Agile working – full guidance

Work is an activity we do, rather than a place we go.

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 We recognise that the workforce does not need to be in set premises to effectively provide services. Agile working can support us to develop modern working practices to enable employees to maximise their performance and productivity and deliver the greatest value to the council, whilst maintaining a good work life balance. In addition, new technologies are making it easy to access information remotely and work from a variety of locations, whilst promoting a more joined up service.

1.2 This guide to agile working supports staff to build upon the positive experiences from home working during COVID-19 and to support the transition to new ways of working across the workforce as we further develop West Suffolk 2025 plans.

1.3 The future working environment needs to provide continued flexibility in terms of both working locations and hours, along with opportunities to connect and collaborate, which is a two-way relationship that supports both organisation needs and individual needs.

1.4 The approach to agile working outlined in this guide supports what people are looking for in future working environments, notably:

- a hybrid working approach between home and office and other locations
- ensuring the office provides social interaction and collaborative space (the office is about providing opportunities for collaboration, not individual contributions or work)
- a culture of trust and a wellbeing focus – focusing on developing personal responsibility and accountability, self-management and autonomy
- new approaches to leadership (manager as coach, recognising the importance of emotional intelligence, managing by outcomes, listening and celebrating success).

2. Scope

2.1 The Agile working guidance applies to all council employees working at any level within the organisation.

2.2 The nature and extent of agile working will depend on the job undertaken. Considerations will include the impact on the ability to meet customer demand (internal and external), employee welfare and GDPR implications of carrying out particular roles in a home or community context.

2.3 The guide will enable both managers and staff to gain a better understanding of agile working and the basic principles, which can then be considered and applied to specific roles.

2.4 Agile working allows staff to influence how they carry out their role and promotes varying levels of flexibility within the workplace, which meets both operational needs and service delivery. It must be noted, however, that there

is no expectation for staff to work at home and managers cannot force any member of their team to do so. It has been recognised that personal circumstances or personal preference may influence an employee's decision with regard to home working. In such cases where an individual does not want to work at home, other elements of agile working must still be considered – for example, working at touchdown sites.

2.5   As some roles are more suited to agile working than others, agile working will be adopted at varying levels within services.

2.6   The intention is for the agile working guidance and approach to be reviewed as we continue the journey of recovery, to make sure that it is fit for purpose and supports the transition to new ways of working. At this stage, there is no intention to review terms and conditions of employment. For administrative purposes and for the claiming of travel expenses, everyone's contractual base will remain unchanged.

3.   What is agile working?

3.1   Traditional flexible working in the workplace, whether it be formal and agreed contractually or informal such as flexi time, is the opportunity for employees to make choices that suit their needs about when, where and how they carry out their work.

3.2   Agile working differs in that it considers work to be an activity, not a place, where employees can work flexibly from any location, whether it is from a council building, partner organisation's premises, neighbouring premises, other appropriate space within the community or by varying degrees of home working and regular hotdesking.

3.3   The different ways in which agile working can be undertaken is dependent on the demands and needs of the role, the individual's preferences and circumstances, the service an employee is engaged in and the way in which an organisation wants work to be done.

3.4   Agile working provides staff with more options with regard to where, when and how they undertake their role by introducing an element of choice which will ensure that the needs of the service user are best met, whilst meeting the needs of the team, the service and the organisation.

4.   The benefits

4.1   It is anticipated that the implementation of agile working will offer benefits to our customers, employees and the employer. The key benefits are that it will:

- allow us to focus time and money on services, not buildings, to ensure delivering services takes priority over occupying buildings, and redesign and repurpose office space for the most cost effective use
- reduce unnecessary travel time, which will increase productivity and reduce cost

- create an environment which allows employees to achieve an improved work life balance, greater job satisfaction, motivation, morale and productivity
- lower our carbon footprint, through reduced emissions from reduced travel
- improve the recruitment and retention of skilled and experienced employees by offering a range of work styles to match individual work preferences
- reduce absenteeism and related costs.

4.2 For employees, agile working can:

- provide an opportunity to manage their working day more efficiently
- increase engagement as a result of autonomy and trust at work
- improve work life balance
- enable them to work more effectively on a particular piece of work, where concentration is important, by avoiding the interruptions that are part of the office environment
- reduce travelling time and related costs
- increase their wellbeing, health and happiness – reduced stress, better sense of control.

4.3 However, it is acknowledged that, whilst some employees may feel agile working can be a benefit, others may not and it is, therefore, recognised that one size does not fit all. Some employees may have other family members working from home or may have inadequate or unsuitable work space, making it difficult to work in this way. It is important that managers and their staff work together to find the most suited work arrangement to ensure our staff are able to perform to their best ability whilst focusing on their wellbeing

5. Principles underpinning agile working

5.1 The following principles underpin the approach to agile working:

- Clear and realistic objectives should be agreed between the employee and their manager to enable their performance to be managed by outcomes rather than presence. This should be reviewed on a regular basis through performance appraisals and regular one-to-one discussions. Employees will be expected to deliver the outcomes agreed with their manager and the focus on determining the productivity of staff should be on outputs and not inputs.

- The need for staff to come into the office is a two-way relationship and requires a balance between both individual need and organisational need.

- Teams will determine which staff need a more regular presence in the office and how this will work, be it for health or work specific reasons.

- Staff will commit to keeping diaries up to date to ensure they communicate their availability to others.

- Large scale team meetings should continue to be held remotely wherever possible, accepting that teams may wish to hold away days as a service or directorate and make provisions for so doing (although this will require the whole team to book a desk).

- Staff can come into the office for part days and book desks for part days.

- The organisation supports staff to work flexibly in support of agile working and to plan their working day around their individual and work needs (and this includes part day attendance in the office). If staff travel into the office during the working day, they manage their working day accordingly – travel to the office in the middle of the day is not part of their working day.

- Staff should come into the office for identified training which is integral to their role or considered a corporate need

- Staff must accept that it is reasonable for a manager to require them to work in the office for performance, operational and/or team needs, as determined by the manager.

- Audits of desk booking arrangements and attendance at the office will be conducted.

6. Home working

6.1 The most appropriate approach to working will be agreed with the manager.

6.2 Although agile workers will not necessarily work standard office hours (unless the role dictates this), it is important to agree a work programme so that other team members are aware of the individual's working pattern, where they are located and when and how to contact them. This allows employees who are using their homes as part of their agile working arrangements to have a right to privacy out of hours and be able to separate their working and home lives.

6.3 Agile working must not affect the provision of services and, therefore, managers must ensure that they have systems in place to maintain suitable office presence, as required, and to monitor the level of available frontline staff on duty at any one time. A team or service charter, based on the organisational charter approach to agile working, can set out an agreed framework, with parameters and expectations of how different working arrangements can support the way in which a team works. Our organisational charter is available on the website: https://intranet.lan.westsuffolk.gov.uk/people/upload/OrganisationalCharter-EightPrinciplesOfHowWeWorkRemotely.pdf

6.4 When working from home, caring arrangements for children and other dependents should be in place as they would have been if the employee was working in the office. There may be an occasional and exceptional circumstance where alternative arrangements need to be made. In these situations, managers will work with their teams to agree the best approach

and consider other options, such as annual leave and unpaid leave, if agile working is not possible.

6.5   Different working arrangements, however, may support staff with caring responsibilities if the way the employee works enables a more flexible approach to working hours – for example, working outside of traditional office hours. Managers must ensure that this meets the operational and team needs and also consider the wellbeing of the employee. If a more structured or permanent arrangement is sought by the employee, this should be requested formally via a flexible working request.

6.6   Should an employee request to work from home when unwell, their manager will need to consider whether this is appropriate. Each case will be assessed on its own merit with support from HR, as some illnesses may be more appropriately managed from home, resulting in a shorter recovery period.

6.7   It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure they have adequate mobile phone reception and an appropriate Internet connection to allow them to work from home with little disruption. Employees are advised to contact their Internet provider to ensure there are no restrictions to working from home for personal or business use. Those employees considering working from home on a permanent or ad hoc basis are responsible for checking that there are no restrictions in mortgage or tenancy agreements that could prevent this.

7.   Costs of home working

7.1   An employee who is an agile worker will be provided with the necessary ICT equipment and technology to work in this way.

7.2   The employee should use our equipment while agile working and will not be eligible to claim expenses for use of personal equipment such as home phone lines.

7.3   We will not make payments for any household bills, which includes but is not limited to Internet broadband costs, heating, lighting, water and landline connections. Employees should seek Government guidance (see link below) which clarifies tax relief that employees can claim if they are asked to work from home by their employer or the Government on a regular basis for all or part of the week. This allowance helps offset costs for utility charges. The council is **not** responsible for claiming this tax relief on behalf of employees. Visit GOV.UK: https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees

7.4   Agile working does not change an employee's contractual place of work. No member of staff should be at a financial disadvantage through working from home once they offset costs such as commuting. However, consideration will be given to individual circumstances with regard to an employee being regularly based at the council's premises and they should raise those concerns with their line manager in the first instance.

8. Working at other locations

8.1 Agile or hybrid working enables employees to work at other locations in addition to the traditional office and home working. Employees may be able to carry out work in other locations such as organisational partners' premises, neighbouring authorities or appropriate locations in the community.

8.2 All West Suffolk Council laptops create a secure connection back to our systems across the Internet when being used remotely. The use of public hot spots is permitted provided you follow guidance laid out in our information security policy. For example, never leave your laptop unattended and ensure no one else can see what is on your screen. Once connected to a wireless network, your laptop should connect in exactly the same way as when working from home.

8.3 Employees must be mindful of confidential data, ensuring they do not leave their screen on full display. Be mindful of other people having sight of the screen and ensure screens are locked when not in use. When an employee leaves a non-council location, they should ensure they disconnect from the WIFI they have been using.

8.4 Employees are encouraged to carry equipment in bags, so as not to draw attention to the equipment they may be carrying, ensuring they take all equipment away with them when they leave. Employees should take care of transporting equipment, especially in a vehicle, making sure that equipment is not left on view to potential thieves.

9. Security of council equipment

9.1 In the event of any council equipment being lost or stolen, employees should report this immediately to their line manager, who will inform ICT. Our Information Governance Officer should also be advised immediately.

10. Responsibilities

10.1 **Corporate responsibilities**

- The Chief Executive (Head of Paid Service), on behalf of the council, carries overall responsibility for ensuring that we have the appropriate processes in place which adequately and appropriately support our employees, regardless of what working pattern or arrangement they have.

- The Human Resources team is responsible for providing advice, guidance and training on this procedure.

- The Service Manager of Human Resources is responsible for reviewing, updating and amending this guidance to reflect changes in legislation or employment practice, in conjunction with the trade unions.

- Directors are responsible for establishing their own arrangements to ensure:

  o effective implementation of the policy
  o continued service delivery
  o consultation with their employees on these arrangements
  o authority is delegated to assistant directors or managers to take action under this policy, as appropriate
  o the principles of remote working, as set out in the remote working charter, are embedded throughout teams (see Appendix D).

10.2 Management responsibilities

Management responsibilities are:

- ensuring flexibility, openness and constructiveness in relation to discussions and agreements about agile working with employees within their area of responsibility, whilst remaining focused on the needs of the service
- supporting a positive work life balance by ensuring that employees do not work excessively long hours on a regular basis and aim to work their contractual hours, balancing hours with outcomes
- keeping in regular contact with all employees, irrespective of how and where they are working, in order to support health and wellbeing
- making arrangements for both regular individual and team meetings, ensuring regular communication is maintained between themselves and team members, providing support for employees and implementing ways of measuring and monitoring work output that have been mutually agreed
- setting and monitoring defined performance measures in line with performance appraisals and regular one-to-one meetings
- allowing employees who are using their homes to work from, to have a right to privacy out of working hours and the ability to separate their working and home lives
- meeting their duties in relation to health and safety by undertaking appropriate risk assessments and acting on any areas of concern for employees who they are responsible for, as outlined in section 9 of the procedure
- jointly agreeing with employees their agile working style and how this will be achieved
- ensuring good communication with employees and agreeing clear communication lines and methods; this includes arrangements for employees to report sickness absence
- undertaking a regular review of the agile working arrangements – if it is not working, every effort will be made to resolve any issues.

10.3 Employee responsibilities

An employee's responsibilities are:

- complying with this procedure in a reasonable, constructive and appropriate manner

- jointly agreeing an agile working style with their manager
- being flexible, open and constructive in discussing and agreeing agile working arrangements, whilst remaining focused on the needs of the service
- maintaining regular contact with their manager
- working within the agreed 'housekeeping rules' (appropriate work area for working at home and so on) and abiding by all our policies (available on the intranet) while working in this way
- optimising meetings to minimise the amount of travel time when working off site
- complying with health and safety policies and procedures by participating in and undertaking risk assessments, carrying out any necessary actions to minimise risk, maintaining a safe working environment and taking reasonable care of their own safety, as outlined in section 9 of the procedure
- complying with confidentiality, data protection and Internet security policies
- ensuring that all reasonable care is taken of all council supplied ICT equipment
- reporting immediately once known any loss, theft or damage to council ICT equipment or the loss of confidential information
- consulting with any necessary parties, such as insurance companies, regarding home working
- ensuring that any personally adapted equipment (for example, left-hand orientation or widescreen laptops) required in order to undertake their duties is available for their use wherever they are working under this arrangement.

11. Health and safety

11.1 Employees have a responsibility for their own health and safety, and that of others, while they are carrying out work activities, regardless of the work location, in accordance with our Health and Safety Policy. This includes visually inspecting council supplied ICT equipment before using it to ensure that there are no obvious faults with the equipment. Any faults found must be immediately reported to their line manager and the ICT team and the equipment must not be used.

11.2 Where employees use council locations to work in, they should familiarise themselves with the local arrangements for signing in and out and the management of health and safety. They must ensure they are aware of fire safety arrangements for the particular location that they are in and be fully conversant with the actions to be taken in the event of discovering a fire or on hearing the fire alarm.

11.3 Due consideration to lone working arrangements should be explored fully between the line manager and employee to ensure safe working arrangements are in place. This includes the issuing of and the use of lone worker devices such as Peoplesafe and council procedures such as the Guardian Angels.

11.4   An Agile (Home) Working Plan must be discussed between manager and employee (Appendix A) and the Health and Safety Home Risk Assessment (Appendix B) must be fully completed and signed if any part of an employee's working style requires them to work from home. This will need to be carried out again if any substantial changes are made to their working environment or arrangements. Employees must fully participate in completing the necessary risk assessment paperwork and review this with their manager.

11.5   When working from home, even if it 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 from the rest of their home. There must also be adequate ventilation and lighting. Employees must not carry out work meetings in their home with staff, customers, elected members or officers from other agencies.

11.6   If homeworkers need to attend site meetings direct from home, they must notify their line manager of their itinerary.

11.7   It is good practice for employees to agree with their manager when visits that they undertake may expose them to higher risks of violence or difficult situations. If this is so, this requires the employee to make a telephone call to the office at the end of the working period to confirm safe completion of the visits.

11.8   Managers should seek advice from the Health and Safety Team regarding any specific concerns around health and safety issues, as sign off for agile working will not take place until all the health and safety requirements have been appropriately addressed.

12.   Data protection, security and confidentiality

12.1   We provide employees with access to the personal and confidential information they need to do their job. This information must not be disclosed to others who are not authorised to see it. Our information security policies apply at all times regardless of working site. When working in a mobile manner, the employee is responsible for the security of equipment, files and any other information in their possession, including the transportation of such items whenever outside of the council office environment.

12.2   It is particularly important to ensure that non-authorised personnel (in the home environment or while working off site) cannot gain access to confidential or personal information.

12.3   All efforts must be made to secure council equipment when being used at home. As a minimum, all equipment should be stored out of sight of windows and doors to deter equipment being stolen. Any paper-based documentation that contains personal or confidential information must be disposed of securely. No work-related emails or sensitive data should be sent to the employee's home email addresses. No work-related files should be stored on an employee's personal computer. Any loss of equipment or information must be reported immediately to the employee's line manager.

12.4 Managers must ensure that their staff:

- know their responsibilities under the Data Protection Act and the council's security policies
- never leave a computer with personal confidential information on screen
- never leave a computer logged on when unattended
- observe the same level of security at home as in an office environment.

13. Allocation of equipment and other financial support

13.1 The manager, in consultation with the employee, will determine their work style or activity. ICT will be responsible for determining and providing the equipment and technical requirements for the employee undertaking an agile working arrangement.

13.2 Personally adapted equipment will be provided to an individual should a workstation assessment deem this necessary following an occupational health assessment and an access to work recommendation (where appropriate). However, this equipment will be provided at the place where they predominantly work and not across multiple sites. Therefore, the individual will be responsible for ensuring that this equipment is available for their use wherever they work. In some circumstances, it may be deemed necessary that this equipment is made available at a fixed place of work, such as the council's premises.

14. Insurance

14.1 Computers and other items of equipment that we provide as part of the agile working arrangement will be covered by our insurance policy. In instances of loss, our Replacement Equipment Issued to Staff Policy will apply.

14.2 Home workers are required to contact their own insurance company to inform it that they will be working at home. This does not usually result in an increase in premium and it is unlikely that working from home will affect cover. An example letter for use can be found at Appendix C (Home Based Workers' Letter to Insurers).

14.3 Liability insurance arranged by us will operate once the risk assessments are completed satisfactorily. Risk control measures identified as a result of a risk assessment must be addressed prior to the agile working arrangement commencing.

14.4 Employees working at or from home are covered by our Employer's Liability Policy. Any accidents must be reported immediately in accordance with our health and safety guidelines. It is the employee's responsibility to advise their mortgage lender or landlord if they intend to work from home.

15. Principles when working in the office

15.1   Employees must remember they can work from any council location and managers must ensure that employees feel comfortable when 'touching down' at temporary desks and zones.

15.2   Booking desks – information to follow.

15.3   As all marked desks may be used by any council employee, adopting clear desk principles will assist with the changes in working practice, in that employees will feel more comfortable working from a desk that has not been personalised. There is an expectation that, when an individual vacates a desk to enable use by another member of staff, it will be wiped down with antibacterial wipes and left clear, with no materials left either on or beneath the desk.

15.4   Confidential discussions should not be carried out in communal areas.

15.5   All employees will continue to have a designated base for travel claim purposes, although they may choose to work from an alternative location to allow for improved efficiency and a more effective service.

16. Review and revision arrangements

16.1   This guidance will be reviewed in line with HR processes and regularly reviewed and adapted as the organisation develops its response to new ways of working.

Appendix A: Agile or Hybrid Working Plan

Managers and their staff should use this as a guide to agree an agile or hybrid working plan which fits with operational and individual needs, allowing staff to be able to do their best work in the best place. Flexibility to this plan is essential and will need to be reassessed periodically in order to continue to meet service needs and demands.

- I wish to work in an agile way, which may include working at home and/or a different location.

- In order to work from home, I agree to complete the Home Working Assessment of Risk checklist and return it to the Health and Safety Team. (It is between you and your manager to ensure that all actions raised on the assessment have been addressed prior to you working from home.)

- I agree to provide an appropriate workspace in my home for the furnishings and equipment to enable me to work effectively at home.

- I will promptly inform my manager of any changes to my home or personal circumstances, which could affect my health and safety while home working.

- I agree to provide reasonable access to my home by an employee of the council or their representative in order for them to undertake any health and safety assessments, provide maintenance or repair to council equipment, or undertake any relevant audit activities. All access requirements will be discussed prior to the visit, and appropriate notice given.

- I am aware of the security measures required and the sensitive nature of the data I am working with.

- I agree at all times to protect access, maintain and store the data securely and confidentially in line with the Data Protection Acts and council requirements. The council's computer will not be used by anyone other than myself.

- I am aware and understand my requirements to notify my manager when I am unable to work or absent from work due to sickness or any other reason. In the event of home working ceasing, I will cooperate with the council in arranging a time for any equipment to be collected or I will return the equipment to the council within five working days of home working ceasing.

- I am aware and understand the requirement to report any work-related accidents while working at home or other locations and of the actions I am required to take in an emergency.

The arrangements that have been agreed will be reviewed and a decision taken on whether the arrangements will continue.

- I agree to attend the office (location to be confirmed as appropriate) for regular communications and meetings or for operational reasons in order to undertake the requirements of my role and my employment, as defined by my manager.

- I agree that, if I am unable to work at home due to an unforeseen circumstance, such as loss of power, broadband or unsuitable working arrangements, I will attend the office to fulfil my role.

- I am aware that I must continue to comply with all council policies, practices and procedures.

- I am aware that regular performance reviews will be conducted.

- I agree to provide the council with a contact phone number that can be used for work purposes during work hours or arrange for my calls to be directly forwarded.

Please send a copy of the completed Agile (Home) Working Assessment of Risks checklist to confirm that a risk assessment has been undertaken.

Appendix B: Agile (Home) Working Assessment of Risks

Please answer yes or no to the questions below.

Workstation risk assessment	Yes	No
Have you been supplied with a laptop upstand, mouse and keyboard? If not, please contact the ICT team or your line manager to obtain one.		
Have you completed the Display Screen Equipment (DSE) training module located on the intranet https://westsuffolk.britsafelearning.com in the past 12 months?		
Have you completed the DSE self risk assessment located on the intranet https://westsuffolk.britsafelearning.com in the past 12 months?		
General health and safety	**Yes**	**No**
Electrical – Are all electrical outlets (sockets) in a sound condition? Has all council-supplied electrical equipment been tested and is it in date? Note: All equipment is to be PA tested annually; re-tests must be arranged prior to expiry date.		
Fire – If working from home, is your means of exiting the building free from obstructions?		
Do you have a smoke alarm or a fire extinguisher that is not more than five years old?		
Have you completed the fire awareness training module located on the intranet https://westsuffolk.britsafelearning.com in the past 12 months?		
Stress – Have you completed the manual handling training module located on the intranet https://westsuffolk.britsafelearning.com in the past 12 months?		
Communications – Have adequate communication processes been agreed to prevent isolation and stress with your team and colleagues?		
Manual handling – Will the task include lifting or carrying and, if so, have you completed the manual handling training module located on the intranet https://westsuffolk.britsafelearning.com in the past three years?		

Health – Do you have any existing health problems which may affect your ability to work from home?		
Slips, trips and falls – Is your work area at home free from the risk of slips, trips and falls?		
Emergencies – Do you have access to a phone in the case of emergencies?		

Any other comments:

Actions required (if none, please state none):

Completed by and date:

Signature of employee: ……………………………………….. Date: …………………………………….

Signature of manager: ………………………………………. Date: …………………………………….

Appendix C: Agile (Home) Worker's Letter to Insurer template

Address line 1
Address line 2
Address line 3
Address line 4

Date

Dear

Insurance policy number (where appropriate)

I have agreed with my employer, West Suffolk Council, that I will be working at home under the council's Agile Working Policy on an ad hoc/partial/full-time basis (delete as appropriate).

West Suffolk Council will provide me with the following items of equipment to enable me to work at home. (List all equipment)

• Laptop or tablet
• 22 inch monitor
• Second screen (where required for role)
• Laptop stand
• Mouse
• Keyboard
• Carry bag
• Headset and cable
• Mitel phone

I require written confirmation of receipt of this letter and acceptance of these terms. I would be grateful for an early response. I would appreciate your confirmation that this will not affect, in any way, the validity or cost of my household insurance cover which is placed with you (policy number as above) and that my policy includes public liability cover for at least £1 million (include in letter to home contents insurer only).

Yours sincerely (if addressed to a person) or faithfully (if addressed to Sir or Madam)

Sign off

Appendix D: Organisational Remote Working Charter

Eight principles of how we work remotely

#We'reAllInThisTogether
#TeamWestSuffolk

1. Create clear separation between work and personal time

Just because we can be connected 24 hours a day, seven days a week, doesn't mean that we should be. We respect each other's personal time, the need to disconnect and the importance of self-care.

2. Virtual meeting etiquette

We will all actively engage in virtual meetings, which means limiting multi-tasking and being visible by turning on our cameras as required during the meeting.

We will make sure our backgrounds during meetings are appropriate and use background blurring if necessary.

3. Connecting with others

We support each other's wellbeing and show empathy, care and consideration for others.

We encourage virtual breaks to check in, catch up and stay connected with each other.

Even when we are apart, we are all in this together.

We encourage people to share their ideas and regularly discuss how they are feeling.

We encourage people to make use of the range of ways we can communicate with others, reducing the over-reliance on emails and the necessity to send emails to multiple recipients for information purposes only.

4. Flexibility

We understand that one size does not fit all, and we support all our staff to work in ways that work for them.

We respect the fact that people are working at different times and we will show consideration for their choice of when and how to work. We do not expect people to reply to emails outside of their working hours.

Staff are empowered to work flexibly, although their work patterns should be known by line management to ensure we manage our customers' expectations.

We want to focus on people working in smarter ways and in ways that work for them and our customers.

We encourage and expect managers to carry out regular wellbeing conversations and distinguish between supervision of work and personal support.

5. Transparency and trust

Everyone is committed to and accountable for their performance, but we encourage people to find ways of working that work for them so that we can balance work and life and remain healthy and productive.

6. Meetings with purpose

We respect each other's time and busy schedules and understand that not everything has to be a meeting.

We respect break and lunch times when scheduling meetings.

Meeting duration and time management should allow for productive positive meetings that don't overrun. We respect the needs of others for breaks away from screens.

Formal meeting objectives should be clear in advance, allowing for focused discussions.

7. Team alignment

We encourage all teams to review their expectations and ways of working and communicate with each other in ways that work for them and their teams.

We encourage all teams to focus on their achievements and generate a positive working environment.

8. Upholding our values and behaviours

We continue to focus on delivering exceptional service for our communities and we remain committed to providing a high quality, people-oriented service across the organisation.