

WORKSMART - Hybrid Working Policy

We promote flexible working for all staff and will agree to an employee working partly or wholly from home or an alternative location (herein referred to collectively as 'off-site') as opposed to solely from an NFDC workplace, where appropriate.

Individual requests for hybrid working will depend on whether or not your work can be done off-site effectively. We cannot agree to all requests because every job is different, service demands are different and every employee is different.

An integral part of the decision as to whether agreement can be reached between the Manager and employee on the flexible working request will have regard to what is happening across other service areas. Requests for flexible working will not be considered in isolation but on a corporate basis.

If making a request to work off-site you should consider whether or not you have the necessary organisational and time-management skills; the ability to work without direct supervision; and are able to cope with the potentially conflicting demands of work and family.

This policy outlines the working arrangements that will apply when a flexible working request has been approved. All requests granted will initially be for a period of 12 months. A review will then be undertaken before any further request is agreed to. Should there be concerns about productivity then meetings must be arranged during the trial to discuss this. If the issues cannot be overcome then the trial may be halted.

Hours of work

Off-site workers are not subject to fixed hours and subject first and foremost to the needs of the business and the agreement of their manager, are free to perform the agreed number of hours/work at times that suit them. The flexible working agreement would include details of the working pattern agreed. These should typically be between the hours of 8am and 6pm.

We would expect all staff to be in regular contact with their supervisor and team colleagues when working off-site.

Where employees are required to be accessible to members of the public then arrangements need to be put in place to accommodate this. Where members of the public are unable or unwilling to use devices to facilitate a virtual meeting then alternative arrangements need to be made which will include face to face meetings at an NFDC workplace.

All employees must ensure they take adequate rest breaks, as set out by the Working Time Regulations 1998:

- take a break of at least 20 minutes if working a period of 6 hours or more;

- ensure the time period between stopping work one day and beginning the next is not less than 11 hours; and
- have at least one complete day each week when no work is done.

All employees working off site will be required to complete a DSE Assessment of their off site set up and this will need to be submitted as part of their application for flexible working. The Council has appropriate workspace in its office locations for any employer whose home DSE assessment fails to provide a suitable workspace.

Visits to the employer's premises

Any staff that work off-site are required, on request, to attend the NFDC workplace for purposes such as, but not limited to; training, performance assessments, collaborative work and team briefings. In the event of any ICT issues experienced you may be asked to attend the NFDC workplace to provide ICT staff physical access to your device. The dates and times of such visits will be agreed in advance. Travel to and from the NFDC workplace will be in the employees own time.

Equipment and materials

We will provide and maintain all ICT equipment and materials necessary for you to work from home. It is your duty to ensure that proper care is taken of such equipment and materials.

Specifically, we will provide:

- a laptop computer;
- Screen
- Keyboard / mouse

On termination of your employment for any reason, we will have the right to visit your home at an agreed time and retrieve all equipment, materials and documents belonging to us if you are unable to bring them back to the office yourself.

Telephone and internet accounts

You will pay the costs for all telephone and internet connections in your home and these must be of a suitable quality to ensure you can carry out your work with maximum productivity. If a suitable stable internet connection is not available then you will be unable to work from that location.

We will pay all charges on any mobile phone provided by us, with the strict proviso that it must be used only for work-related purposes. The employee should be aware of their data usage on their NFDC device and speak to ICT immediately if they have concerns about data limits.

Mileage Claims

On days that you work from home / off-site you will be able to claim mileage for any visits undertaken using your home / off-site location as your base.

On days when you work in the NFDC workplace – any mileage claimed should start using the NFDC workplace as your base starting point.

Employees are responsible for planning their days sensibly to minimise travel and downtime during work hours.

Stationery Printing and Postage

If you require stationery to complete your job whilst working off-site, then this should be collected from the NFDC workplace.

There will be no reimbursement of printing or postage costs. The Corporate Admin team offer a printing and postal service and this can be used via the online eform available on Forestnet.

Security

You must not allow members of your family or third parties to access or use our equipment.

Employees who work off-site are responsible for keeping all documents and information associated with our business secure at all times. Specifically, those that work from home are under a duty to:

- keep filing cabinets and drawers locked when they are not being used;
- keep all documentation under lock and key at all times except when in use; and
- use a unique password for the computer and any other digital devices.

Further, the computer and other equipment provided by us must be used for work-related purposes only and must not be used by any other member of the family or third party at any time or for any purpose. All employees working off-site must continue to adhere to the ICT Security Policy; http://forestnet/media/1111/ICT-Security-Policy/pdf/ICT_Security_Policy_-_New.pdf

Health and safety issues

We are legally obliged to ensure the health and safety of homeworkers in the same way as office-based staff. We are therefore required to ensure that:

- all equipment is safe;
- all articles and substances are handled and stored safely;
- an assessment of your workstation is conducted;
- information and training on the safe use of equipment, including display screen equipment, is provided; and
- relevant risk assessments are carried out.

All employees who work off-site have a duty to ensure, insofar as is reasonably practicable, that they work in a safe manner and that they follow all health and safety instructions issued by us from time to time.

Insurance

The homeworker is responsible for checking that all home and contents insurance policies provide adequate cover for the fact that they work from home. Any additional costs would need to be met by the employee.

Mortgage or rental agreements

You are responsible for checking applicable mortgage or rental agreements to ensure you are permitted to work from home, and for obtaining any permissions necessary to work from home.

Requests to work from home or an alternative location

Any employee who wishes to work from home or an alternative location should make the request under the council's Worksmart Flexible Working Procedure. In general, most requests should be made with a view to spending a proportion of a working week off-site, and a proportion at an NFDC workplace. Your manager will arrange a meeting to discuss the feasibility of your flexible working request within 28 days. If you do not accept the outcome of that meeting, you have the right to request a review be carried out by your Service Manager.

It is our policy to view such requests in a positive light and we will, whenever it is possible and practicable, agree to the request. You must however be in a position where your productivity will not be affected by working off site.