



ADUR & WORTHING  
COUNCILS

## Blended Working Policy

### **1.0 Overview**

- 1.1 This policy applies to all employees of Adur and Worthing Councils, it also applies to temporary workers, agency staff and contractors. It sets out the standards for working arrangements to benefit the Councils, their employees and customers. (Referred to hereafter as employees)
- 1.2 This policy has been developed from a position of trust acknowledging that all staff members work hard and our ways of working should support us in achieving the best outcomes for the residents of Adur and Worthing.
- 1.3 This policy should be interpreted in accordance with the Equalities Act 2010 and shall be applied fairly and consistently to all employees in roles identified as suitable for blended or home working.
- 1.4 The Councils promote a blended working approach and agree to an employee voluntarily working a proportion of their working hours from home, where their role is deemed by their manager as suitable. In some instances, where the role permits, the Councils may agree to an employee working 100% of their working hours at home.
- 1.5 Every job is different and therefore the Councils are unable to agree that all roles will have this level of flexibility.
- 1.6 This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and it is anticipated to be reviewed after 12 months, notwithstanding exceptional circumstances. The Councils reserve the right to amend or remove this policy and return everyone to the office, following normal consultation processes.

## **2.0 Guiding Principles**

2.1 The following guiding principles are how we want to work with our teams across the Councils:

- Our ways of working will ensure we provide the high quality service to our communities, e.g. in terms of service standards and accessibility (in line with Good Services)
- Our focus is on delivering the best outcomes
- The work environment needs to be conducive to carry out the role
- Our workforce is flexible in terms of work location and hours subject to service needs, agreed in Team Charters
- The office is the formal work location, unless otherwise agreed.
- To enable working from flexible locations, teams and individuals will proactively engage and communicate
- Staff may be required to change their work location to meet the requirements of their role, this may be at short notice in the case of an emergency or for business continuity reasons.
- All work environments need to be safe (including DSE, data security, personal security, infection control)

## **3.0 Definition of Blended Working**

3.1 This is where an employee will work a proportion of their time in the office and a proportion of their time at home. Their work base location will remain as the office.

3.2 This will be a blended working approach, where the employee may agree with their line manager on a weekly basis. The days of the week and work pattern may vary and depend on the needs of the business.

3.3 The employee should attend the office at the request of the manager for meetings, team activity, general work days, training and to assist with coaching of other team members.

3.4 The role will be assessed by the manager and the job description/person spec updated to reflect the ability to work from home on an occasional basis.

## 4.0 Definition of Homeworkers

- 4.1 Where it is agreed that an employee may work home for 100% of their working week, their work base location will be 'home' and this will be reflected in their statement of terms and conditions of employment.
- 4.2 The employee may be required, at reasonable notice to the office at the request of the manager for meetings, team activity, general work days, training and to assist with coaching of other team members.
- 4.3 The role will be assessed by the manager and the job description/person spec updated to reflect the ability to work from home on a full time basis.

## 5.0 Roles and responsibilities

- 5.1 **Managers** will use the following to decide the level of blended working possible for the roles within their teams:

### The role:

- The role and team has successfully worked from home during lockdown
- The quality of the teams work has not been affected by working remotely
- Level of service has been maintained through remote working during lockdown
- The team can be managed by outcomes
- The team is able to work together remotely and does not require day to day supervision
- The role does not have duties requiring it to attend an office ie. staffing reception, scanning, fixing equipment etc

### The person:

- they have a suitable home working environment that meets the DSE workstation assessment requirements
- their organisational and time-management skills
- their ability to work without constant direct supervision
- their ability to cope with conflicting priorities work/homelife balance

- 5.2 **Manager Responsibility to**

- Work with the their employees and identify the roles that are able to work from home
- Manage their teams to ensure they meet their productivity targets and objectives

- Understand where their team is on a daily basis
- Have regular 1:1s with individuals (at least every six weeks) to discuss performance and wellbeing
- Hold regular team meetings and gather their team together in person when required
- Ensure the employee has the appropriate equipment to enable them to do their job effectively
- Ensure the job description is updated to reflect the blended working approach
- Regardless of work location, give the team regular feedback and put in place ways of communicating with them (e.g. bulletins, team briefs, team meetings).
- Monitor the hours their team work to ensure they comply with working time regulations.
- Ensure all their team have completed a DSE workstation assessment.
- Ensure IT kit is returned to the IT team when a member of staff leaves their team or the organisation ensuring that document ownership is correctly reallocated.
- Determine and review working patterns and practices in the team with fairness.
- Ensure work styles and practices are used to enhance business performance.

### 5.3 Employee Responsibility to

- Ensure their space when working from home is free from distractions where possible
- Ensure they have an appropriate place to work with the correct equipment and compliant with DSE workstation assessment requirements
- Attend the office as required by their manager and for any activity required to fulfil their job role (i.e. for training, meetings where they are requested to attend in person, to get support if there are any performance concerns raised, or to participate in team activities)
- Keep in touch with their line manager and their colleagues as they would in the office
- Meet any objectives and targets set
- Take care of their health, making sure they have completed an annual DSE workstation assessment if they are working from home
- Be contactable via phone or email, when working regardless of their place of work.
- Ensure their contact details are up-to-date on the staff directory and in their email signature, including mobile phone numbers where applicable.
- Keep calendars up-to-date with location and meeting details.
- Attend meetings, training and provide office cover where needed.
- Abide by data protection and GDPR, freedom of information and IT policies and take all steps possible to ensure confidentiality regardless of where they work.

## 6.0 Base Location

### 6.1 Blended Working

6.1.1 The work base location for blended working will be the employee's contractual work base.

- 6.1.2 Should the employee be required to attend the office at any time due to issues with equipment or technology the employee must be available to do so at reasonable notice.
- 6.1.3 Travelling time to and from the work base office to home location and vice versa, is not classed as working hours.
- 6.1.4 The employee will be able to claim travel expenses from where they are working on that day, please refer to the Staff Expenses & Reimbursements Policy.

## **6.2 Home Working**

- 6.2.1 The work base location for a 'home worker' will be the employees' home address and this will be reflected in their contract.
- 6.2.2 The employee may be requested to attend meetings but reasonable notice must be provided.
- 6.2.3 Travelling time to and from their 'home base' to the office is classed as working hours and may be expensed, please refer to the Staff Expenses & Reimbursements Policy.

## **7.0 Hours of Work**

- 7.1 The employee will work their contractual hours of employment. However, where the role permits the employee will not be subject to any fixed hours, and is free to perform their duties at work times to suit as long as they meet their required outcomes and deadlines and are available as per the job description.
- 7.2 The employee must keep their manager informed of their working pattern for the week and ensure that they are meeting their job description and fulfilling their statement of terms and conditions of employment.
- 7.3 The employee must comply with the Working Time Regulation Act 1998.

## **8.0 Equipment**

- 8.1 All employees that work from home, for any part of their working hours, are expected to provide an appropriate office environment, with a suitable desk and chair in line with the DSE Workstation Assessment.
- 8.2 It is the Councils' policy to provide and maintain all equipment and materials necessary for you to work from home in line with the following equipment guideline below.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Blended Worker</b>	<b>Homeworker</b>
<b>Laptop</b>	Y	Y
<b>Laptop Stand</b>	DSE Assessment	DSE Assessment
<b>Screen</b>	Y	Y
<b>2nd Screen</b>	Role dependent	Role dependent
<b>Keyboard</b>	Y	Y
<b>Wrist Rest</b>	DSE Assessment	DSE Assessment
<b>Mouse</b>	Y	Y
<b>Foot rest</b>	DSE Assessment	DSE Assessment
<b>Desk</b>	Y - dependent on % of time worked	Y
<b>Office Chair</b>	Y - dependent on % of time worked	Y
<b>Printer</b>	N	Y - dependent on business need
<b>Shredder</b>	N	Y - dependent on business need
<b>Lockable Cabinet</b>	N	Y- dependent on business need
<b>Laptop Rucksack/Bag</b>	Y	Y
<b>Trolley Bag</b>	Role Dependent	Role Dependent

- 8.3 The Manager will discuss equipment with employees on an individual basis based on their job role, the number of days working from home and the completed DSE Assessment.
- 8.4 It is the employee's duty to ensure that proper care is taken of such equipment and materials as they remain the property of the Councils.
- 8.5 Should the employee not have the right equipment or environment, the manager may request that the employee returns to their main base in line with their contracted hours.
- 8.6 On termination of employment for any reason, the employee will be required to return all equipment that has been provided to their work base.
- 8.7 The employee will sign an inventory of items that will be maintained on their file.

## **9.0 DSE Workstation Assessments**

- 9.1 Line managers have a responsibility to ensure that a health and safety risk assessment is undertaken for each employee in relation to the work-style, practices and location of their work.
- 9.2 Where employees are visiting clients/sites etc, the line manager and individual must ensure that an appropriate lone working risk assessment is undertaken and appropriate measures implemented in line with the Councils' Lone Working Policy.
- 9.3 The employee must complete an annual DSE workstation assessment for the home and the office. The employee is responsible for ensuring their workstation is in line with the provided guidelines and that they produce their equipment for annual PAT testing in line with the Councils' processes.
- 9.4 If the employee's home working environment does not meet the required DSE Workstation assessment standards they may be unable to work safely from home, and they will need to work in the office.
- 9.5 Employees have a responsibility for implementing any actions identified in order to reduce/mitigate risks to make their work environment safe. The line manager should take reasonable steps to ensure the employee has implemented any actions identified.
- 9.6 Line managers have a responsibility to ensure that their team members carry out a DSE Workstation assessment, on their home working setup and/or their office base.
- 9.7 Line managers should review health and safety on a regular basis and it should be discussed frequently during one to one meetings. Where there are concerns, appropriate advice should be sought. This may include employees being assessed by a trained workstation assessor to outline specific equipment needed (e.g. special computer mouse, or a specific type of chair).
- 9.8 For any accidents that occur in the workplace (which includes the home or any temporary workplace if the accident is work related), the employee should report this to their manager who will complete an accident book report as soon as reasonably practicable and in any case by the end of the current working day. In these circumstances, the line manager should inform the Safety and Resilience team immediately and (if this was not done at the time of the injury) complete an Incident Report Form based on the information given.

## **10.0 Security and Confidentiality**

- 10.1 ICT policies apply to all employees, wherever they may be working. Employees are expected to maintain the same standards of security of information, system security and security of equipment regardless of their location of work. This includes the Councils' policies on the [Data Protection Act](#) , GDPR and the Freedom of Information Act.
- 10.2 Employees who transport equipment (e.g. laptops, mobile phones) should not, as far as practicable, leave this unattended in vehicles.
- 10.3 The employee must not allow members of their household or third parties to access or use any Councils equipment.
- 10.4 Employees who work from home are responsible for keeping all documents and information associated with the Councils secure and confidential at all times. This includes destroying confidential documents appropriately.
- 10.5 Employee's should not print documents off at home.
- 10.6 An employee should take the appropriate steps when dealing with confidential matters from home. Where possible, they should ensure they are working in a confidential work space and if taking a confidential call they should wear a headset to mitigate any risk of confidential information being overheard.

## **11.0 Working Environment**

- 11.1 It's important that staff are able to concentrate on their work and maintain their productivity levels, and distractions kept to a minimum, ie. such as ensuring suitable arrangements for children and dependents is in place.
- 11.2 Should you require to take leave to look after your dependents more information is available in Section 7: Special Paid Leave within the Leave Policy.

## **12.0 Stationery and Sundries**

- 12.1 The employee will be expected to order their stationery and sundries from their work location as per the normal procedures. The employee is permitted to take this stationery home for use for work purposes.

## **13.0 Home domestic bills**

- 13.1 The employee will be expected to pay the costs of all their personal domestic bills. Costs towards household bills, such as gas, water and electricity will not be reimbursed.



## **14.0 Telephone and Internet Access**

- 14.1 The employee will be expected to pay the costs of all personal telephone and internet connections into their home.
- 14.2 The employee should not use their personal mobile or phone line for business phone calls.

## **15.0 Insurance and liability**

- 15.1 The employee is responsible for checking that all home and content insurance policies provide adequate cover for the fact they are working from home.
- 15.2 Employees are covered by the Councils' insurance policy for employer's liability and personal accident in the same way whether they are office based employees or not.
- 15.3 Equipment supplied to flexible/mobile workers is covered by the Councils' insurance arrangements, providing it is used for work purposes only, and in line with the manufacturer's instructions.
- 15.4 It is the responsibility of those who work from home to contact their own insurance company, landlord and/or mortgage provider to advise that they will be working from home.
- 15.5 The Councils will not reimburse any increase in insurance premium.

## **16.0 Work Deliverables**

- 16.1 The employee will be measured on outcomes and will be monitored by their line manager. Should an employee complete their allocated workload prior to the end of the daily contracted hours, they must request more work.

## **17.0 Probation Period**

- 17.1 Any employee who is starting a new role with the Councils may be required to attend the office for training purposes for an intensive period of time before shifting to blended working. This will be agreed with the employee prior to commencement in the role and may vary on a role to role basis.

## **18.0 Staying in touch**

- 18.1 It is important for the employee to stay in contact with their team and manager on a regular basis.

18.2 The Councils will encourage all employees whether in blended working or home working to attend the office with their colleagues regularly for meetings, training or general work purposes.

18.3 Employees working in a blended work pattern, should at the request of their manager attend the workplace at short notice in the case of an emergency or for business continuity reasons. This will be role dependent.

## **19.0 Performance**

19.1 The manager will have regular 1:1 meetings with their team members to ensure performance is to the required standard and is meeting the managers expectations. 1:1s are encouraged to happen in person whenever possible.

19.2 Should the employees' performance be affected in any way, the manager will commence the normal performance management process as detailed in the Performance Support Policy.

19.3 The manager has the right to request that the employee attends the office on a more regular basis during any period of performance management, to enable support and coaching. This may be up to 5 days a week or in line with the employee contractual working pattern.

## **20.0 Training and Development**

20.1 Should an employee require support in their role, they must raise this with their line manager. This could happen as part of the regular 1:1 conversations that a member of staff has with their line manager

## **21.0 Disciplinary or Grievance**

21.1 The Councils' normal disciplinary and grievance procedure will apply. Should you be required to attend a meeting in relation to either of these procedures you will be expected to attend the meeting at a Councils' premises.

## **22.0 Visits to the employees' home**

22.1 Should the Councils have concerns relating to Health and Safety matters they may request an appointment to conduct an assessment at the employees home. Such appointments will be arranged at a mutually convenient time.

## **23.0 Dispute Resolution**

23.1 Should there be a dispute between the employee and the manager, they should ideally try and resolve it between them informally. If this is not possible then this should be escalated in the first instance to the Head of Service for resolution.

23.2 Should the situation not be resolved within the as per 23.1, then HR should be contacted and then the normal grievance procedure must be followed.

#### **24.0 Failure to comply with this policy**

24.1 Failure to comply with any of this policy may result in the employee returning to the office full time and/or appropriate performance management/disciplinary processes being applied.

#### **25.0 Policy Implementation & Monitoring**

25.1 Responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and development of this policy lies with the Head of Human Resources and CLT.

25.2 Day to day operation of the policy is the responsibility of managers' who will ensure that this policy is adhered to.

Date policy agreed with Unison: 4th August 2021

Date agreed by Joint Staff Committee: 29th September 2021

Date policy formally adopted: 1st November 2021

Date for review: 1 year from formal adoption of policy 31st October 2022