majority of comments focused on travel related issues, including the likelihood of extended travelling times to new offices, poor availability of car parking in Belfast, increased costs and impact on work/life balance.

Many respondents raised concerns over potential impact to customer services as a result of implementing the proposals.

Unions and some staff felt that Northern Ireland should have been reviewed as a whole as this would have shown a better commitment to the equality agenda and Section 75 (Northern Ireland Act 1998).

Unions and some staff believe that the Belfast proposals contravene the Northern Ireland Assembly's decentralisation policy and other political and economic initiatives.

Business managers will meet with every individual affected by changes and discuss the implications for them and their options. Some staff may need to move to another HMRC location depending on personal circumstances.

## **6 RELOCATION OPTIONS FOR STAFF**

This section considers the impact of relocating staff to alternative HMRC offices.

TCO, currently a total of 112 staff, will relocate to Dorchester House, Belfast.

The distance between Windsor House and Dorchester House is 0.5 miles (0.8km). The journey between offices by car takes approximately three minutes. There are no bus routes linking the offices<sup>7</sup>.

### **6.1. Dorchester House, Belfast**

The map in section 8 shows the position of Windsor House in relation to Dorchester House.

Dorchester House is an ex-IR office. HMRC occupies a space sufficient to accommodate an estimated 512 staff before desk sharing and shift patterns are taken into account. The building currently houses 543 staff. The majority of staff work in National Processing<sup>8</sup>.

Dorchester House has 12 parking spaces. There are no commuter spaces: all spaces are either official spaces or allocated as designated disabled bays.

Public car parking is available within 0.3 mile (0.5km) of the office<sup>9</sup>.

One to one discussions between staff and managers will establish the full impact of relocation to Dorchester House and could lead to alternative arrangements being considered.

### **6.2. Daily Travel Assistance**

A calculation based upon 112 relocated members of staff travelling between Windsor House and Dorchester House, a return journey of 1 mile (1.6km), produces a maximum Daily Travel Assistance cost of £22k over three years<sup>10</sup>.

Because Daily Travel Assistance forms part of a person's taxable income, any individuals receiving Working Tax Credit and claiming Daily Travel Assistance should be aware that their Working Tax Credit entitlement could be reduced as a result.

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<sup>7</sup> Source: [www.translink.co.uk](http://www.translink.co.uk)

<sup>8</sup> Source: Latest headcount data provided by HMRC business units

<sup>9</sup> [www.multimap.com](http://www.multimap.com)

<sup>10</sup> Formula: staff x return mileage x PTR x 260 days x 3 years

### **6.3. Other Government Departments**

The expectation is that staff will relocate within HMRC. However opportunities may exist in other Government Departments or within the Northern Ireland Civil Service, Northern Ireland Office and Northern Ireland Assembly. Those located in the area include

- Northern Ireland Office
- Northern Ireland Assembly
- Dept of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
- Dept Of Agriculture and Rural Development
- Dept of Culture, Arts and Leisure
- Dept of Enterprise, Trade & Investment
- Dept of the Environment
- Dept of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
- Dept of Regional Development
- Dept of Social Development.

## **7 ESTATES & FINANCE**

### **7.1. Estate Information**

HMRC occupies Windsor House under a Memorandum of Terms of Occupation (MOTO) with the Department for Finance & Personnel. Windsor House has no on-site car parking.

### **7.2. Finance**

Estates-related savings of approximately £363k per year will be achieved through the full vacation of Windsor House. Initial relocation costs and will need to be offset against this saving. More detailed information on savings will be available when the closure timetable is announced.

### **7.3. Information Management Solutions (IMS)**

IMS has been engaged in the detailed consideration of the proposals for Windsor House. IMS will work closely with ESS and business unit managers to provide the IT and telephony requirements for staff relocating to Dorchester House.

## 8 MAP OF BELFAST URBAN CENTRE OFFICES

