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# Agile working

DRAFT policy

# Introduction

West Lindsey District Council is a modern and ambitious employer, where the customer is at the centre of everything we do.

This policy formalises our approach to agile working practices, enabling our employees to perform their job role, whilst at the same time recognising the importance of promoting a healthy work life balance. Agile working has inclusion and wellbeing advantages for employees and can help attract and retain a talented workforce.

An agile workplace is somewhere which:

- Work is an activity, not a place.
- Focuses on outcomes and performance.
- Values trust based relationships.
- Recognises the importance of health and wellbeing.
- Embraces innovation and transformation.
- Ensures the needs of the service are met.
- Is inclusive and accommodates diverse needs.

The term 'agile working' is used to describe a flexible approach to work and considers the themes of time and place. Although it is recognised that the requirement of every team, role and individual can be different, the overall principle is that our core values are the same.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the flexible working requests procedure.

Our core values:

1. Putting the customer at the centre of everything we do.
2. To act as One Council.
3. To be business smart, act on evidence and take advantage of opportunities, thinking creatively and getting things done.
4. To communicate effectively with all stakeholders.
5. To have integrity in everything we do.

This policy applies to employees of the council. It does not apply to casual workers, agency workers, or contractors.

This policy takes into account:

- the [Employment Relations \(Flexible Working\) Act 2023](#) implemented by the [Employment Relations \(Flexible Working\) Act 2023 \(Commencement\) Regulations 2024](#); and
- changes to the revised [Acas code of practice on requests for flexible working](#), introduced via the [Code of Practice \(Requests for Flexible Working\) Order 2024 \(SI 2024/429\)](#).
- [The Working Time Regulations 1998](#)

# Purpose and Objectives

West Lindsey District Council recognises that agile working arrangements can support employee work life balance, engagement, and wellbeing. Many roles across the organisation are required to work outside of normal working hours, for example evening meetings, site visits or other events and it is recognised that working in this way supports these critical activities.

Our objectives are to:

- Ensure that all our decision making considers the exploration of innovative opportunities to reduce our carbon footprint. This includes a reduction in commuting and business miles through working in an agile way.
- Utilise technology to ensure high levels of service and customer engagement.
- Be a modern and ambitious employer that aims to attract and retain a talented, inclusive workforce.
- Recognise the importance of work life balance.
- Manage performance based on outcomes.
- Provide a collaborative workspace with a combination of bookable desks, different sized meeting rooms and drop in spaces.
- Reduce lost time through travel and costs associated with business mileage.

We expect managers to:

- Trust and empower their team.
- Enable individuals to work in the most productive way.
- Ensure that team members receive an appropriate induction, and personal development opportunities.
- Balance the needs of individuals, the team, and the needs of the service.
- Proactively manage employee wellbeing requirements.
- Agree regular face to face meetings to meet business and individual needs.

We expect employees to:

- Take personal responsibility.
- Be contactable during working hours.
- Maintain up to date calendars.
- Attend meetings in person and virtually when required.
- Work from specific locations when required for their job role, specific tasks or team interactions.
- Attend the nominated place of work at short notice when required.

## Workplace, Equipment, and Time

The Guildhall is the council's main administrative office and is open to all employees Monday to Friday 07:00- 19:00. Bookable desks have monitors, a keyboard, mouse, and power supply. Employees can book a desk for a whole or part-day using the booking facility on Minerva.

Arrangements to work at the Caenby Corner Depot, Trinity Arts Centre and Lea Fields Crematorium should be made with the site managers.

Meeting rooms are available to book through Outlook.

As standard, employees are issued with:

- Laptop
- Mouse
- Headphones with microphone
- Bit locker USB

Managers can request additional monitors and keyboards for staff by contacting I.T.

If there is a business need, employees will be issued with additional equipment (ie mobile phone, tablet, camera etc.)

Employees who require additional equipment should speak to their line manager in the first instance. HR advice is available if required. Specialist equipment must be provided to support a reasonable adjustment recommended by occupational health or the Access to Work service.

Travel between home and the place of work is not counted as working time.

Employees cannot claim mileage expenses for travel between home and their place of work.

Employees who work outside of their core hours should agree the arrangements with their line manager and use flexitime if applicable.

Employees requiring help to exit the building in an emergency or in the instance of lift failure should inform their line manager to ensure that arrangements can be made to provide trained assistance as part of a personal emergency evacuation plan.

Requests to work outside of the UK are not permitted unless there are extenuating circumstances; for example, international restrictions on travel are imposed whilst overseas. If this situation arises, the employee's Director and the Director of Corporate Services must approve the request and consider if there are any insurance or tax implications. When leaving the council's employment, all equipment must be returned in a timely manner.

# Managing an agile team

In an agile working environment, it is important to define clear ways of working, planning, and organising the work. Whilst agile arrangements are tailored to the unique needs of the employee and team, the needs of the service must come first.

How agile working is managed will vary depending on the type of work being undertaken. It is important that managers have regular conversations with their team to understand how well the arrangements are working.

When recruiting new team members, it is recommended that managers provide information about how the agile working arrangements operate within their team.

A Team Charter is provided as an example at appendix 1. This is a starting point intended to clarify everyone's roles and responsibilities within the team. Individual working arrangements can also be documented using appendix 2.

Regular one-to-one meetings, team meetings and check-in arrangements should be agreed within the team. It is also important to consider inter-team relationships. Managers must ensure that regular face to face meetings take place.

Careful consideration should be given to the induction of new starters. Ideally this should include a combination of in-person and virtual training. Developing a rota of colleagues' time in the workplace may be helpful for the first few weeks.

To maintain good health and wellbeing, it is important to create boundaries:

- Regular DSE and workstation assessments should be undertaken. Equipment must be provided if needed.
- Calendars should be maintained and up to date.
- Wellbeing checks should take place on a regular basis.
- Consideration should be given to email signatures; ie 'my working arrangements are XXX If I contact you outside of your normal working hours, I do not expect you to respond immediately.'
- Make time for less formal, professional networking opportunities.

Agile working guidelines can be found at appendix 3.

## Procedure: Requests for flexible working

Team managers are responsible for agreeing the overall working arrangements within their team. A Team Charter example is provided at appendix 1 for this purpose. Operating hours should be clearly defined, and agreements should be made with individuals to determine their usual working times and places to fulfil these requirements. Individual working arrangements can be recorded using the template at appendix 2.

It is recognised that some roles will be more suited to flexible working arrangements than others for example those with fixed operating hours. Employees are encouraged to discuss this with their immediate line manager or the HR team if they have any questions.

### Eligibility

All employees have the statutory right to request flexible working arrangements from day one of their employment. Under statutory guidelines, employees can make two formal requests in every 12 month period. If making a second request, employees must wait until their first request has been considered before making submitting another.

However, we encourage that informal conversations take place between employees and their manager prior to making formal requests, with an aim being to reach agreement where possible.

All requests for flexible working will be considered with an open mind.

Team managers are encouraged to consider flexible working prior to recruitment and placing job advertisements as this may attract candidates from a wider talent pool.

All employees will have a nominated main work base (ie The Guildhall, Caenby Corner Depot, Trinity Arts Centre, Lea Fields Crematorium). This will be set out in their contract of employment and will be used for tax purposes and expense claims. It is reasonable to expect that employees attend their nominated work base when required to do so.

### Types of flexible working

Requests for flexible working can include:

- **Place** of work where time is split between the main base, and remote, agile working.
- **Time** of work; includes flexible hours, part-time working, compressed hours.

### Making a request for flexible working

Employees wishing to make a request should start by having an informal discussion with their line manager. Requests will be considered with an open mind, and it may be that the request can be accommodated without the need for the formal approach. If the request cannot be accommodated, a compromise should be discussed. This could include a trial arrangement, alternative hours, or job-sharing. If the job role is not suitable for agile working, the manager should explain why this is the case.

Employees should make a formal request to their manager in writing (includes email). The formal request should include:

- The date of the request;
- The changes sought;
- The date on which the changed working arrangement should start;
- If and when a previous application had been made.

### **Timescale**

Requests will be dealt with as soon as possible. All requests will be dealt with within two calendar months from receipt of the request to notification of any appeal decision.

### **Consultation Meeting**

The line manager will arrange a meeting to discuss the request. A representative of the HR department may attend if required. Employees may ask a fellow worker or trade union representative to attend.

The meeting is an opportunity to discuss the proposed working arrangement and to consider any impact on the customer, the employee and the wider team.

After the meeting the line manager will consider the request carefully. In making a decision the manager will take into account the potential benefits to the employee and the council and any adverse impact.

Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Agreeing to one request will not set a precedent or create the immediate right for another employee to be granted a similar change to their working patterns.

The decision will be confirmed in writing usually within 7 days of the meeting. The decision may be granted in full or part. Examples are:

- Proposal for a modified version of the request;
- a temporary trial of the working arrangement;
- a different start date of the request.

Whilst we are committed to support flexible working requests, they may not always be possible. This could be due to:

- The burden of additional costs;
- an inability to reorganise work among existing staff;
- an inability to recruit additional staff;
- a detrimental impact on quality;
- a detrimental impact on performance;
- a detrimental effect to meet customer demand;
- Insufficient work for the periods the employee proposes to work;
- A planned structural change within the organisation.

Requests will not be rejected for any other reason.

## **Right of appeal**

Employees have the right to appeal if their request is rejected or agreed in part.

Appeals should be sent to [human.resources@west-lindsey.gov.uk](mailto:human.resources@west-lindsey.gov.uk) within seven days of the date of the decision letter. Appeals should set out the grounds on which the appeal is made.

An appeal meeting will be held as soon as possible. This will be chaired by the Director of the Service, unless that Director has refused the initial request, in which case an alternative Director and a HR representative will attend. Employees may ask a fellow worker or trade union representative to accompany them to the meeting.

Following the appeal meeting, a decision will be confirmed in writing usually within seven days. The outcome of the appeal is final.

If an employee fails to attend, without a good reason both the first meeting and the appeal, the formal request will be treated as withdrawn.



# Agile working: Team Charter

Team:  
Manager:  
Date:

Review date:

Team outcomes: *(set out the main outcomes for the team)*

|   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| Our main base is:                           | (ie Guildhall, Depot)  |
| Our core operating days are:                |                        |
| Our core operating hours are:               |                        |
| How we can be contacted during these times: |                        |
| Any out of hours contacts/ arrangements:    |                        |
| We have formal team meetings:               | (frequency and method) |
| We have informal team meetings:             | (frequency and method) |
| One to one meetings:                        |                        |
| Appraisals:                                 |                        |
| All in days:                                |                        |
| Rota days:                                  |                        |
| How we ensure wellbeing needs are met:      |                        |

# Agile working: Individual agreement

Name and job title:  
Manager:  
Date:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Your main base is:                          | (ie Guildhall, Depot)                            |
| When working remotely, you will be:         | (ie working on site, at home, external meetings) |
| Your usual operating days are:              |  |
| Your usual operating hours are:             |  |
| How we can contact you during these times:  |  |
| Any out of hours contacts/ arrangements:    |  |
| Arrangements for one-to-one meetings:       |  |
| Arrangements for appraisals:                |  |
| How we ensure your wellbeing needs are met: |  |
| Equipment required:                         |  |
| How we will review this arrangement:        |  |

# Agile working guidelines

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## General guidance:

- a) We are all responsible for our health and safety. Ensure that DSE assessments are up to date and report any concerns immediately.
- b) When working remotely, maintain an up-to-date calendar so that your colleagues know if you are contactable.
- b) Use automatic replies to notify others that you are out of office, on leave, or not able to respond to email messages.
- c) Dress appropriately for your job role and behave as you would when working in the office.
- d) Take good care of the equipment provided to you. Ensure that confidential information is securely stored.

## When using MS Teams:

- a) Cameras should be on at all times unless there are technical problems.
- b) Use the WLDC backgrounds for all meetings with external colleagues.
- c) Use your headset if you need to prevent background noise or maintain confidentiality.
- d) Set your availability and work location so that colleagues know if you are reachable.
- e) Be present. Check in with your team regularly throughout the day and be responsive to their questions and comments.
- f) Stay focussed during calls. Try not to be distracted by incoming chat messages or emails.
- g) Take breaks. Plan time to move away from your screen. Consider going out in the fresh air during your lunch break to keep a fresh mind.
- h) GDPR- remember that chat messages/ teams posts may be disclosable if a subject access request is made.
- i) Make sure that you have a space where you can maintain confidentiality and separate work from home life.

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| JSCC approved:                                     | 5 September 2024 |
| Corporate Policy and Resources Committee approved: |                  |