

Agile Policy

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1. Introduction

1.1 This document sets out the policy and procedures for agile working within Lewes District and Eastbourne Borough Councils.

1.2 This policy applies to all employees. It will be applied fairly and consistently to all staff employed in the councils to ensure that our approach promotes and protects equality of opportunity in both service delivery and employment at all times, in line with corporate policies and training.

2. Equality and Diversity

- 2.1 The councils are committed to good practice in equality and diversity, and to meeting our statutory equality responsibilities, both as an employer and in the provision of services. In respect of agile working, this means ensuring that staff with a protected characteristic covered by the Equality Act, are not discriminated against or treated either more or less favourably.
- 2.2 An equality and fairness analysis has been conducted and will be reviewed periodically.
- 2.3 Where a staff member requires a meeting to discuss reasonable adjustments around ways of working and agile working they may be accompanied by an appropriate person to provide support, in addition to their right to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union official. The manager responsible for the meeting will ensure reasonable adjustments and special arrangements are considered where possible to accommodate dependent on operational need.
- 2.4 Staff members are invited to advise their line manager and subsequent managers of their needs and requirements to ensure they are known to the councils and can be supported where possible. This may include the requirement to attend an occupational health assessment so that the council can seek professional advice on medical conditions.

3. What is Agile Working?

3.1 Agile working is the term used to describe how employees can work flexibly from any location, whether it is from a council building, in the community, from home or a combination of these. It is about enabling individuals to work in an environment that best suits the job role so that work is completed in the most appropriate place, at the best time, and in the best way, to deliver the service to our customers.

3.2 It is the policy of the council to ensure that:

- Agile working delivers the business needs of the service. It is a formal arrangement entered into jointly by the councils and the employee.
- Agile working promotes work/life balance for employees and improves performance management by emphasising the quality of output rather than attendance in the office.
- Employees are provided with appropriate IT support, including equipment, software, training and technical support and advice, as appropriate to their work style.
- All working environments (including the home 'office') are subject to a [risk self-assessment](#) to ensure the health and safety of employees.
- The council offices have adequate arrangements for hot-desks for employees who work in an agile way, including ensuring workstations meet display screen equipment (DSE) standards and provision of sufficient quantity and quality of meeting spaces.
- All employees working from home have suitable child care/dependent care arrangements in place where appropriate; Child care should be in place during the time which home working employees spend working at home. Agile working provides a flexible way of working to fit around child care commitments or other responsibilities but it should not be used as an alternative to child care.

- All equipment provided to support the employee working in an agile way is for the exclusive use of that employee (i.e. not for use by family/friends);
- Managers and employees are provided with procedures, training and support, as necessary, to ensure that performance and conduct can be managed for agile workers.
- Line managers, under the overall direction of Heads of Service, are responsible for:
 - the day-to-day management of agile working;
 - ensuring compliance with published agile working standards, procedures, working practices and technology changes.
- All council employees are responsible for familiarising themselves and ensuring that they comply with this procedure and standards.

3.3 All mobile, flexible and home workers will be issued with a council laptop. This will be the standard equipment staff are required to use whether working from home or at one of our council locations and therefore staff should ensure that laptops are not used for home working only or stored at one site.

4. Agile Working - Categories of Work Style

4.1 The different ways in which agile working can be undertaken are as follows:

| Workstyle | Desk | Example Equipment | Examples |
|------------------|-------------|--|--|
| Office | Fixed | Desk phone only Fixed PC computer | Works exclusively from the office, e.g. Customer Advisors |
| Mobile | Hot | Laptop and/or Tablet Smartphone | Works in the community or at various locations including the office or home Neighbourhood Advisors |
| Flexible/Mobile | Hot | Laptop Desk phone when in office Smartphone when remote | Works from offices, home and attends external meetings or site visits regularly e.g. Managers Functional Leads Strategy and Partnership Leads |
| Flexible /Office | Hot | Laptop Desk phone when in office Softphone with headset when at home | Works predominately in the office with cross-site and home working e.g. Finance and Audit Lawyers |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|-------------|
| | | | Caseworkers |
|--|--|--|-------------|

4.2 In the main, a role's workstyle will be apparent from the job description, e.g. Neighbourhood workers are classed as mobile.

4.3 Requirements of the role may vary, however this does not necessarily constitute a change in workstyles.

5. Home working

5.1 Home working, for the purpose of this policy can be classified in the following ways:

- Mobile workers using their home as a journey base
- Ad hoc home working to undertake a particular project or task; and
- Those working from home in the event of adverse conditions e.g. adverse weather.

5.2 If a member of staff wishes to request to work from home as a regular arrangement (for the majority of their working hours) they should do so by making an application under the Flexible Working Policy. Once received an assessment of the role and whether it can be undertaken at home for the majority of time will be undertaken on an individual basis using the Home Worker Analysis form.

6. Mobile and Flexible Workers

- 6.1 Where employees have been designated as a flexible or mobile worker the focus on performance will shift to the outputs and quality of outcomes achieved, rather than time spent in the office. Managers will ensure that staff are clear of the expectations around mobile and flexible working and that business needs are met at all times. With the use of remote technology staff should also ensure they 'switch off' and maintain reasonable working hours.
- 6.2 Where problems occur the home working arrangement may be withdrawn temporarily or permanently. In these instances an employee will use the hot-desk facilities instead of working from home.
- 6.3 In operational emergencies e.g. lack of cover to meet service requirements, or in the case of poor performance, the arrangement may be suspended or terminated with immediate effect.

7. Changes to Workstyle

- 7.1 Where the role is re-categorised to another work style due to changes in tasks or development of technology then discussions will take place with the individual regarding the proposed change of work style.
- 7.2 If an individual requests a change to their work style due to medical reasons there will be a discussion between the line manager and the individual, and there may also be a member of HR present. Following this meeting a referral will be made to the councils' Occupational Health advisor. The **Specialist Advisor (Health and Safety)** may be required to carry out an assessment and can advise on reasonable adjustments to working practices that could be considered

8. Hot Desks

- 8.1 Unless a medical need has been confirmed by Occupational Health in discussion with HR and the Specialist Advisor (Health and Safety); Mobile, Flexible and Home Workers will not be allocated a fixed desk due to the nature of their role but when working at the office will have access to a hot desk.
- 8.2 Hot desks can be used by all employees, in order to provide a professional and welcoming environment a clear desk policy should be followed at all times. If a member of staff is going to be away from their hot desk for more than 2 hours (for example, at meetings, they should clear the desk to ensure that it can be used by somebody else. The clear desk policy also applies to fixed workers, who should not personalise their work station as the desks may be reallocated when not in use e.g. sickness and holidays.
- 8.3 Lockers are provided for staff use to store personal and work related items.

9. Equipment

- 9.1 The councils will provide any essential technology equipment. This will remain the property of the councils.
- 9.2 An inventory of equipment provided will be drawn up and signed by the employee and the manager. This equipment will remain the property of the councils who will bear the cost of maintaining it. It is the line manager's responsibility to ensure that all appropriate equipment is provided at the start of employment and returned at the end of employment.
- 9.3 A variety of different laptop bags will be offered /provided to protect laptops and to enable staff to carry it easily when travelling.
- 9.4 Employees are required to:
- Take reasonable care of equipment and use it only for council sanctioned purposes.
 - Ensure that the equipment is only used by them for work purposes and not by family members or friends for non-work purposes.
 - Use equipment only in accordance with any operating instructions.
 - Make arrangements to return the equipment to their line manger when employment ends.

10. Health and Safety

- 10.1 Employees working at or from home have statutory duties and responsibilities under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of anyone else who might be affected by their actions and omissions.
- 10.2 When working from home, the employee will ensure they have an appropriate workspace with adequate security, storage and screening from activities and noise in the rest of the home. There must also be adequate ventilation and lighting.
- 10.3 Prior to commencing home, flexible or mobile working, employees must carry out a home workplace self-assessment using the Home Working Risk Assessment. This will be used to assess any risks and the measures necessary to prevent them.
- 10.4 The [OLLE](#) online 'Working Safely with Computers' course should be undertaken by all new staff and on a regular basis by all existing staff:
- 10.5 Employees must not have meetings in their home with clients, customers or officers from other agencies, or divulge their home address or personal telephone number to them.
- 10.6 In order to ensure the safety of staff working alone or at remote locations, they must comply with normal lone working procedures to ensure that their whereabouts are known.
- 10.7 One of the bonuses of working in an agile way is that it may mean increased flexibility in the hours worked by employees if they are not restricted by the opening hours of the office. This also brings with it the potential to work extended hours. It is important that working patterns and level of hours are not detrimental to health and wellbeing. Employees are asked to work within the requirements of the [Working Time Regulations](#). It is part of an employee's responsibility to ensure that their manager is aware of the number of hours they work to comply with the Regulations.

The main points to be aware of are:

- Maximum weekly working time is not to exceed 48 hours per 7 day period when averaged out over a 17 week period.
- A rest break of at least 20 minutes should be taken when working more than 6 hours per day.
- Length of daily rest break (overnight) of 11 hours per 24 hours.
- Length of weekly rest break (weekend), usually 24 hours rest in each 7 day period.

10.8 Flexible and mobile workers will continue to be covered by the organisation's employer's liability insurance. In the event of an accident or injury at home, it may, however, be very difficult to prove negligence on the part of the councils, because the officer working at home would be primarily responsible for their own working environment.

10.9 If an employee injures themselves whilst working at home they must notify their manager at the earliest opportunity. The employee must complete the accident form, which is located on the council's intranet as soon as practicable. If the employee is incapacitated the manager must complete the accident form on the individual's behalf.

10.10 Employees must report any health and safety concerns to their manager at the earliest opportunity.

11. Sickness

- 11.1 If an employee is unable to work due to personal sickness they should follow the councils' [attendance management procedure](#) in reporting this.
- 11.2 In some roles it may be possible for the member of staff, depending on the nature of their illness, to work at home. This is a discussion to be held between the member of staff and their manager and any agreement reached should accurately reflect whether or not they are well enough to be working, whether that is at home or in the office.

12. Security

- 12.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the IT Acceptable Use Policy and Data Protection Policy. In addition all staff should familiarise themselves with the online OLLE training course on Information Security
- 12.2 All information and equipment must be kept safely at all times. Line managers must be satisfied that adequate precautions are in place to maintain confidentiality of material in accordance with the Data Protection Act.
- 12.3 Confidential and sensitive information must be maintained to ensure that it is not accessible to visitors or others living in the home.
- 12.4 It is important that confidential waste be shredded or returned for disposal.

13. Insurance

- 13.1 Equipment belonging to the councils will continue to be covered by the organisation's insurance arrangements, provided it is stored securely whether in the office or in the employee's home.
- 13.2 IT equipment is covered by the councils' computer policies. Employees should, however, at all times be thoughtful in their use of the equipment and take precautions to minimise the risk of loss or damage. The insurance will not cover the theft of a laptop left in view and unattended in a vehicle.
- 13.3 Employees who fail to take appropriate care of council equipment provided to them or misuse the equipment whilst it is in their possession could result in formal action being taken under the council's Disciplinary Procedure.

14. Managing Performance and Communication

- 14.1 Good communication is essential to effective agile working. The manager and employee should plan and agree how they will communicate effectively with each other. The onus is equally on both manager and employee to ensure that meetings and contact happens.
- 14.2 Team briefings/meetings should take place regularly regardless of manager and employee work styles or work patterns.
- 14.3 Employees working at home must be available to managers by phone, instant messaging tools e.g. MiCollab and e-mail during their working hours.
- 14.4 Manager and employee will mutually agree tasks and objectives so that the employee has a clear idea as to what is expected of them when working at home. The manager will assess/monitor performance and output.
- 14.5 Regular one to one discussions will be used to discuss work performance, outcomes and individual progress. Reviews of progress in regard to quality and quantity of work will be used to establish if the employee needs any assistance, training and/or support.
- 14.6 There is a suggested template for conducting a [one to one](#) on The Hub.
- 14.7 The final decision about whether an individual works at or regularly from home will rest with the manager and will take account of the plans for the service area.