

Hybrid Working Guidance – last updated April 2024

What Is Hybrid Working?

Hybrid Working is a type of flexible working which means employees split their working time between their contractual work base, home and/or agreed alternative workspaces within their locality.

The Councils approach to Hybrid Working

Hybrid Working is offered as a Flexible Working “Option” within the Councils Flexible Working Framework.

The Council has opted to have a standardised minimum number of days “on site”, for employees

- a) whose role is seen to be suited to Hybrid Working and
- b) who wish to informally embrace this style of flexible working.

NB: “On site” attendance does not necessarily mean an employee’s contracted place of work – it could be another Council premises or those of partners/customers/ service users/ stakeholders, essentially not an employee’s home.

For full time employees, this will normally be 2 days (40%) per week. Managers should use discretion when agreeing an approach with employees who work less than full time hours. All employees will require to be on-site at a pattern and frequency to allow them to contribute to the delivery of work and meeting customer needs, as well as having the opportunity to connect and collaborate with colleagues. This may mean part time employees being on site for more than 40% of their working week, where necessary.

NB: The word “normally” is included to allow some flexibility around set parameters. As noted below attendance patterns may vary to reflect the variety of work, deadline periods e.g. month end/year end, Committee reports, team and customer requirements, support for new employees and holiday cover.

Embedding Hybrid Working

How Hybrid Working is embedded at team and individual levels should be agreed at local level to fit the specific needs of the work/customers served by that team/ individual.

Hybrid patterns of work should be reviewed locally at regular intervals (at least every 6 months) to ensure these needs continue to be met in the most effective way.

Managers are encouraged to discuss individual circumstances with employees prior to implementation.

It is important that our approach to hybrid working enables a working environment which meets the organisation's needs and there should be clear operational reasons for hybrid working,

- having a positive impact on our day-to-day activities,
- improving productivity and efficiency and
- prioritising the needs of our stakeholders,

whilst recognising the potential benefits of flexible working to our employees, including

- better work life balance,
- improved inclusion and fairness and
- improved health and wellbeing.

Hybrid Working guidance is built around our Flexible Working Policy Statement and identified themes – **Health, Safety & Wellbeing; Communication; Culture; Fairness & Inclusion; Technology & Resources;** and **Focus on Results.** The principles provide a framework to support the success of hybrid working and ensure it meets employees and organisational needs.

Examples of situations where colleagues may be required to meet in person include:

- One to One meetings/catch ups
- Team Meetings/Development sessions
- Learning & Development Discussions
- Formal process meetings e.g., under an HR Framework
- Occasional in person interaction/supervision of team members for Health and Wellbeing reasons
- Re-familiarisation meeting with team(s); particularly new team members/changes to working arrangements
- To deliver and/or attend training
- As part of recruitment activity e.g., interviews, selection exercises
- To support or participate in an induction process
- To provide a service in person to a public, pupil or client group
- Meetings with or to support customers/colleagues which can't take place using Hybrid technology
- To participate in procurement activity including contract award/contract management processes e.g., meeting with a current or potential supplier
- Site visits where appropriate and in response to operational need.

Which roles are suitable for Hybrid Working?

A high number of roles within the Council offer the opportunity for Hybrid Working. For some job roles and type of work however, particularly those which require employees to provide a service in person to the public, pupil or client group, hybrid working may not be suitable. See Workstyles Document.

All roles will be discussed and, using the Councils Workstyles document, an appropriate workstyle agreed. Where it is not possible to agree, the Service Manager will review and make a decision to ensure a consistent approach is taken.

Job vacancy adverts/profiles will detail whether a role is suitable for hybrid working and will identify the base location for that role.

If an employee wishes to use a Hybrid workstyle they will require to discuss this with their manager. If a post is already categorised as suitable for hybrid working then there should be no issue with approval in principle, however details of individual working patterns will require discussion and agreement.

The number of days per week each member of staff may spend working remotely will vary, within Council set parameters, depending on:

- the nature of their role;
- what is happening within their role and team at any particular time;
- the needs of our organisation, including the space we have available at our work locations, and
- needs/circumstances of the individual. (a risk assessment may be required)

To reflect the variety of work, deadline periods e.g. month end/year end, Committee reports, team and customer requirements, support for new employees and holiday cover, work patterns may change weekly.

The level of autonomy an employee has, to vary work patterns must be made clear to the employee.

Ongoing Reviews of Working Patterns

Hybrid Working will be discussed regularly between a manager and the employee as part of annual development discussions or more frequently if required, to ensure arrangements still fit with organisational needs and any changes should be noted in writing to the employee.

There may be occasions when a manager requires a presence in the office at short notice. It is important that employees are able to be flexible in these situations however reasonable notice should be given where possible.

If employees/managers are unable to agree the pattern of attendance, the overriding requirement is to fulfil service delivery. The original contract of employment – including contracted work base – continues to be in place and will be the on-going position until an agreement is reached.

Managers, in consultation with HR, can remove or amend days worked remotely, should there be an abuse of the flexible working option, or where there is a business reason to do so.

Where hybrid working is permanently removed as an option for a particular role the employee(s) will be given reasonable notice of at least 4 weeks.

In situations where an employee no longer wishes to work in a hybrid manner due to

- challenges with the environment at home and/or
- personal reasons or reasons of wellbeing,

they should discuss this with their line manager to make them aware they wish to revert back to their original way of working. Appropriate workspace will be made available on a full-time basis at the employee's contractual base.

Terms and conditions

Hybrid Working is not a contractual right. If an employee has chosen to embrace hybrid working in a role that has been designated as suitable, there will normally be no contractual change and their contractual base for admin purposes will remain unchanged. Where an employee working in a Hybrid manner requests to work less than the normal 2 days on site, on a regular basis, a discussion should take place, in the first instance, to clarify the reasons and to establish whether an agreement can be reached, through a temporary change or via a reasonable adjustment on grounds of equality, before making a request through the formal Flexible Working process.

Agreeing outputs/objectives

It is important that managers agree clear objectives with employees opting to work in a hybrid manner. This means

- agreeing tasks and actions that need to be carried out within agreed timescales and to agreed standards.
- Agreeing when an employee will be available for teams calls/collaboration

to ensure team productivity is maintained.

NB: Hybrid working should not impact on the hours of work carried out. Employees who are currently on Flexi may continue to make use of this facility within in the confines of customer and team requirements.

Support for managers of Hybrid workers/teams

Being responsible for a team who are working in a hybrid manner may require a change in the way we manage and lead. Guidance, to assist managers lead and support hybrid teams and for teams working in a hybrid workstyle, is available within the [Hybrid Working Principles Guidance](#).

Communications

It is important, both for service delivery and positive wellbeing that employees remain in regular contact with their manager and colleagues when working from home or from a remote location. Regular, meaningful and inclusive communications are essential. Being in the office helps maintain relationships and can better facilitate service development discussions. The requirement of normally working 2 days/week on-site is designed to facilitate this connection and collaborative working and, as

such hybrid team members are expected to maximise the benefits that can be gained from this regular face to face time with their own team and to maintain links with others.

It is important that your manager and colleagues know your working pattern and location. You must update your electronic diary to ensure it is clear when you are due to work, when you are in meetings, and any other commitments you may have during the normal working week. You can add your lunch break into your diary to ensure you are not disturbed.

Work Locations

When agreeing a hybrid way of working, potential locations should also be discussed and agreed. It is likely that an employee's contracted "base" location will have an area available on certain days for the team to work in close proximity. Employees should ensure they are aware where they can work from and of how to book a desk, if a booking system is in place, in locations they are likely to be working from. Desk booking should be cancelled if an employee's arrangements change to allow others to utilise that desk.

NB Attendance "at work" does not necessarily mean an employee's contracted base/place of work – it could be another Council premises or those of partners/customers/service users/ stakeholders, essentially not an employee's home.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing

The health, safety and wellbeing of our employees is the shared responsibility of everyone. Guidance is available to support new ways of working on our [Wellbeing](#) pages.

Learning & Development

On-line learning opportunities continue to increase however all hybrid workers will be expected to attend Council premises for scheduled face to face learning and development events as and when required.

Performance and Development Discussions (PDD) should take place, face to face, on a regular basis in line with guidance available.

Equalities

Managers should consider any information disclosed in terms of equality and discuss, agree and regularly review any reasonable adjustments required to facilitate hybrid working. See [Equality and diversity](#) guidance.

Equipment and resources

For information and guidance regarding access to appropriate equipment for hybrid working, and for working offline see [Information Technology Guidance](#).

Expenses, Mileage Claims and Tax Implications

Only where there is no alternative Council workspace available to an employee will they be eligible to claim tax relief through HMRC, for any time spent working at home. This is unlikely to apply to any Council employees who choose a hybrid workstyle. See [Claim tax relief for your job expenses: Working from home - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-tax-relief-for-your-job-expenses-working-from-home)

Any mileage claims should be made in line with the Council's [Travel and Subsistence Policy](#). The journey to and from your contractual base or preferred based, cannot be claimed as a travel expense. Journeys to and from base should take place out with working time/whilst clocked out.

Energy Use

To help minimise our carbon footprint and improve the quality of our working and living environment please see [Home Energy Scotland](#).

Security

Any employees who work remotely for all or part of their working week should continue to follow the principles of the Councils [Information Security Policy](#).

Insurance/Mortgage/Rental agreements

It is the responsibility of the employee to check whether any time spent working at home on a hybrid basis, has any impact on their home insurance, mortgage or rental agreement.

Hybrid Working from a remote base

Managers should consult [Guidance](#) or contact their HR service representative should questions arise regarding an employee hybrid working from a distant or non UK home base. This can be a complex area therefore the default position is that working from outside of the UK will not normally be supported and managers should not make any decisions before taking advice.

Hybrid Work for employees sponsored to work in the UK, by the Council

Managers should contact their HR service representative should an employee who is currently sponsored by the Council to work in the UK, start or stop hybrid working, as a change to working arrangements may require to be declared.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with related Flexible Working guidance.