Hybrid & Remote Working Policy

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Contents

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December 2022	**N/A**	**Corporate HR**	Policy to provide details of hybrid working approach and incorporate covid 19 return to work guidance from chief exec in 2021. Section 13 to cover policy for very small number of permanent home workers, removing the outdated home working policy.	

<mark>INTRANET LINKS TO GUIDANCE TO BE INCLUDED ONCE POSTED ON THE INTRANET</mark>

1. Introduction

1.1 The Council's workforce is its most valuable asset, and it recognises staff are now seeking more diverse working patterns. The pandemic has accelerated the speed at which hybrid working patterns have been adopted and current technologies make it easier to access information in an agile way; working remotely and across multiple locations, depending on the task, whilst ensuring a connected service. This enables many more staff to perform their duties, with a blend of workplace and remote working, often termed "hybrid working".

1.2 It is not a right to work in a hybrid way and staff should be available to attend the workplace every day. Staff should agree any hybrid working arrangements in advance with their manager. If circumstances change, staff may be called in. If attendance is needed at the workplace during the course of a day when working remotely, staff will be required to attend the workplace. This approach is to ensure Council services are delivered and responsibilities to residents are fulfilled. Hybrid working arrangements, if they are not effective in delivering services, may be withdrawn at any point.

1.3 The Council's leadership teams champion flexible working and encourage creative consideration of flexible working arrangements, not only in roles that can be performed in an hybrid way but across all services and job groups in line with the flexible working policies. This aims to embrace opportunities to enhance workforce wellbeing, underpinned by the Council's values framework.

1.4 This policy details the key principles relating to hybrid working, setting flexible limits and outlining how things will work to ensure service delivery, workforce health, safety and wellbeing are all effectively supported. More detailed guidance for Health and Safety, IT processes and wellbeing support are available on the intranet and should be read in conjunction with this policy.

1.5 In line with the Equalities Strategy, the Council aims to provide an environment where people feel included, supported, and are treated fairly. Whilst this policy aims to ensure a fair and consistent approach to hybrid and remote working and to outline the key considerations for staff and managers, it is important to note that the methods used may vary in accordance with the requirements of service areas and roles.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to Bolton Council employees, recognising that the Council is committed to supporting hybrid working arrangements where these are appropriate for and in line with the needs of the service and job role being completed.

2.2 The policy covers permanent and temporary arrangements, a mix of workplace and remote working and for a very small number of services, permanent homeworking. An office base is assigned for all staff with the exception of a very small number of permanently home-based staff.

2.3 Although this policy focuses on hybrid working practices, there are many other forms of flexible working. Whilst some roles within the Council cannot be considered for hybrid working due to the nature of the work being carried out, there is considerable scope in many cases for some form of flexible working, considering the demands of the role, service, and individual's circumstances.

2.4 **Types of working arrangements**

There are a number of types of working arrangements which include:

- **Flexible working:** Examples of flexible working arrangements include changing the number of hours worked, buying additional annual leave, changing start and finish times, compressing working hours

into fewer days, job share, flexible retirement etc. Flexible working requests are covered by the Council's flexible working policies.

- **Workplace working:** Where employees are based at a specific location(s), offices or sites.

- **Hybrid working:** Hybrid working refers to a more flexible, blended approach, where an employee splits their time between the workplace and remote working (often working from home). Hybrid working is sometimes used interchangeably with "agile" which refers to working at different locations, using the most appropriate location for the task in hand. Staff can use their one to one/supervision sessions to discuss hybrid working arrangements with their manager.

- **Temporary home or hybrid working**: This could be to facilitate a particular circumstance and can be employee or employer led. This could be, for example part of a phased return to work, to enable the employee a more expedient return to work from sickness absence or alternatively where government guidance recommends this.

- **Permanent home working**: This arrangement is where staff are permanently based at home. This is service-led and can incur a change to the employment contract. This is covered in section 13.

- **Home-based mobile working:** These are staff who are permanently based at home but are frequently travelling to service users and/or sites within Bolton (and possibly beyond) as part of their role and may be referred to as "peripatetic".

2.5   The policy may also apply to some temporary agency workers depending on the nature of the role and solely refers to employees working within the UK.

2.6   The location proposed for remote working is normally of a reasonable journey time from the office given the likelihood that workplace working may be required at short notice. Staff are not entitled to work outside of the UK.

2.7   This policy may be reviewed and updated in accordance with government guidance and advice and if necessary adjustments may be implemented on a temporary, urgent basis.

3.   The benefits of hybrid working

3.1   There are undoubtedly a number of benefits associated with hybrid working practices for both the organisation and employees. It is important that managers work with their teams to find the correct balance between needs of individuals, teams, customers, other services and the wider organisation. It is also acknowledged that there can be some disadvantages including the increased risk of isolation, reduced connection and collaboration opportunities.

3.2   **Benefits of hybrid working can include:**

- **Flexibility:** Hybrid working improves work-life balance and can help manage domestic responsibilities with work duties, which in turn encourages positive wellbeing and enables people to work in a way that makes them more creative and productive. This can support the recruitment of staff and also retention of experienced staff whose personal circumstances change and may otherwise choose to leave, thus reducing turnover.
- **Wellbeing**: Improved workforce wellbeing and work-life balance by exercising more control over the hours and place that an employee works, balancing work, lifestyle, and family commitments.
- **Savings**: Offering a workable solution to the challenge within the Council of limited desk space and possible savings from reducing office space needed. For staff, this may mean less commute and parking related costs are incurred.

- **Sustainability:** Hybrid working can support environmental initiatives and the carbon footprint, by reducing traffic.
- **Supporting continuity of service:** the efficient functioning of the organisation both in the short and longer term, particularly when external factors change e.g. in a pandemic.
- **Encourages equality, diversity and inclusion:** Hybrid and flexible ways of working encourages a more diverse workforce. It also offers increased opportunities for people with disabilities to work for the Council, keeping those with long term conditions in work and/or offering temporary working from home as a reasonable adjustment or phased return to work.
- **Belonging:** Working collaboratively in the office and connecting with colleagues creates a sense of belonging that helps people thrive at work.
- **Improved productivity:** Working remotely can allow better use of time for some tasks and encourages greater focus time, to enable individuals to concentrate on delivery.
- **Engagement:** People can work in a way that's flexible but enables them to be effective and get the job done. This in turn can improve engagement with the organisation and job satisfaction.
- **Collaboration:** Through teams identifying specific areas where collaboration is needed, this increases the quality of team and stakeholder interactions.
- **Digital skills:** New technology and tools are being shared all the time, helping to make us more effective. Working in a hybrid way enables people to improve their digital skills.

4. Hybrid working principles

4.1 Managers will work with team members to explore how hybrid working can operate within each team, and overall service, to ensure the standards and productivity of its business are maintained. For all hybrid working arrangements, this section outlines the ***principles*** to be used (4.2 to 4.12):

4.2 It is not a right or entitlement for an employee to work in a hybrid way merely as a preferred way of working. Managers must assess whether a hybrid working model suits service delivery and if its implementation would maintain and usually enhance service delivery and staff performance.

4.3 All hybrid working arrangements must be discussed and agreed with management and may be changed at short notice, should attendance at the workplace be required. It is expected that any member of staff scheduled to be working remotely, can be available to attend their designated base or another location, on occasion at short notice, during their normal working hours, in line with business need. For example, if the business needs require a physical presence in the office due to absence or urgent issues. Staff are reminded that during 'core' business hours they should be available for work, whether working remotely or asked to attend the workplace.

4.4 Staff will be required to attend team, coaching or development sessions, normally in person, including regular team meetings, to ensure connection, collective ownership, understanding of organisational priorities and skills development.

4.5 A return to the office setting may be required, if productivity or service standards drop, for an individual employee or team working in a hybrid way. In line with any performance plans in place, staff who are experiencing performance issues may be required to be present in the office, to access appropriate support and supervision arrangements.

4.6 The expectation of the organisation, for services to be delivered, is that staff should be available to attend the workplace every day. If hybrid arrangements are agreed, staff will, as a minimum, be in the workplace for **the majority of** their working hours. This may fluctuate each week depending on business need and the availability of space in the building. The specific proportion of time at the different locations should be agreed with management in advance and may change with service need.

4.7　It is important to note that home working is not a replacement for childcare or other care obligations. Employees with caring responsibilities should make alternative arrangements to ensure these responsibilities are managed, to work effectively without distraction and be available to attend the workplace at short notice should their presence be needed. Should working from home on a regular basis be agreed, it is the employee's responsibility to ensure adequate childcare provisions are in place.

4.8　Clear and clean desk principles apply to all workers to maximise hybrid working opportunities. All employees should lock their computer or laptop screen whenever they are away from their desk, log off and switch off at the end of each working day, locking laptops safely away.

4.9　During the probationary period, newly appointed staff will normally be required to be office based whilst training, mentoring and face to face support is especially important in enabling employees to adjust to their new roles.

4.10　If circumstances arise where an employee temporarily cannot work remotely, such as in the event of a system/Wi-Fi issue or they no longer have an appropriate environment to work, staff will be expected to travel into the workplace (in their own time) to undertake their duties.

4.11　It is advised the details of hybrid working arrangements are discussed in regular supervision/1 to 1 sessions to ensure they continue to work well for staff, managers and meet the needs of the service. The hybrid arrangements may be modified or withdrawn following review. If, following a review, it is concluded that a hybrid working arrangement is no longer suitable or workable, the reasons should be outlined to the employee. The effectiveness of all hybrid arrangements should be reviewed annually, as a minimum.

4.12　All Council policies, procedures and practices that apply to office-based employees will apply equally to hybrid and home workers, including the sickness absence reporting procedure.

5.　Roles and responsibilities

5.1　**Managers are expected to:**

- Support and reinforce key principles of the policy and engage in regular discussions with team members to review the arrangements in place, ensuring individual and service needs are being met.
- Carefully consider any requests for hybrid working, balancing the needs of the individual, team and service in a fair and equitable way.
- Respond to any requests in writing, outlining the details agreed or reasons the request can't be accommodated, and any alternatives proposed.
- Take up support and development opportunities to learn more about managing hybrid teams and new tools available.
- Familiarise themselves with relevant policies, procedures, and guidance.
- Completing risk assessments with staff and seeking any advice needed from advisory services such as Health & Safety, CICT and HR.
- Discuss and confirm with both individuals and teams the working arrangements for their service.
- Ensure appropriate arrangements are in place, and processes are followed to support regular communication, health, safety and wellbeing of team members.
- Discuss ways to support and increase wellbeing, signposting to appropriate sources of support.
- Support new staff and provide adequate workplace support for their induction and probationary period.
- Complete regular 1:1 supervision sessions and team meetings, to support wellbeing, encourage connection and ensure appraisal processes are not overlooked.

- Ensure staff have access to the appropriate communications, information on job opportunities, access to support, resources, and the trades unions.
- Be aware of wider implications and considerations across a hybrid team including ensuring equality of opportunities, inclusivity and fair distribution of tasks.
- Ensure employees have appropriate support and signpost to key resources as required, if there are any wellbeing concerns, or risk of isolation.

5.2 **Employees are expected to:**

- Be aware of, and adhere to, key principles of the policy and explore the training available.
- Familiarise themselves with relevant policies, procedures and guidance and seek advisory services as needed from Health & Safety, CICT and HR.
- Engage in open dialogue with their line manager about personal preferences and requirements relating to hybrid working, appreciating the needs of the service.
- Be available for work in line with expectations of the role and needs of the service.
- Ensure they have the necessary equipment and an appropriate working environment; supportive seating, appropriate desk space and private space in which to work.
- Complete the risk assessment process and access key resources and support as required to maintain positive wellbeing.
- Make sure their workspace is secure and safe, adhering with relevant procedures (Information Security, Health and Safety etc).
- Safeguard any assets, making sure they are used, kept and transported securely in order to avoid data breaches, accidents and any opportunist theft.
- Ensure appropriate breaks are taken and there are healthy boundaries to the working day.
- Maintain professional etiquette during virtual meetings.
- Discuss any concerns or changes to circumstances that may impact on the effectiveness of hybrid/home working arrangements or content of the risk assessments.
- Log working hours with the method advised by management.
- Be aware that flexi is not accrued when working at home unless there is an exceptional service need to do so and that this is agreed with their manager, in advance.

6. Management of hybrid working & working hours

6.1 Staff working remotely will be under less direct supervision of a manager and arrangements are reliant on a high level of trust. It is therefore important that management arrangements are agreed at the outset before hybrid working arrangements begin. It is advised the following are agreed, together with appropriate review points for the arrangements:

- Hours of work and any method for logging hours worked.
- When, where and how the work will be carried out, detailing how often the workplace, hybrid and remote working will take place.
- Measurable outcomes and effectiveness. This covers such issues as quantity of work, quality of work, deadlines and how the work can be easily assessed remotely.
- Communication arrangements, to ensure staff remain briefed, able to contribute to team working and enable information to be shared effectively.
- A supervision structure, including completion of the annual appraisal process, face to face.
- The necessary equipment needed.
- Security and confidentiality arrangements.

- Contingency arrangements should the IT system be unavailable.
- How the employee will access training and development effectively.
- How the employee can be supported to stay organised and motivated when working remotely.

6.2   Should any performance concerns arise they should be addressed through the Probationary Period or Managing Capability Procedure.

6.3   The Working Time Directive continues to apply to staff wherever they may be working. The key legislative detail is taking a break for at least 20 minutes, when working 6 hours or more and ensuring the time-period between stopping work one day and beginning the next is not less than 11 hours. The Council's Flexible Working Guidelines stipulate lunchbreaks are for a minimum of 30 minutes.

6.4   Hours of work must be agreed in advance to ensure colleagues know when and how to make contact, enabling effective separation of working and home lives.

6.5   Where staff may be working outside normal working hours and less management support can be accessed, staff should read and adhere to any lone working arrangements and be aware of their own safety and security.

6.6   If an employee requests long term changes in working arrangements (hours, times, locations) then the relevant flexible working process should be used.

6.7   Flexi-time is not accrued when working at home other than in exceptional circumstances, when agreed in advance, including arrangements for how this time could be taken back.

7.   Health and safety

7.1   The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places specific duties on employers, having a duty of care to protect the health, safety and welfare of their employees including those working from other locations, or at home. It is key that the working environment is safe, secure and suitable.

7.2   To ensure these duties are fulfilled, managers must complete a risk-assessment process and the employee carry out self risk-assessments. This ensures hybrid and home working can be done safely and that any control measures are implemented to mitigate risks identified and to improve remote working environments. If further advice is needed, subject to the nature of the work and individual circumstances, the assessment may be referred to a (DSE) trained risk assessor for advice on the suitability of the proposed space for use as a work environment and use of display screen equipment. Details of this are available on the Health & Safety intranet page. A template home worker risk assessment can be found here and the home workers self checklist here.

7.3   Where employees work from home, using a computer for the majority of their working day the manager must follow the DSE Guidance for Office & Homeworking. Managers must ensure that they follow the guidance in the document which sets out the simple steps to ensure their employees are trained to set up equipment in a way which will help them adopt ergonomic work practices. The process is enhanced when staff and managers complete the risk assessment and discuss the content, allowing them to work on any issues that have been identified.

7.4   The assessment forms for staff and managers are available on the intranet together with the Council's DSE guidance documents. The key points for consideration when working at home are:

- Adequate space, light and ventilation

- Safe and adequate power supply

- A home workstation setup that is not restrictive or likely to cause the user to experience discomfort or create musculoskeletal issues

- Any risks specific to the activity and/or location

- Working freely without interruption from others and to ensure that information is not accessible by other members of the household

- The home security protocols in place

- Provision of contact and emergency contact details

- Any reasonable adjustments needed, where the employee is covered by the Equality Act 2010 or through a formal OH/DSE review by a trained DSE assessor

7.5 Should risk assessments recommend any adaptations or equipment, the Council will consider the viability of meeting the costs where the home-working request is service driven. For purely employee driven hybrid working arrangement requests, which include homeworking, the employee is normally responsible for meeting the costs. Managers should consider any reasonable adjustments covered by the Equality Act and also any existing equipment owned by the Council, that could be used both in the workplace and at home. When new equipment is to be purchased, quotes should be obtained to ensure value for money and to comply with any procurement procedures including exploring any support from Access to Work.

7.6 Managers are responsible for retaining and reviewing all completed Health and Safety related documentation.

7.7 Staff are responsible for informing their manager of any changes to the agreed working arrangements and/or if they notice or start to experience any changes to their wellbeing or discomfort which may be associated with working at home, so support can be provided.

7.8 Staff are expected to complete the DSE e-learning module and must follow the guidance provided by Health and Safety, including reviewing the HSE DSE setup video together with an up-to-date DSE self-assessment, reflecting all relevant working environments i.e. both remote and workplace environments. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing intranet Site and the Councils e-Learning platform has a range of other information, training and advice.

7.9 Remote working may not be practical in all circumstances and some home environments. This may be due to wellbeing reasons or that the remote working environment is not suitable. Individual circumstances will continue to be taken into account, recognising these factors may also change over time. Where staff raise issues around DSE related medical conditions, if their home workstation is below the standard of their normal office setup, (e.g. special DSE equipment purchased and only fitted for the office) there may be a need to work from the office.

7.10 Employees working at home are advised against inviting anyone to their homes for work-related meetings and should also exercise caution in releasing their home address to other parties.

8. Wellbeing

8.1 The Council considers the wellbeing and engagement of its staff a high priority, regardless of where they are working. This is really important because being as physically and mentally healthy as they can be means staff are more likely to function well, fulfil their potential and be more resilient. It is

therefore important that the working environment, wherever this may be, optimises and supports both physical and mental wellbeing.

8.2 It is recognised that hybrid and home working can increase employee engagement, job satisfaction and wellbeing, however it is important to avoid any potential negative impacts, for example blurring or lack of work and home life boundaries, feelings of isolation and disconnection, all of which could impact on an individual's mental wellbeing.

8.3 Staff should be mindful of the benefits of a routine, the need for regular breaks, considering how to continue to engage with their team and stay connected with their manager. While working at home, it is important for staff to consider their posture, positioning and working habits so they can stay as comfortable and productive as possible. It is recommended staff ensure they are stretching and getting up from the workstation, having a rest from screen-time to avoid eye fatigue, breaks in activity, eating and keeping hydrated.

8.4 If staff have any concerns around how health and safety at work may be affecting their mental or physical health and wellbeing, they should raise them with their line manager. It is important to recognise the signs of any stress as early as possible, so that help and support can be accessed. Line managers should listen to concerns and be supportive in finding any solutions to alleviate and resolve concerns raised.

8.5 The Council has a culture of openness around wellbeing, therefore if staff have any concerns about their wellbeing, they are advised to speak to their manager in the first instance, the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) or a Mental Health First Aider. Other wellbeing support, tips and advice are on the intranet. Occupational Health and EAP counselling services are also available.

8.6 If an employee is unable to work for health reasons, normal sickness absence reporting procedures must be followed in line with the sickness absence policy, so appropriate support can be provided. When working remotely, it is important employees should not work if they are not fit to do so.

9. Communication

9.1 Effective communication is especially important and is essential to the success of hybrid and remote working. Both managers and employees need to ensure that they consider the best way to communicate effectively with each other, colleagues, and service users.

9.2 Those who use remote working should remain in regular contact with their manager and colleagues to ensure continued service delivery, to avoid any feelings of disconnection or isolation and to keep abreast of organisational changes.

9.3 Regular team meetings should be arranged including face to face sessions to ensure connection and collaboration opportunities are provided.

9.4 Staff should also ensure they remain 'contactable' during working time or otherwise agree alternative arrangements with their line manager. Services and teams should agree the default communication routes e.g. phone, email, Microsoft Teams etc.

9.5 Clear expectations should be communicated regarding what work is to be completed.

9.6 It is vital that staff keep their electronic diaries up to date with availability and communicate any changes appropriately.

10. Equipment, technology and data security

10.1   The workstation and equipment requirements will be discussed during the risk assessment process and any necessary equipment required to be sourced by the Council will be considered by management.

10.2   For permanent home and regular remote workers, necessary ICT equipment will be provided. Managers should consider providing mobile phones to staff where calls need to be made and cannot be made via Microsoft Teams. The Council will also supply any necessary stocks and supplies e.g. stationery. The default position should be to source any necessary equipment from existing Council stock. Where this is not possible, it is advised to always consider Council approved suppliers, seeking advice from ICT for any ICT equipment and if purchasing any other equipment externally to obtain 3 quotes, to ensure value for money.

10.3   Advice on the best digital solutions are available on the intranet and the list of approved devices is available on the service desk portal, see Help Yourself To IT - Home (sharepoint.com). The CICT team can advise on other options and costs, together with the Council's IT Support provider (link)

10.4   All equipment provided will remain the property of and be insured by Bolton Council. Staff are expected to use ICT in line with the corporate IT security policies.

10.5   Where personal identifiable data and/or other confidential data; including business sensitive information is to be taken off the premises, the Council's ICT and Information Governance Policies must be adhered to, including safe and secure transportation of information. This should form part of the risk assessment process.

10.6   Employees must not allow any other individuals (including other council employees and/or family members), access to Council information, equipment and password details, ensuring work is carried out in spaces where any necessary privacy and confidentiality can be maintained.

10.7   The employee will take responsibility for the confidentiality of any records held remotely (either in paper or electronic form), take all necessary steps to ensure that private and confidential material is kept secure at all times, and for its transportation to and from sites.

10.8   Documentation that is no longer needed should be safely disposed of in line with Information Governance policies and the Corporate Retention Schedule. Staff may have to visit a Bolton Council site for disposal and shredding facilities.

10.9   All portable equipment and documentation should be put away and safely stored when not in use.

10.10   All information security training required for the role, should be up to date.

10.11   Employees must notify their manager if they do not believe they have sufficient or appropriate equipment, or if any of the equipment develops a fault.

10.12   Employees should not use their own devices to store or email information which relates to Bolton Council. Bolton Council is not responsible for the provision, maintenance, replacement, or repair in the event of loss or damage to any personal equipment used by employees when working from home as part of hybrid working arrangements.

10.13   Misuse of Bolton Council's property may result in disciplinary action, therefore where equipment is provided, the employee must ensure it is used solely for the purposes for which it has been provided, taking reasonable care of the equipment and use it in accordance with any operating instructions.

10.14   If employees are concerned about a security breach of any nature, they should contact their manager immediately. Loss of equipment must be reported to Agilisys on 01204 338888 and any data incident must be reported to the Information Governance Team at information.security@bolton.gov.uk The form for reporting an incident is available on the ==intranet.==

11.   Reimbursement of costs

11.1   Costs will only be reimbursed by exception, where the Council cannot provide equipment to prevent costs being incurred and on proof of the expenditure incurred being provided. The reimbursement should be authorized, in advance, by the manager. The default position should be to purchase through the Council's procurement system or via purchase card. Any costs are to be met by services' own budgets. Any equipment bought by the Council remains the property of the Council.

The Council will not reimburse:
- Broadband charges and/or household utility costs.
- Any costs where Council equipment has been provided to avoid the incurrence of costs.
- Travel costs, parking costs and the commuting time incurred when traveling to Bolton office sites/home, to work or attend necessary meetings or training.
- Insurance premiums

11.2   Those staff who are designated permanent home workers by the service, who work at home for all their working hours are entitled to a monthly allowance towards heating, lighting and electricity costs. Payment of this allowance is subject to CLT approval and is pro-rated for part-time staff.

11.3   Staff should seek advice from the HMRC website should they wish to find information on any government allowances for working at home. Staff will be responsible for claiming any HMRC allowances directly from HMRC, if their individual circumstances meet the government's current allowance eligibility criteria.

11.4   Mileage policy provisions are detailed in the Travel and Subsistence Policy. Mileage is not paid to hybrid or permanent home workers for travel from home to a Bolton workplace for work, meetings, training and collecting equipment etc. All mileage claims are on the basis that normal home to work commuting mileage is deducted:

- All staff working on a hybrid basis, working from home for part of their hours (or all hours on a temporary basis) will be allocated a designated base for travel claims purposes.
- Individual services, with permanent home-workers or home-based peripatetic staff may agree more detailed processes and protocols via their JOG meetings for claims, considering the detail of working practices, in line with the overall Travel and Subsistence Policy's principles.

11.5   Staff may need to visit Council sites to access facilities, which are essential to their hybrid or home-working arrangements, such as printing, posting and data disposal services. The costs and time involved in travelling to the workplace cannot be claimed.

12. Insurance

12.1   Remote and hybrid working will be covered by the Council's insurance policy for employer's liability and personal accident in the same way as office-based employees.

12.2 Council owned equipment will be covered by the Council's insurance policy subject to the insurance policy excess procedures in place, with satisfactory completion, and actioning, of risk assessments, care and security processes. In line with the policy excess procedures, losses and/or damages may need to be paid for by the service.

12.3 Hybrid working arrangements should not result in any additional charges against an employee's home insurance policy, but employees are advised to consult the details of their own policy provisions. Staff are responsible for informing their home insurers, landlord or mortgage provider of any home working arrangement and are responsible for meeting any additional costs if they arise.

12.4 The employee is responsible for keeping assets securely and reporting any accidents, incidents or work-related concerns appropriately, for example theft of equipment, data breaches, issues with equipment etc.

13. Permanent home workers

13.1 For a very small number of roles, permanent home working arrangements are in place. This is where it can be proven to be a more effective way to deliver services and improve productivity.

13.2 These arrangements must be service led with management identifying the efficiencies achievable, whilst still being able to deliver high quality outcomes.

13.3 Managers will refer any recommended service-led permanent home working applications which they support (and associated payment of the allowance) to their DLT and onto CLT for consideration, approval and allocation of the allowance.

13.4 The criteria to consider when assessing a service-led application, should include details of:

- The arrangement is in line with service need and the nature of the role.
- Moving the role from an office to a home base should achieve savings and efficiencies for the Council.
- For permanent home workers, the work can be done without regular face-to-face contact with colleagues, internal and external customers.
- The arrangements can be agreed without increasing the workload of others.
- There is no detriment to the services provided or wider Council by changing to a permanent home-working arrangement.
- The work can be conducted with minimal supervision.
- The risk assessment concludes that the proposed workstation at home is suitable, and the employee has access to the necessary equipment and connectivity needed.
- The employee has met the development needs of the role and possesses the skills and confidence to work without immediate access and in person support from their manager.
- The employee is performing satisfactorily and meeting any local performance standards. It may not be appropriate for those involved in the capability or disciplinary process to work from home.
- The location proposed is of a reasonable journey time from the office given the necessity to attend meetings and training courses required to be attended as needed

13.5 Following CLT approval of a service-led permanent home working arrangement, managers should seek advice from HR and Health and Safety teams about any necessary contractual changes and complete the required processes for risk assessments and permanent home working documentation

14. Further advice and support

14.1   Guidance and supplementary information, HR policies, Health and Safety risk assessment documentation and guidance, Occupational Health, wellbeing support and EAP service details are available on the intranet.

14.2   Staff can contact their trades union representative for advice and support.

14.3   Managers can also seek expertise and advice from CICT, Health and Safety, HR and OD teams.

14.4   A range of training is available on DSE, managing hybrid workers, digital skills and wellbeing. Details of training available can be found on the intranet.