

Together
we make a
difference

Hybrid Working Policy

FEBRUARY 2022

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Hybrid working is a flexible working arrangement, which allows employees to work from a variety of different locations. It empowers employees to work flexibly from any location, whether from a council building, within the community or by home working.
- 1.2 The council has adopted hybrid working so that staff can work from more than one location in the most 'effective' and 'efficient' way which benefits the council, our staff and the service we deliver to our residents
- 1.3 The council believes that its staff members are its most valuable asset and is committed to attracting and retaining the very best talent. It also appreciates that the UK workforce is becoming increasingly diverse and includes a high percentage of parents and individuals with caring responsibilities, as well as those whose interests and aspirations impact on their time. Hybrid working is one of the flexible working options offered by the council and enables a better work life balance together with the ability to meet business needs in the most effective and efficient way.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 **Suitability of the Role for Hybrid Working**
Generally, it will be those roles that are traditionally office based that are suitable for hybrid working. Hybrid working is not suitable for roles where there is a requirement for the role holder to be at a particular location, using specialist equipment or providing face-to-face interaction with the public.
- 2.2 This policy should also be read in conjunction with:
- Flexible Working Policy
 - Flexitime Policy
 - Driving Policy
 - Data Protection
 - ICT Usage Policy
 - Disciplinary Policy
 - Promoting Attendance Managing Absence
 - FAQ – Guidance for Staff

3. PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 The Council wants to support staff to perform their role when, where and how they and their Manager choose, to maximise their productivity, innovation and ultimately deliver best value to the council.

- 3.2 The degree of work flexibility will depend on the service that is being delivered and the workstyle of each role. It is recognised that, due to their nature, some roles in the Council will have more scope for home or hybrid working than others. However, all managers and employees are encouraged to continuously identify opportunities and maximise the potential to work flexibly wherever possible whilst ensuring operational and team needs are met.
- 3.3 If business needs are such that staff are required to be present in the office, then they will be expected to attend.

4. HYBRID WORKING STYLES

- 4.1 There are four styles that the council had identified for traditionally office based staff.
- 4.1.1 **100% Office Worker**
This is suitable for staff who have to be physically present at a particular office to undertake the work required, for example where direct face-to-face contact with members of the public or other staff members is required.
- 4.1.2 **Hybrid Worker**
This is suitable for staff who are required to work from council offices however some of the work they carry out as part of their normal duties can be undertaken from home. They may also be required to attend meetings at a variety of council and partner offices.
- 4.1.3 **Mobile Hybrid Worker**
This style is suitable for staff who work predominately out in the community and are required to access and update information whilst working out in the field, as well as at a variety of council and partner offices. They will also be able to carry out a proportion of their work from home.
- 4.1.4 **100% Home Based**
This style is suitable for staff where there is no requirement for work to be undertaken outside of the home base. All of the employees working time is spent at the home although they may be required to attend an office base or other venue on a very infrequent or ad hoc basis.
- 4.2 **Contractual Place of Work**
For the 100% office worker, hybrid worker and mobile hybrid worker the contractual place of work will be their usual designated office base as set out in existing terms and conditions of employment.

For the 100% home worker the contractual place of work will be their home.
- 4.3 The council considers that 100% home working will only be suitable in exceptional circumstances as it is felt the combination of home/office working is far more beneficial for employee wellbeing, team morale and business need.

- 4.4 If it is considered that 100% home working is the most appropriate style this will need to be agreed in conjunction with the Corporate Director and Human Resources as it will result in a change of terms and conditions of employment.

5. AGREEING APPROPRIATE WORKING STYLE AND WORK PATTERN

- 5.1 The working style which is most appropriate for each staff member must be agreed between staff members and their manager.
- 5.2 The [Working Style Discussion Form](#) has been designed to assist with the process. This enables full consideration of the most appropriate working style, pattern of work, ie. home/office split, any operational requirements and any equipment that will be needed.
- 5.3 Each discussion form will require sign off by the relevant Head of Service and in the instances where the staff member is likely to be working more from home than office base sign off is also required from the relevant Corporate Director.
- 5.4 In agreeing the appropriate working style and working arrangements, due consideration needs to be given to the best fit operationally for the service and for the team
- 5.5 Whilst there are no set limits or restrictions to the number of days working from home operational need must always come first and staff/managers need to give sensible consideration to the most appropriate working arrangement.
- 5.6 DSE Assessments are required for each location of work and must be attached when submitting the Working Style Discussion form. Staff who work from home for any part of a working week must also provide a photograph of their work set up with the DSE Assessment.
- 5.7 Once completed the discussion forms must be sent to HR.
- 5.8 **Review of Working Style/Arrangements**
The working arrangements agreed and documented on the Working Style Discussion Form will be reviewed on an annual basis through the 1-2-1+ process. If however the staff member or their manager have concerns at any time that the arrangement is not working as effectively as it should this should be addressed. Any changes made to the working style or pattern of home/office working must be carried out taking into consideration operational and team needs.
- 5.9 **Resolution of disagreement about working style**
All of the discussion forms are signed off by the relevant Head of Service and Director where there is a request for more than 50% home working to ensure that decisions regarding home/office working are consistent across the service and directorate. However if a staff member considers that their working style and/or pattern of days working from home/office are not appropriate they should raise this initially with their Head of Service or the HR Manager.

- 5.10 It is anticipated that any disagreement can be managed informally however if concerns remain unresolved they should be raised as a request for resolution via the Council's Resolution Policy.

6. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 **Insurance, Mortgage and Tenancy Arrangements**
Whilst hybrid working is covered by the Council's Employer's Liability Policy employees are required to notify their own insurance provider if they work from home as part of their week.
- 6.2 Similarly, staff must also contact their mortgage provider or landlord as some mortgage and rental agreements do not permit any form of homeworking to take place on the premises. It is the employee's responsibility to undertake these checks.
- 6.3 **ICT & Workstation Equipment**
Managers should carefully consider the need for the additional equipment based on the frequency of home working, the employee's requirements including any DSE considerations.
- 6.4 The council will not pay for a full workstation set up at both home and office location. They will however pay for adaptations such as mouse, keyboard, monitor raiser if appropriate and as identified by your DSE assessment.
- 6.5 Employees should take reasonable care of the council equipment and only use it for council business. ICT equipment may only be used in accordance with the council's relevant [ICT policies](#).
- 6.6 Personal equipment that an employee uses for work purposes remains their responsibility and the council is not liable for any loss, damage, repair or replacement of any personal equipment. If an item of equipment is deemed necessary for work, the employee should contact their line manager.
- 6.7 **Working Time**
The Council's policies relating to working time and flexi-time arrangements will continue to apply to all staff irrespective of their working arrangements. It is important that managers monitor working hours and where these are excessive, talk to staff about how the balance can be improved. It is also important that staff clock using the Crown System in line with the [Flexitime Policy](#). This includes actively clocking in and out at lunchtime when home working.
- 6.8 **Confidentiality**
It is important that staff ensure they maintain confidentiality regardless of whether they work in the office, at home or from another location. The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 applies regardless of work location and staff are responsible for keeping the councils data secure. The council's [Data Protection Policy](#) must be followed at all times and staff must take all reasonable steps to keep Council information safe.

6.9

Business Mileage

Business mileage can be claimed in line with section 6 of the council [Driving Policy](#). The contractual/normal place of work is the work location set out in employees Statement of Particulars and staff. Mileage is not claimable for journeys to and from your contractual place of work. Where an employee travels to a location other than their contractual place of work, either from home or on the way home, expense claims will be considered only in respect of any mileage incurred which is over and above their usual home to work mileage.

6.10

Household Costs

The costs of electricity, water, heating, telephone, broadband and other utilities will not be covered by the council. These costs will remain the employee's responsibility.

7. HEALTH AND SAFETY

7.1

Health and Safety

Employers are under a statutory duty to provide its employees with a safe working environment and all employees should be made aware of arrangements to protect their health and safety, including personal security. Health and Safety Legislation applies to all employees, whether they are working in the office, remotely or from home.

7.2

Employees are responsible for taking reasonable steps to ensure their own health and safety and that of anyone else that may be affected by what they do. For example, a home worker needs to include anyone who may have access to the work space during the employees working hours. It is the homeworkers' responsibility to carry out adequate checks and report any work related hazards to others who might access their work space.

7.3

The employee must also report any changes to their home working setup to their manager and update the Risk Assessment accordingly to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of the employee is maintained at all times.

7.4

DSE Assessments

As part of the process for agreeing working style and working pattern for hybrid working, managers must consider all the health and safety implications. Therefore as part of the Working Style Discussion Forms a DSE assessment must be submitted including a photograph of the work station set up.

7.5

Staff are also required to update their DSE Assessment following any changes to their home working set up.

7.6

Electrical equipment

All equipment used in home work locations must be checked to ensure that it complies with best practice and manufacturer's guidelines. Staff must ensure that equipment is available for checking when advised by the council that it is taking place. Homeworkers will be responsible for any other electrical

equipment used by them in their work activities and will continue to be responsible for the safety of electrical sockets and wiring in their home.

8. SICKNESS ABSENCE

8.1

Sickness Absence

Staff who are working from home must follow the normal notification and reporting procedures when not fit to work due to health reasons and will remain subject to the Promoting Attendance and Managing Absence policy.

9. MISCONDUCT

9.1

Employee conduct

If hybrid working becomes unsuitable due to employee conduct or performance, the homeworking arrangement may be terminated immediately. Further disciplinary action may also be taken in line with council policy.

10. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT MONITORING

10.1

The operation of this policy will be monitored for its impact on different staff groups in line with the Equality Act 2010. This will enable the council to assess whether any differences have an adverse impact on a particular group, such that further action would be required.

11. DATA PROTECTION

11.1

In implementing this policy, the council will ensure that any personal data relating to the application of this policy will be obtained, processed and destroyed in line with Data Protection requirements.