

**BRACKNELL FOREST BOROUGH COUNCIL'S
FLEXIBLE/AGILE WORKING POLICY
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BRACKNELL FOREST BOROUGH COUNCIL'S FLEXIBLE/AGILE WORKING POLICY

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council has approved the implementation of agile and flexible working in its town centre offices, and agile working is now the norm. The key principles behind this, described further within this document, are:
- Work is about what you do, not where you are. Regardless of where the individual is working, they should be available to communicate and collaborate in person as required, during their working hours
 - Maintaining a clear desk policy to facilitate sharing workstations
 - Making best use of technology to ensure agile working is embraced fully, while maintaining the best level of service.
 - When meeting rooms are booked, they should be occupied within 10 minutes of the meeting start time, or the room will be released for someone else's use.
- 1.2 This document provides a framework for flexible working and covers the issues which need to be considered. You should use this document as a checklist of issues you need to consider. The particular circumstances and nature of work in a section will affect the specific way in which flexible working is applied.
- 1.3 For some employees whose work frequently takes them out of an office environment to make site visits, they can be enabled to do their office-based work flexibly, at home or at the Council Offices or at another work location. For other employees, some of their work tasks may lend themselves to being done at home or at another location, whilst others would require them to be at the office. Times of work, as well as locations, can also be key features of flexible working across a range of working styles – and each work location or function will present different opportunities and limitations compared to working traditional hours, according to the needs of the service.

2 WORKSTYLE DEFINITIONS

The following work styles will be referred to throughout this document:

Workstyle	Description
1 FIXED	This is primarily a desk bound role that requires the user to be in the office location for most of their working hours
2 HOMEFLEX	This is also a primarily deskbound role but it could equally be done for part of the week from home. For a 5:3 desk ratio this amounts to 40% of time away from a desk in the office – this may be working at home or another location or attending meetings or other activities away from a desk.
3 FREE	Roles which involve working in the field/attending meetings at workbase and other offices and/or working in other locations, eg schools, doctors surgeries <i>and</i> could in part be done at home or another location for a proportion of the working week For a 5:3 desk ratio this amounts to 40% away from the desk.

Relatively few staff would work exclusively at home.

When it has been agreed that a particular location will operate agile and flexible working, it is the responsibility of senior managers to assign one of the above workstyles for each of the roles within their area. Part time workers may fall into any workstyle. The manager concerned is ultimately responsible for agreeing flexible work patterns which will be mutually beneficial and cost-effective. There is no absolute right for an employee to adopt any of the work styles.

Jobs will be assessed by senior managers for the potential for flexible working where flexible working is first introduced to a work area; or when the job changes significantly enough to warrant a change in work style; or when a new post is created. The work styles will be recorded in the HR system, and any subsequent changes must therefore be notified to HR. There is a form which the manager should complete and submit to their Director for approval if they wish to change a workstyle, on the Flexible Working intranet page.

When a workplace adopts flexible working for the first time, the senior managers in the department will liaise with ICT. They can give practical advice on appropriate ICT equipment.

Please note it is the Council's policy to avoid duplication in issuing equipment. Only in exceptional circumstances would a member of staff have for example both a laptop and a fixed pc, or a mobile phone and a softphone; this would need to be agreed by the relevant Chief Officer and the Chief Officer: ICT. Similarly, where 3G connectivity is required, only one device will be 3G enabled.

3 SCOPE

This document applies to all those non-school based employees whose work location supports flexible working. Working at home will not be permitted in the following cases:

Employees being supported under the Performance Improvement/Capability Procedure, or employees for whom temporary close supervision is necessary to obtain data on work outputs, may be withdrawn from flexible working.

Employees subject to a formal Disciplinary warning for breaches of this procedure or other relevant misconduct may be withdrawn from flexible working.

Agency workers or work experience students not employed by the Council.

4 FLEXIBILITY OF LOCATION

4.1 Contractual Place of Work

For those who work either occasionally or regularly (but not exclusively) at home, their official principal place of work should remain a specific office location (eg Time Square). Their contract of employment would indicate that they may be required or permitted to work at any location within the Borough, following appropriate consultation, but it would still specify a principal work location. Employees are required to attend the principal work location regularly, at times and for purposes

agreed with their line manager. Only in an exceptional case where the employee is contractually required to work exclusively at their home will the place of work be shown as the home on the contract of employment.

For new employees, flexible working will be a contractual requirement unless the job is assessed as fixed. However, the ability to work at home should not affect the recruitment decision as other work locations could be used. The recruiting manager should assess and record any issues around the ability to work remotely or flexibly.

Employees who work flexibly will be expected to do so on a permanent basis or until operational requirements are redefined. It is not possible to allow employees to shuttle between “flexible”, “free” and “fixed” working. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where a manager may agree a change from “homeflex” back to fixed working and these would be assessed on a case by case basis and authorised at Director level. Where there are exceptional circumstances, the manager should record the working arrangements and requirements that apply in writing, and include a period after which the arrangements will be reviewed.

The facility to work from home is one based on the mutual consent of the employee and employer and must address the needs of the service; there is therefore no right to work at home.

At the beginning of a probationary period, a flexible employee may need to spend proportionally more time in the office to enable better training, induction, team-building and assistance; however, those who will be required to work flexibly should gradually be introduced to working away from the office so that, by the end of the probationary period, the manager can be confident of their ability to work under less direct supervision.

4.2 The Manager’s Role Where the Employee Regularly Works From Home

It is important to establish what measure of control the manager has on how much work is done at home and when. This is because the boundary between home life and work life can become blurred, and also because the manager must ensure the interests of the service are not prejudiced. The following principles apply:

- *Meetings/business visits* must not be held at the employee’s home.
- *The employer reserves the right to visit*, (for example to make a risk assessment), but reasonable notice will be given unless urgent access is necessary.
- The manager may *require the employee to work at the principal work location* in the interests of the service. This might be required for example if there was a need for closer supervision; if the task can be completed more efficiently using the resources at work; for cover in the office; for meetings; for a short period for a particular task or project or for operational reasons; or if the manager is not convinced that the home working environment is safe. The employee must always attend the office where the team is based when required. The employee may also be required to attend meetings, training, seminars etc at any appropriate location.
- *The manager may not insist that the home is used as a workplace* if the employee is unwilling to do so. If the interests of the service are not adversely affected by the employee working at home, *the manager should not unreasonably refuse home working for a proportion of the normal working hours.*

- The employee should not keep *files or information at home* beyond what is needed for the immediate tasks being worked on. Departments may wish to agree a booking out system for resources to be used at home or in other office locations, and some items may be designated as never to be removed from the office.
- The manager must ensure that staff have *appropriate training in Information Security* and should periodically check that standards are being adhered to. E learning packages are available.
- Working flexibly at home must not be seen as a substitute for other *childcare/dependent care arrangements*, and employees working from home should not do so whilst in sole charge of children or other dependents requiring care and supervision unless as an agreed “time out”.
- *On-line information* should be used where possible and files containing sensitive personal information should not be removed from Council premises. Always save sensitive information onto the Council network, do not save it on non-council computers. Connection of personal printers will only be done in exceptional circumstances and with a business case approved by the relevant Chief Officer. Restricted information may not be printed at home. Letterheaded paper should not be stored at home. Employees should not use personal email accounts for work purposes as these are not secure.
- Printed materials which are taken home must be kept securely when not in use, and returned to the office or disposed of confidentially when no longer required for a current task.
- If a memory stick is used it must be supplied by the employer and encrypted; however saving to the network will almost always be the preferred option, as memory sticks can be lost or stolen.
- Managers should agree *core times* at which employees should be contactable while working at home. They will be required to take a minimum of half an hour lunch break (unless only working half a day). The line manager may agree reasonable “time out” in core hours (eg to take the children to an after school activity or to attend an appointment) but these “time outs” should be agreed in advance and clearly indicated on the Outlook calendar as non-contact time. All hours worked should be recorded. The Council’s open calendar policy means that the Outlook Calendar should indicate availability clearly.
- When the employee is working they must be directly contactable. If they are temporarily unavailable (eg in a meeting or on a training course) there must be an appropriate way for voice messages to be left with another employee or on a voicemail, and these messages should be regularly passed on or checked.
- Proposed patterns of work must be discussed with the manager, as the manager is responsible for ensuring there is adequate cover whether in the office or from home. These patterns of work should, however, be flexible – for example on a day when the individual had planned to work at home, they may need to change their plans if needed for a meeting, for example.
- Managers should have a *clear expectation of the output expected* of an employee working from home and should monitor whether this level of output is being achieved. Normal performance management standards apply, and the Performance Improvement/Capability Procedure should be used if performance is not acceptable. The Disciplinary Procedure should be used to address misconduct issues. Remote working may be suspended to allow closer monitoring of work in these circumstances, with advice from HR.

- Employees may be required to come in eg for meetings in the office, even when they had planned to work from home. However please note that guidance on using the Conference calling facility can be found at <https://bfcouncil.sharepoint.com/SitePages/Conference-calls.aspx>: conference calling may on occasions be an acceptable alternative to physical attendance, as agreed with the manager or meeting organiser.
- Managers should arrange for any Home-flex or Free employees who work away from the office extensively to attend the office at least once per month, to ensure that they remain familiar with corporate systems and with the people they deal with at the office. Time should be devoted to regular communications, supervisions/one to ones, and team meetings, team building and team activities. Induction for new employees should include them meeting and building working relationships with team members including those who work outside the normal office location. It is also necessary to connect the council laptop to the corporate network to ensure policies, anti-virus software and software patches are kept up to date. This also should be done at least monthly.
- Home-flex and Free workers should have *maturity, trustworthiness, self-sufficiency, self discipline, good time management skills and good communication skills.*

Departmental managers are responsible for authorising the appropriate equipment for workstyles required in consultation with ICT. ICT will order and install it. The manager must ensure the ICT equipment represents a cost effective and appropriate solution for the specific work circumstances.

4.3 Flexibility of working hours – agree the boundaries

Working flexibly may mean increased flexibility in the hours worked - if they are not restricted by the opening hours of the office. However the options available must take account of the needs of the service and the availability of other colleagues, and the parameters must be agreed with the manager. The employee and manager should also consider the times when other services – such as ICT support – will be available (normally 8.00am – 5.30pm Monday to Friday, excluding Bank Holidays).

Employees should be contactable whilst working, so most working time should be at times when suppliers, managers and colleagues are also likely to be working and when customers will have an expectation of contacting a council officer. When working at home, employees should use their softphones and should log in to email and to Jabber (which will indicate their availability).

Managers will need to consider carefully what the requirements of the service are in terms of when employees need to be available to work and/or be contacted. The manager needs to be satisfied that the service will not be adversely affected by varying the hours of work; in some cases there may be a direct benefit to the service. The wishes of the individual, the team and the needs of the Council must be balanced. The Outlook Calendar must clearly indicate the availability of the employee; this will be reflected in Jabber.

4.4 Working from home

The individual should receive no increase in their basic pay in respect of working flexibly or working from a home location. Flexible working is about where, how and when we work, not about changing the work we do; there is no incentive payment to participate and no change to the rate of pay for the job, as the job remains the same wherever and whenever it is done.

Employees should be flexible about where and when they work to meet the needs of the service; a plan to work from home on a particular day should not rule an employee out from meeting work requirements. Employees should avoid letting regular patterns of home working (eg working at home every Monday) interfere with the best interests of the service.

- Phones. Employees should only use Council provided equipment – including softphones or smartphones.
- The employee will usually need to have a broadband connection in order to work from home; the majority of employees will already have a connection. If the employee does not have a broadband connection they will need to work from the offices.
- Subsistence allowances. The normal expenses rules will apply, but employees should note that subsistence allowances will not be paid for people working from home or at their principal place of work.
- Home to work journeys. If the home is not the principal/contractual place of work, journeys to that principal place of work will still be regarded as normal home to work travel and will not be claimable. Employees do not have to come into the office before an appointment elsewhere in order to claim mileage. See Expenses Policy for Employees for details.
- Home Workers. The relatively rare case of an employee contractually required to operate exclusively from home would differ in that their home would be recognised as their normal place of work. In this case, travel expenses from home may be payable if the individual is required to visit the offices; the circumstances of individual cases will be taken into account.

4.5 Working in an agile workplace

- A “fixed” worker will usually have a laptop and softphone to allow them to work from different desks in the office. In some exceptional cases where specialist equipment is required or where there are specific requirements under the Equalities Act as a reasonable adaptation to a disability, there may be a fixed desk, but this also can be used by others when free.
- A home flex or free employee will be supplied with appropriate mobile equipment (eg a laptop or tablet.)
- Staff will be expected to find a vacant workstation in the office. A team will usually have a team zone and in most cases the employee will work there, with colleagues. However any desk with a docking station can be used by an employee on occasions, if there are no operational reasons against this. Occasionally business needs will dictate working alongside colleagues in a different team zone.

Some standing and touch down desks will also be available. For those few employees with fixed PCs, a laptop loan service will be available for occasional use such as presentations etc.

ICT's Remote Access Policy should be consulted, particularly in respect of the security issues arising from working at home or remotely. ICT have a programme of work related to cyber security which includes home or remote working as this will be done on BFC ICT equipment. Further details of this are available on the intranet but some basic ways to minimise risks are –

- recognise that you may be an attractive target to hackers (do not think it will not happen to you)
- practice good password management (use a strong mix of characters and do not share your password)

- never leave your device unattended (including flash drive or external storage)
- always be careful when clicking on attachments in an email (if it's unexpected or suspicious for any reason, DO NOT click on it)
- be careful of what you are sharing on social networks.

Telephones. Telephone provision will be by issue of a soft phone, or mobile phone or smart phone. When working away from the office, either a softphone should be used or the office phone number should be diverted to the mobile phone. Under no circumstances should individuals give out their personal home phone number, personal mobile or home address for business use.

Teams and Jabber. Teams is used for online meetings, chat, calls and other collaboration within the council. Phone calls can also be placed using Jabber. Staff should ensure that their status on Teams and Jabber is kept up to date to allow enable effective collaboration.

Private email address. Use of private email addresses such as gmail or hotmail for work purposes is not allowed, as there are security implications. ICT arrange full remote access to Outlook and other systems. Personal data sent from home must be sent either via PSN or Secure emails.

Post. Sending and receiving Council post from a non-Council location is not permitted. (It may be scanned at the workplace and sent to you via email, to your Council email address.) There will usually be at least one "fixed" person in each team to handle distribution of physical post when required. Employees should use electronic means of distributing documents wherever possible, to reduce the volume of hard copies circulating within the organisation and outside.

Working area. The area in which the individual works at home must be conducive to work, sufficiently secure and safe, but need not be a specific office set-up. (See "Health and Safety" below.) The requirement to lock the screen when away from the desk still applies when working at home.

4.6 Equipment

Ownership. The equipment issued remains the property of the Council and will be withdrawn if its provision is no longer justified. ICT maintains an inventory of ICT equipment issued.

Personal use. ICT equipment issued is primarily for business purposes. Some minor incidental personal use is permitted (eg use of the internet during lunchtimes) but personal documents and images should not be stored on a council device. ICT equipment should not be used by friends or members of the family.

4G / 3G. Where wifi is available this should be used in preference to a 4G / 3G connection, as 4G / 3G connections are more expensive. In the exceptional circumstance where a Council device is taken overseas (with permission), the 4G / 3G data roaming should be disabled.

Be aware of your surroundings. If you are working in a public place, please ensure others cannot read your screen or overhear your phone calls. Further information about Cyber Security can be found on the intranet.

Passwords. Employees working remotely should ensure passwords are changed in a timely manner when a prompt is received and not allowed to expire. Once the

password expires, it can only be reset at an office location. For details, see the Council's password policy at

<https://bracknellforest.itpolicysystem.com/topicindex.html#P>

4.7 Flexible Workstations (shared desks)

Workstations are for any member of staff to work at and are not allocated to a particular person. Employees in an area which fully supports flexible working (eg Time Square) will no longer have a designated desk space. The provision of flexible workstations, which can be used by any of several employees, requires provision of individual locker spaces for storage of personal belongings and work in progress. Storage which others can access, such as bookcases or cupboards, should not be used for sensitive information or for valuables. Valuable items which have to be kept in the office should be in personal locker space; sensitive information should be kept in locked storage which is only accessible by those with a need to access the information.

If leaving a workstation for a short period, the screen should be locked. When the employee expects to be away from a particular desk for at least 90 minutes, they should clear the desk so it can be used by other staff and then when returning to a desk, use one which is free. Desks are not bookable. Leaving personal items such as photographs at a desk, or leaving a laptop, in-tray or other work materials on the desk for extended periods when it is not occupied, may imply it belongs to or is reserved for a particular employee, so this is not permitted.

Even if the individual employee has to revert to office-based working for a long period, they will not usually be given a desk which is exclusively theirs.

If a specialised chair is required, the individual should mark it clearly with a sign asking others not to adjust it; however, the chair can be used by others or moved to another desk to enable flexible use of the workstation.

Files and other paper resources should be held centrally accessible and appropriately stored.

All employees should respect fellow workers in the workplace: be aware of noise levels; seek a separate space for meetings; leave desks clean and clear for the next user, and free of any personal belongings that might be seen as "claiming" or personalising a desk space.

5 HEALTH AND SAFETY

5.1 Health and Safety: risk assessments for working at home

Employees working at home should refer to Health and Safety guidance (<https://bfcouncil.sharepoint.com/SitePages/Flexible-working.aspx>). The employee will be asked to fill in a self-assessment form and return it to the manager, who will use it to assess any risks and the measures necessary to control them. If issues are identified arising from this, a home visit may be necessary for the manager to complete a full risk assessment on site; the employee and manager should co-operate to ensure a safe and healthy working space at the employee's home. If the manager feels the working area is not satisfactory then he or she may require the employee to work from the principal office location until the home area is satisfactory. It should be noted that laptops are not intended for protracted use if they are not used seated at a table. If specialised equipment is required (eg special chair, a special

screen), consult HR for advice on a case by case basis; it may be that a return to fixed working is indicated, especially if special equipment would otherwise be required at multiple locations.

5.2 Health and Safety: risk assessments for Free employees

Free workers may be particularly likely to have lone working issues to address, as well as considerations of where and how they may be using any mobile devices. A risk assessment should consider steps to reduce the risks of theft of devices, the working environment in which devices are used (eg in a car) and most importantly reduction of the risks of lone working. See the Lone Working Policy for further information.

5.3 Health and Safety: accident reporting

An accident which occurs whilst working must be reported in the normal way, irrespective of where the accident occurs (at work, at home, at another location).

6 WORKING TIME REGULATIONS

In addition to meeting the requirements of the service, employees are asked to work within the requirements of the Working Time Regulations. Managers must be satisfied that the rules are understood and are being complied with.

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 (though an individual may opt out of this feature in writing).

rest breaks during the working day – the Regulations require a rest break of at least 20 minutes when an adult worker works for more than 6 hours per day, but the Council's policy is to require a minimum break of 30 minutes for every five hours worked.

length of daily rest (eg overnight) – daily rest of 11 hours per 24 hours for adults

length of the weekly rest (eg weekend) – usually 24 hours rest in each 7 day period (doesn't include the rest period from the previous day!)

An individual should not work in a pattern that denies them the right breaks. However, there are some flexibilities: consult HR for advice.

7 FLEXIBLE HOURS PATTERNS

Common forms of flexibility on hours include:

- *Flexitime*. This system already allows considerable flexibility; some creative use of the system's flexibility in agreement between the manager and the employee could give freedom to meet both work and personal requirements. (For example, where a great deal of flexibility is a regular feature of working patterns, the manager and employee may make a separate individual arrangement about cut-off dates, but excessive accumulation of flexi credit or debit must be carefully monitored and controlled.) Working outside the span times of 7.30am to 7.30pm should only be by prior arrangement with a manager and should be on an exceptional basis. The needs of the service should always be considered and the expectation will be that working will usually be within the rules of the Flexitime Scheme.

- *Time off in lieu.* If agreed in advance, this can be a form of flexibility. It is preferable for the manager to agree parameters in advance to avoid large positive or negative balances of time building up.
- *Average hours.* The employee and manager can agree to work contractual hours as an average over a number of weeks.
- *Fewer days.* Working the hours over a larger or smaller number of days on some weeks.
- *Annual hours.* This is less commonly used, as it affects those with distinct and predictable seasonal peaks in workload.

There are other forms of non-standard hours that are not necessarily flexible – for example a fixed arrangement to work part time, or term-time only. *Managers and employees should be wary of making regular arrangements for times and places of work that gradually become more fixed and inflexible than the arrangements they replace.*

8 PREMIUM PAYMENTS AND FLEXIBLE HOURS

Premium Payments should only be applied when the employee is required to work at a time that attracts premium payments. If the individual chooses to work at those times for his or her own convenience, normal payments only will be made. Similarly if the individual works additional hours on a given week as part of a time off in lieu or averaged hours arrangement, overtime payments will not apply.

9 SICKNESS AND ANNUAL LEAVE

Employees unable to work due to sickness must inform the manager in accordance with normal procedure, regardless of the location worked from. Employees are not under an obligation to perform any work related tasks while sick at home.

When agreeing the parameters for flexible working, the manager must clearly indicate how annual leave and sickness absence will be dealt with in cases where the individual is varying the number or length of days worked. The Council will credit any day of annual leave or sickness absence as being of a standard length if there was no pattern previously agreed to cover the days in question – any variation of this will need to be justified.

10 MORTGAGES AND INSURANCE

Individuals working at home must advise their Mortgage Providers and Home Insurance Companies in writing that they will occasionally work at home, and that the Council arranges third party public and private liability insurance (sample letter available in Useful Documents). This is highly unlikely to affect payments/premiums but if the company is not informed it may invalidate your policy or mortgage agreement.

ICT equipment issued is insured on the Council's policy and the Council will normally bear the cost if lost or damaged, provided the employee can show reasonable care has been taken. If reasonable care is not taken then the Council may initiate a Disciplinary Investigation and may take disciplinary action. The Council's insurance will not cover us if the laptop or other mobile device is left visible and unattended in a car. If the employee has to take the device with them as they travel, they should either take it with them when they leave the car or lock it out of sight in the boot.

Loss of, or damage to, equipment must be reported promptly both to the manager and to the ICT Helpdesk; the ICT Helpdesk will contact the Information Security Officer. If the equipment is stolen it should be reported to the police and a crime number obtained and reported to ICT Helpdesk.

11 REVIEW AND REVISION OF ARRANGEMENTS

Often reactions to our working environment can fundamentally affect how we regard our work, and the way we regard work can change over time. Agile working has a strong impact on the culture of the organisation and the performance and job satisfaction of individuals. It is particularly important that working arrangements are kept under regular review, discussed and revised as necessary, to ensure that the individual, the manager and the service all continue to derive benefit from the working arrangements.

GUIDANCE TO SUPPORT INTRODUCTION OF FLEXIBLE/AGILE WORKING

The following are elements to consider when determining work styles and how far service delivery can be maintained through changes of work location, work methods and working time:

1 Re-examine minimum office cover

Each section may already have formal or informal arrangements about the minimum number of people that must be in the office at any given time or on any given day, partly to provide “cover” for incoming calls and impromptu visits from internal and external customers. These should be periodically reviewed for flexible/agile working purposes.

2 Re-examine working times

Is it realistic to encourage use of the whole opening hours of your office building as potential working time – will this mean that staffing is spread too thinly over the peak period? It is important to ensure that service delivery at peak times will not deteriorate due to high numbers of staff choosing to work at off-peak times.

- What are the operating hours for support services necessary to get work done (e.g. ICT Helpdesk)
- What do the general public/internal customers expect as hours they can visit/phone/receive a service, and can you influence this? (are there published standards?)
- Are there any tasks which can only logically be done in certain places or at certain times?

3 Nature of the work – re-engineering the processes

It often takes more than one person to complete a piece of work – either because others have to be consulted, or because a number of successive people handle different phases of a piece of work. Managers should avoid “bottlenecks” in the process where only one key worker can deal with their part of a process and therefore their absence, or their preferred working times, builds a delay into the process. Use of electronic signatures wherever possible should reduce the dependence on people being available to physically sign off items.

Flexibility is important but the key driver remains for Council services to be delivered effectively. Flexible/agile employment practices support and complement this if used sensibly and imaginatively, but the manager must never lose sight of how service delivery is affected. Agile working can enable service to be delivered more effectively in the field and reduce the time taken for processes. The primary objective will always be to get the job done, and some re-engineering may need to be done to adapt the process to being done at a variety of locations and times.

4 Manager Development to Support Flexible/agile Working

Adopting flexible/agile working affects the culture of the organisation or section and the ways of managing work. Additional development may be required.

The Organisational Development team can give advice on development available in a range of areas, including:

- Work planning and project management skills
- Performance measurement and management
- Communications Team building and coaching
- Time management
- General health and safety issues, including lone working
- Using IT and remote working tools effectively
- Information Security
- Data Protection
- Agile working

More information is available on employee self service, and in the e-Learning zone.

5 Working with employees when introducing agile working to a workplace

Achieving a smooth implementation involves careful planning and good communication. Guidance must be sought at an early stage from HR and ICT to help plan the process.

- The Director and the senior managers in a Department will need to define the work style of posts, especially any fixed office workers who will need to be excluded from some facets of Flexible/agile Working, and they should also consider how agile working contributes to what the service should and might potentially provide.
- Early consultation with ICT Services is essential to plan for access to systems and appropriate provision of equipment.
- The communication process with staff is key. Meetings should be held with groups of staff to explain the mutual advantages of Flexible/Agile Working, and to make clear any restrictions which may need to be placed on the numbers who can participate or on their degree of flexibility in order to maintain an efficient service. Fixed Office Workers must still be involved in these meetings, as any changes to the working environment of their colleagues will affect them as well. A series of such group meetings should be planned as implementation continues, as employees will need to be consulted and informed about potential changes at every stage of the process.
- Individual employees should be given the ability to approach managers (over a specified period, and in private) to discuss how Flexible/Agile Working might be applied in their case. It should be stressed that it may not be possible to accommodate the wishes of every employee. The needs of the whole section must be considered before agreeing to individual arrangements.
- Managers should ensure that workers who work at home complete a self-assessment form about the Health and Safety aspects of their working environment. Employees whose working hours are to be variable should be made aware of how, for example, days of annual leave or sickness absence are to be treated. Changes to hours worked may have an effect on pro rata pay or annual leave. An assessment should be made of any development needs arising out of the new working practices.

- The manager and individual may agree to have a trial period on any significant changes to hours or working patterns before any change is made on a permanent basis. However, it is recommended that the manager records in writing the expectations of both parties about the trial period and what special arrangements will be in place.
- Managers should continue to meet with individuals and groups at intervals to assess, support and review the working arrangements and their impact on service provision and effective working through appraisals, one to ones and team meetings.
- Formal review should also take place when:

The employee moves to a new job role

The employee moves home

The work area is reorganised and jobs change – the work styles may need to be redefined.

The manager is responsible for reclaiming equipment when the employee leaves.