

**Appendix A**



# Hybrid Working Policy

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# Abbreviations and definitions

The table below contains explanations for the abbreviations and definitions used in this policy. If you have any questions about any of these please contact the HR team for clarification.

<b>Abbreviation or word</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
DSE	Display Screen Equipment (e.g. laptop screen, computer monitor, tablet screen, phone, etc.)
Hybrid working	A working arrangement where colleagues have more than one regular location of work (e.g. office, home-working, hub, district council office, etc.)
Agile working	Bringing people, processes, connectivity and technology, time and place together to find the most appropriate and effective way of working
Reasonable Adjustments	Changes to a colleagues' work/role that remove or reduce a disadvantage. This could be an adjustment to working patters, or an alteration to the way tasks are completed.
Matrix Management	Where an individual may report to one line manager, but also additional 'project' or 'team' managers at different times.

## 1. Introduction

South Cambridgeshire District Council is committed to providing a flexible, adaptive, and agile working environment for its employees. This includes the way we work, where we work, and what tools we need to utilise to support our hybrid approach.

Our “*hybrid*” approach means that work is an activity we do rather than a place we go; “work is what you do – not where you do it”. It places an emphasis on an activity-based culture, using new tools, new processes, increased flexible working opportunities and new approaches to management and teamwork. It is underpinned by our behaviours; working together, authenticity, dynamic and innovative, and supports a culture of looking at outcomes as the measure of success.

This policy is part of a suite of documents to implement hybrid ways of working. Please refer to the FAQs in Appendix 1 for further information.

### **Aim of the procedure**

The aim of this procedure is to ensure that the Council treats all staff fairly and consistently. It outlines the framework in which we expect employees to agree and develop their own forms of hybrid working, and provides support for managers in making these agreements with their teams and wider colleagues.

### **Access to this Policy**

As part of this policy, the Council will make reasonable adjustments for employees to support their hybrid working, and ensure a safe working environment for all.

Employees who need assistance with interpreting this policy should contact the HR team for guidance and support.

## **2. Hybrid Principles**

We recognise that developing our hybrid culture and ensuring that the changes become embedded is a collective responsibility. The principles and commitments below play a key part of embedding our new way of working.

### ***At SCDC we work flexibly by:***

- accepting that flexibility is the norm rather than the exception,
- reviewing each role to agree how it can best be delivered, based on the activities required to meet customers' needs and support delivery of agreed outcomes,
- ensuring work takes place at the most effective location and time, relevant to the outcome, customer, individual and team needs.
- delivering tools and space which enable collaboration, connectivity and opportunities for hybrid ways of working together,
- continuously challenging traditional and new approaches to how we deliver our services to make sure they are fit for purpose and continually improving,
- ensuring consistency of approach in how we manage flexible working, using pragmatism to accept that specifics may differ for each team, role, and person,
- respecting and supporting individual circumstances, concerns, and the changing needs of our colleagues, providing wellbeing support and development as required,
- managing employees by performance and outcomes rather than presenteeism,
- providing fit for purpose digital and virtual tools to enable the best delivery of services and interactions, automating processes, and eliminating need for paper wherever possible,
- focussing and delivering benefits related to working flexibly e.g., reduced carbon emissions and accommodation costs.

### **As an Organisation We Will...**

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- Provide training, equipment, and the tools required to fulfil your role effectively and efficiently,
- Support our managers to:
  - ensure safe and effective working practices can be easily understood and adhered to by you,
  - take accountability for their team's progress and commitment to workplace culture,
  - manage individual requirements, including specifics such as reasonable adjustments and the needs of newly appointed colleagues,
  - undertake regular performance development conversations and be available to provide necessary support,
- Ensure information about the Council, your employment and specifics related to your role are kept up to date and easily accessible via a colleagues' intranet,
- Provide as much notice and detail as possible about activities and duties which need to be completed at a specific location and time,
- Enable face to face collaboration to be completed in any suitable space appropriate to the confidentiality of the discussion,

### **As Colleagues We Will...**

- Maintain positive communication and engagement within and across teams, including delivering virtual meetings and interactions in an appropriate manner,
- Ensure a working environment which is conducive to delivering our very best, meeting health & safety and working time directive requirements,
- Respect and support individual circumstances, participating in team activities, sharing learnings and best practice with colleagues,
- Manage our time to ensure delivery of agreed outcomes, sharing any challenges or concerns so a solution can be found,
- Work with our teams to ensure cover for our customers and colleagues, ensuring calendars and communication tools are effectively used,
- Agree as a team when we will have collaborative time and actively participate in this,
- Comply with ICT security and data protection requirements, taking care of all equipment provided.

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## **3. Hybrid Approach**

In many cases, colleagues will blend different flexible working options, according to the activities required. This involves a substantial move away from the idea that an individual applies for and is granted a single work pattern that is set in stone. It is important to take a team approach so that flexible working arrangements can be planned to cover the service needs as well as promote more flexible working arrangements for colleagues. Please refer to your Team Charter for your team's agreement to how they will work together.

To consider the flexible and hybrid working arrangements which would be suitable for a specific role or team, we will first analyse the activities involved in each job role, considering how effectively they can be done at different times and in different locations.

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We will then consider the impact on teamwork and/ or customer service to agree the worker profile for each role.

The worker profile will be the same for every role in a team and enables the colleague and their manager to be clear about how much flexibility there is to deliver a role. This is then overlaid with the individual personal preference. The table below captures our two forms of worker profile: Hybrid and Fixed. Most of our roles are classified as hybrid, which is then further broken down into the requirements of the hybrid role. In addition, a set of standard equipment for each role will be agreed.

**Worker profile descriptions**

<b>Hybrid</b>	<b>Fixed</b>
<p>A role which in the main can be conducted from various locations. Although they may have some pre-determined hours/location requirements Individuals in the team have the autonomy to determine their working hours and/or location within pre-agreed team requirements to ensure the agile working profile requirements are met.</p>	<p>A role which in the main has to be completed during set hours and/or location. Flexibility is very limited and only on a pre-agreed basis with the team manager. Individuals in the team can work together with their manager to consider how the role can be delivered in a more agile way, but due to the agile working profile requirement, individuals are not able to have the autonomy to determine their working hours and/or location.</p>

Hybrid is then further divided, as outlined below.

<b>Hybrid: on-the-go</b>	<b>Hybrid: desk based</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A role which starts and finishes their day from a base but during the day moves between locations and places.</li> <li>• Typically, this role needs the flexibility to schedule diaries so they can meet customers/partners and have meetings with teams or their manager in any location.</li> <li>• It is vital they can access files and folders from wherever they are working.</li> <li>• They may work from partners' buildings or in public spaces.</li> <li>• They will come back to the office from time to time across the week.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A role which can be completed without specific desk set up requirements.</li> <li>• Typically, this role needs a desk, screen and ICT access to folders and systems.</li> <li>• They don't need a particular location but tend to stay in one location all day.</li> <li>• Their role is mainly desk based.</li> <li>• They may occasionally work from partners' buildings or in public spaces.</li> </ul> <p><i>NB: Some roles in this category will require a set desk due to specific requirements which can only be set up on a certain desk. This will be agreed where relevant.</i></p>

*Delivering this approach to ways of working means:*

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- Our focus is on delivering agreed outcomes and activities, as opposed to the number of hours worked. We will still have a total contracted number of hours, with an agreed work pattern (this is required for our HR/payroll system), however where and how these are worked will vary from person to person.
- Core business hours may differ between services, based on customer and activity needs. The support required to deliver these services needs to be considered and agreed.
- The use of both virtual and digital working is critical, however we accept that there is sometimes great benefit in being face to face, such as when inducting new people or supporting less experienced colleagues to develop their knowledge/skills.
- We want to see an increase in mixed working groups, cutting across teams and services, including more use of matrix management.
- It is important to take a team approach so that working arrangements can be planned to cover our customers' needs as well as promote more flexible working arrangements for colleagues,
- We recognise that for some colleagues the option for flexible working is greatly reduced or not available, due to the nature of their role, as they are required to deliver a service from a specific location or at a specific time. In these cases, local options will be discussed and agreed to allow as much flexibility as possible for all colleagues.
- All our colleagues, where their role allows, are empowered to manage their hours of work to ensure customer needs and partner requirements are met and our agreed outcomes delivered.
- Health and Wellbeing of all colleagues remains important and colleagues should raise any concerns or challenges with their managers initially, or with HR

## **4. Workspace**

Within our offices, accommodation will be set up with:

- Spaces for collaboration equipped with appropriate technology to connect virtually with remote colleagues/ customers and partners,
- Touch-down spaces for people working on the move,
- Special project areas.

A key constraint on the introduction of flexible working is a perceived dependency on paper documents, storage, and other physical resources. While there are some statutory obligations to retain paper documents, the reasons for using and generating paper are becoming less and less compelling in an age of electronic based working.

The use of electronic processes and appropriate on-line storage and filing is essential to flexible working, enabling more effective working from any location. Managers and colleagues should feel empowered to continuously challenge traditional and new approaches to work, making sure they are fit for purpose but do not suppress our hybrid and flexible ways of working practices.

## **Working remotely**

Most of our hybrid workers can work from a selection of different locations outside of the office. We have three different forms of remote working available to our colleagues, captured below:

**Home** - When colleagues are working from home, it is important that the home working environment is set up properly, your home must:

- provide you with a space which is free from interruptions and distractions, including distractions from caring responsibilities (please see FAQs for more details),
- comply with the needs of the home workplace assessment,
- not be used as a work location for face to face (in person) meetings with members of the public,
- enable you to always keep all documents and information associated with council's business secure,
- have adequate insurance cover to enable you to work from home, the Council will not fund any additional premiums, (*refer FAQs for more information on this*)
- have no restrictions which would stop you working from home e.g., specific clauses in a mortgage or rental agreement.

**Hub** - work may be able to be carried out in 'third party places', for example: client offices, organisational partners, shared offices, cafés, hotel lobbies, libraries and on public transport. Colleagues accessing the network via such external WiFi hotspots signals should always use the correct security procedures and be mindful of information security and confidentiality when working from alternative locations.

**Roam** - For some of our colleagues work is completed either on the move or from various sites. The main issues with working on the move relate to confidentiality, security, safety and health. Safety concerns relate both to personal security and security of organisational property and data.

All colleagues should follow the Lone Worker Policy and whatever your work style, you should never give out your home address, or personal phone number to those outside your immediate team.

## **5. Team Management**

When working in different locations and at different times, social relationships need to be maintained and appropriate online and offline mechanisms need to be developed, such as buddy schemes for new recruits, regular team meetings, colleague briefings etc.

It is the responsibility of teams to look out for each other, and for managers of dispersed teams to spot problems and resolve them before they become major issues. These may be teased out through regular conversations, or clues may be spotted in terms of performance. If necessary, the manager and team member can agree an alternative work style. It is about finding the right work style for the individual, and about providing the appropriate support to overcome the problem.

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The aim in moving to our new ways of working is to create the context in which teams can operate more dynamically and have better physical and online spaces in which to interact. Though they may no longer sit next to one another, the new technologies should allow much more effective sharing of work and enable team members to communicate more effectively than before. New ways of working will also support more effective cross-team working amongst services.

It is important to have clear expectations about what is to be done and about communications within the team. A team should ensure there is/are:

- clear reporting structures,
- clear methods of regular communication, such as Teams updates or team meetings,
- sharing of calendars and schedules,
- rigorous use of electronic document management systems, to ensure work is easily accessible,
- a balanced approach to allocating work and working times, such that no individual is disadvantaged by the choices of others, e.g., in providing office cover or attending meetings,
- useful online communications, and etiquette in virtual meetings is followed,
- signposting and availability for phone contact or online discussion,
- fairness in use of space when in the office.

## **6. Data Security and Information Management**

Maintaining the security of the information we work with is vital and those working remotely are responsible for the security of the data they keep and should comply with all relevant legislation and organisational policies, just as if they were working in a fixed council office.

Specifically:

- Confidential or sensitive conversations/work should not be carried out whilst in any public areas,
- Other individuals (including family members) should not have any access to personal data either on paper or as electronic records,
- All printed or other paper records must be safely locked away when not in use,
- Confidential waste should be disposed of securely using the confidential waste bins provided at Council offices,
- All council data stored outside of the council's network, must only be stored on council systems and/or encrypted council owned devices. Council data must not be stored on any personal devices and/or colleagues should not send work related emails to their personal email address,
- If colleagues are using a laptop or other portable device, they must be aware of the additional security risks if leaving this device unattended,
- If colleagues become aware of any loss of council data they must contact the Information Governance team and notify their line manager immediately.

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It is the responsibility of all colleagues to ensure that information is handled correctly and not used for personal benefit or gain. Failure to follow the above regulations may result in disciplinary action.

### **Personal usage of equipment and technology**

Please refer to our IT policy for more information

## **7. Health and Safety when Working Hybrid**

The Council has a duty of care for all employees, whether they are working in the office, at home, on the move, or in some other working environment.

Employees also need to be responsible for ensuring their workstation is fit for purpose and that they follow the health & safety tips and guidelines provided. Further information can be found on the health and safety pages on Insite.

It is a requirement that all colleagues complete the Workplace DSE workstation assessment for their usual working locations; this means for both home and office. The DSE assessment can be accessed by contacting our Health and Safety officer.

If you are working remotely then your comfort and safety is just as important as it is when working in an office. Using laptops for prolonged periods in an office or home office environment may require the use of a laptop stand and/or an additional properly positioned screen, with a separate keyboard and mouse.

There are also some simple steps you can take to increase your physical wellbeing whilst working from home or remotely:

- breaking up long spells of DSE work with rest breaks (at least 5 minutes every hour) or changes in activity,
- avoiding awkward, static postures by regularly changing position,
- getting up and moving or doing stretching exercises,
- avoiding eye fatigue by for example changing focus,
- wiping down hard surfaces at the end and start of every working day,
- ensuring adequate lighting within your working environment to avoid eye strain.

If colleagues have any questions or concerns about their health and safety they should discuss these initially with their line manager, and then with the Health and Safety officer or HR if required.

## **8. Working Hours**

One of the benefits of working more flexibly is that it can help create a positive work-life balance. For example, it can ease the daily commute and/or help colleagues manage family, caring or domestic responsibilities during lunch breaks or directly before and after they work. Colleagues should ensure that whilst working from home they do not

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work excessively long or low hours on a regular basis and should only work their contracted hours. More information can be found on the gov.uk website:

<https://www.gov.uk/maximum-weekly-working-hours>.

Please also refer to the FAQ about working extra hours.

Alongside other initiatives to promote a healthy workplace, flexible working practices can help support mental wellbeing, and reduce absences from work. There are occasions where a colleague may not feel able to commute to work or sit in an office, but does feel able to work from home. In these instances, colleagues should speak with their line manager to agree if working from home is a viable option; colleagues should not feel obliged to work from home if they are sick - if the colleague is not well enough to work from home, then the normal sickness absence procedure will apply.

Colleagues who are being affected by stress may find home working beneficial to their wellbeing, however others may find it isolating. Individual circumstances should be discussed with line managers or the HR team to find a solution that works best for you. It is also important that colleagues remember to take annual leave on a regular basis to help protect and maintain their wellbeing.

Colleagues who do work from home also need to set boundaries so they can 'switch off' after the working day and ensure they maintain good health and well-being.

## **9. Environmental Sustainability**

One of the primary components of the carbon footprint of work relates to travel. Travelling thousands of miles each year for work/ meetings that can be carried out using video or telephone conferencing is an unsustainable and unproductive thing to do. Decisions about where we work, where we expect our colleagues to work, and the ways in which we communicate can increase or reduce our need for travel, our energy consumption and consumption of physical resources. We would therefore always encourage that meetings be held virtually where appropriate, and face-to-face meetings do not need to be seen as the norm. There are some times where virtual meetings are not appropriate, and in those situations spaces will still be available in our offices to conduct face-to-face meetings.