

Agile Working Policy

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Policy Title	Agile Working Policy
Policy Author	HR Team - PSPS
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Policy Sign-off	Head of Paid Service/SHDC Council

Scope of the Policy

The policy applies to employees of the Council who have a role that allows them to work in an agile way regardless of whether they are fixed-term, permanent, full or part-time. It is recognised that due to the diverse nature of roles within the organisation that work patterns will vary and that this will need to be taken into account when applying this policy.

The Agile Working Policy provides a framework for consistent and fair practice on the issues to be taken into account when implementing and managing employees who are agile working.

The Agile Working Policy does not negate or supersede the 'Flexible Working Policy'.

The ability to work in an agile way is dependent on a number of factors including but not limited to:

- the requirements of the role;
- the facilities in place to support the particular employee;
- the service being delivered by the employee's service area;
- the Organisation as a whole;
- the welfare of the employee.

Introduction

Teams across our Council have been working in an agile way for many years.

Agile working is a way of working that enables the Council to empower their workforce to work more flexibly by embracing new ways of working, supported by technology.

Many employees already work in an agile way. The Council supports employees to work in this way, recognising the benefits agile working can bring to employees and the Councils as service providers.

Whilst the Council already has technology to support agile working for many employees, such as Microsoft 365, the Council is continuing to invest in additional/improved technology that provides the benefit of services to be provided in new ways. In many cases this technology also facilitates agile working.

It is recognised, however, that this level of flexibility is not possible for all our employees and that our multi-site environment requires employees to be visible and available to our customers and colleagues.

It is important that employees are regularly connected with the organisation, supporting colleagues and customers with visible and accessible leadership and support.

The agile working approach has the opportunity to increase productivity and improve work/life balance for individuals. The ability to work in an agile and flexible way is now a key consideration for individuals when exploring employment opportunities.

This policy defines the procedure to support agile working and the roles and responsibilities associated with the management of an agile workforce.

The policy adheres to statutory UK legislation and ACAS best practice. The Council ensures it is a fair, equitable and transparent policy with the needs of employees at heart. The Council ensure compliance with equality and diversity, making sure consideration is given to the needs of its employees, balancing these with the needs of the business.

Governing Legislation

- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR);
- Data Protection Act 2018;
- Working Time Directive;
- The Flexible working Regulations 2014.

Supporting Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the HR policies and procedures.

- Flexible Working Policy;

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1. What is Agile Working

- 1.1 'Agile Working' is a flexible and more sustainable way of working for employees who do not need to be fixed to one location and desk and have the tools and technology to work anywhere at any time determined by service needs and work.
- 1.2 Agile working enables employees to work from different office locations; work from home or undertake more duties whilst out on site; and also seize the benefits of products like Microsoft 365 that can reduce the need for travel and increase collaboration.

1.3 Key responsibilities

1.3.1 People Managers should:

- ensure that they comply with this procedure and apply it effectively and fairly within their area of responsibility,
- where appropriate, seek advice and/or guidance from HR,
- ensure that they agree appropriate arrangements for any employee who works in an agile way, which includes employees working from multiple Council office bases (ie frequency/days/supervision/work space etc.);
- have risk assessments in place where required for those who are 'Agile Working'.
- set out and monitor defined performances measures or work outcomes, in line with the Performance Appraisal process, and acting on these where appropriate for each employee,
- be accessible and available to provide employees with the necessary visibility, support and guidance. This will ensure that the service delivery and performance of their service area is being delivered in line with Councils' objectives.

1.3.2 Employees should:

- comply with this policy in a reasonable, constructive and appropriate manner;
- be focused on the needs of the Councils' and their customers when working in an agile way.
- abide by policies and procedures whilst 'Agile Working' and comply with the Health and Safety policy and procedures by participating in and undertaking risk assessments; carrying out any necessary actions to minimise risk, maintain a safe working environment and take reasonable care of their own safety;
- consult with any necessary parties, such as landlords, insurance or mortgage companies, if the agile working includes working from home.
- be available to amend 'Agile Working' arrangements in line with service need;

- ensure their contact details, calendar availability, colleagues and customers are able to easily make contact with them whilst 'Agile Working'.
- be able to work in an environment that lends itself to levels of work concentration.
- Complete an annual DSE assessment

2 Agile Working Procedure

2.1 The way an employee undertakes 'Agile Working' will depend upon their role and the demands and needs of the service area that they work in.

2.2 Line Managers are responsible for agreeing practical and operational arrangements in regard to 'Agile Working' with employees, such as arrangements for communication and support.

2.3 Employees who work in an agile way will still need to interact regularly with their Line Manager, colleagues and engage with the wider organisation, as required, and will still be required to attend at the office as and when required.

2.4 This policy can be adopted by apprentices but consideration needs to be given to the support that is required as this may be their first workplace, support will also be required to complete the learning outcomes of the apprenticeship. In the first 3 months more support face to face may be required from the People Manager and also the wider team.

2.5 Employees who are working in an agile way should ensure that working patterns, working hours and contact arrangements are shared with colleagues to ensure the employee has privacy when they are not working, enabling them to separate their working and home lives.

2.6 A review will be undertaken if 'Agile Working' arrangements are deemed to be unsuccessful and the employee may be requested to revert to working their previous working.

2.7 A review might also be necessary if the arrangements have been agreed for a trial period and it is also recommended to review arrangements annually.

3 Agile Working Procedure Health & Safety Risk Assessment

- 3.1 To comply with relevant legislation People Managers must ensure appropriate risk assessments are undertaken.
- 3.2 Due consideration to lone working arrangements should be explored fully between the Line Manager and employee to ensure safe working arrangements are in place.
- 3.3 When agile working from home, even if this is only on an ad-hoc basis, the employee has a responsibility to ensure they have an appropriate workspace with adequate security, storage and screening from activities and noise in the rest of the home and there must also be adequate ventilation and lighting.
- 3.4 Employees who may occasionally work from home under the 'Agile Working Policy' should be free of disruption and have a suitable environment in which they are able to perform their work.
- 3.5 Employees working at home should not be distracted from their work.
- 3.6 Employees should ensure all work materials, documents, IT equipment are stored safely in line with data protection requirements.
- 3.7 If a Line Manager requests an employee to return to their work place due to a business/service need, the employee will be expected to return to the office.
- 3.8 There may be occasions when the provisions of this policy are superseded by other policies, such as during bad weather or emergencies, where alternative short-term arrangements may be necessary for the employee and employer.
- 3.9 The policy does not impact nor should be considered to deal with other short-term working from home arrangements which employees and Line Managers may agree to. Examples are during recuperation, medical/injury or disability related situations where an employee may be physically prevented from travelling to or working in the normal office environment.

4 Costs Associated with Agile Working

- 4.1 Employees will not be eligible to claim expenses for use of personal equipment such as home phone lines.
- 4.2 Employees are responsible for any home internet broadband costs and increased energy or heating costs whilst 'Agile Working' at home.
- 4.3 Agile Working should not incur additional costs, such as travel, to the Council (i.e. commutable mileage would still be deductible from journeys based on contracted work base).

4.4 The employee's contractual designated base will remain unchanged whilst 'Agile Working'.

4.5 Employees who work in an agile way, will continue to have a contractual base of an appropriate Council Office location.

5 Data Protection

5.1 The provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018 must be complied with in relation to the security of information at all times no matter what work location is used or working pattern is followed by an employee.

5.2 Appropriate security requirements must be met in relation to equipment and Council information in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018.

5.3 When dealing with personal information the same measures must be applied as if working in the office.

5.4 When working in an agile manner, the employee is responsible for the security of equipment, software, files and any other information in their possession, including the transportation of such items whenever outside of the office environment.

5.5 It is particularly important to ensure that non-authorized personnel (in the home environment or whilst working off site) cannot gain access to confidential or personal information as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018.

5.6 All Council paperwork should be securely locked away and only be accessible to the employee. Considerations should be made when working remotely on laptops to ensure that the screen cannot be overseen by others and precautions taken to avoid laptops being stolen or lost.

5.7 Council paperwork must be returned to Council offices where it will be disposed of correctly (it's also commercial waste and must not be disposed of in domestic bins at home or anywhere else).

6 Property and Liability Insurance

6.1 Computers and other items of equipment provided by the Council as part of the 'Agile Working' arrangement will be covered by the Council's insurance policy.

6.2 Employees who 'Agile Work' from home on an ad-hoc basis as part of 'Agile Working' may be required to contact their own insurance company to inform them that they will be working at home.

6.3 Employees who `Work Remotely` from home on an ad-hoc basis are advised to contact their mortgage provider, letting agent, landlord to inform them that they will be working from home on an occasional, infrequent basis.