

Title of report	People Management Policies
Public/Confidential	Public
Summary/purpose of report	To ask Council to approve the Agile Working Policy and endorse changes to policies approved by the Executive Management Team (EMT).
Recommendations	<p>The Council is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. approve the Agile Working Policy 2. endorse changes to policies which EMT has approved 3. agree that Council no longer endorses EMT approved policies.
Author	Lucy Finn, Head of Human Resources
Responsible Officer	Lynn Murray, Interim Director, Finance and Resources
Link to Strategic Plan	<p>The information in this report links to:</p> <p>Outcome 1: People who use services are protected by ensuring the regulated workforce is fit to practise.</p> <p>Outcome 2: The SSSC supports and enhances the development of the registered workforce to deliver high standards of practice and drive improvement.</p> <p>Outcome 3: Our workforce planning activities support employers, commissioners and policy makers to deliver a sustainable, integrated and innovative workforce.</p> <p>Outcome 4: The social work, social care and early years workforce is recognised as professional and regulated and valued for the difference it makes to people's lives.</p>

Link to Risk Register	<p>Risk 3: We fail to meet corporate governance, external scrutiny and legal obligations.</p> <p>Risk 5: We fail to develop and support SSSC staff appropriately to ensure we have a motivated and skilled workforce to achieve our strategic outcomes.</p>
Impact assessments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) was developed. 2. A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) was not required. 3. A Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) was not required.
Documents attached	Appendix 1 Agile Working Policy
Background papers	<p>Link to Minute of Council meeting of 14 May 2020 - see paragraph 13.4</p>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. We ask Council to approve the Agile Working Policy, to endorse changes to policies approved by the EMT since November and agree that we do not continue to ask Council to endorse EMT approved policies (agreed at Council meeting on 14 May 2020). These policies support the SSSC in managing employment relationships fairly, without unreasonable delay and in line with employment law and best practice.
2. We are committed to supporting work life balance and to equal opportunities for all our employees. Throughout the pandemic most of our staff have worked from home. This enabled our staff and operation teams to continue to deliver throughout the pandemic.
3. We introduced interim measures to govern the working arrangements of staff during the pandemic. We have created this policy to set out the key principles and working practices for managers and staff of how we will work in the medium to long term.
4. We propose that we adopt agile working practices as our normal working practice. This will assist with meeting our operational requirements, improve work-life balance, support our equality duties and help us to remain attractive as an employer.

OVERVIEW OF AGILE WORKING POLICY

5. We have not previously adopted an agile working approach and this is our first Agile Working Policy.
6. This policy identifies the practical arrangements for managers and staff to consider when they work in an agile manner eg confidentiality, resources, health and safety. This policy identifies our commitment to finding a workable solution for employees to maximise the benefits for everyone.
7. This policy is different from our Flexible Working Policy. The Agile Working Policy does not vary contractual terms and applies to all our employees. The Flexible Working Policy has provisions for employees to request to vary their times, hours and location of work as a contractual change.

POLICY REVIEW

8. Council recently endorsed the Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure. We have since incorporated the Acting Up guidance for staff who are acting up to an alternative role. We ask Council to endorse this change.

9. We have modified our Special Leave Policy to include additional paid time off for public duties. This is in line with Scottish Government provisions and better reflects our obligations as a public sector employer to contribute towards our staff performing public duties. We ask Council to endorse this change.
10. We also ask Council to agree that we no longer ask for endorsement of people management policies that EMT has approved as no other EMT approved policies are endorsed by Council.

CONSULTATION

11. We have externally benchmarked with other public bodies and non-departmental public bodies for the Agile Working Policy and other policies.
12. We have conducted internal consultation with the Operational Management Team, EMT, Unison and the Infrastructure Group. We have maintained a consultation log of comments, suggestions and changes.
13. These policies are compliant with ACAS guidance.

RISKS

14. We have an averse appetite for risk 3: We fail to meet corporate governance, external scrutiny and legal obligations. We have an averse appetite for risk 5: We fail to develop and support SSSC staff appropriately to ensure we have a motivated and skilled workforce to achieve our strategic outcomes.
15. By following the Agile Working Policy we minimise risks associated with working in an agile manner. The policy provides clear guidance on the considerations and practices for managers and staff to follow.
16. By adopting agile working practices we improve our ability to recruit and retain employees and reduce the risk of being unable to meet our resource requirements.
17. Agile working practices reduce the work-life balance strains that can occur. By adopting agile working, we expect to reduce the health and wellbeing risks our employees face.
18. There are legal, financial and reputational risks to the SSSC if we do not operate processes appropriately. These policies mitigate these risks by establishing clear principles, processes and guidance to manage these situations.

IMPLICATIONS

Resourcing

19. The Agile Working Policy is appropriately detailed with information for managers and staff to administer. We will provide advice and guidance using existing resources.
20. We may incur additional costs associated with providing equipment to individual staff working at home which we would otherwise have made available for communal use in the office.
21. We will update and amend training to recognise agile working as the default rather than the exception.
22. The reduction in the requirement for office space is likely to lead to a financial saving – we have yet to quantify this.
23. We may incur additional costs or see a reduction in productivity where staff take time off to perform public duties. We expect to have sufficient resource to redistribute work or costs within existing resource.

Compliance

24. We must consider the employment, health and safety, data protection and legal implications when supporting agile working, which are included in the policy. The policy does not amend the terms and conditions of employees.
25. These policies comply with our legal obligations.

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Equalities

26. We have developed EQIAs for these policies. We did not identify any major implications after carrying out the assessments.
27. The Agile Working Policy does not include any direct discrimination and is accessible to all employees. The assessment identifies improvements to meeting our Public Sector Equality Duties.
28. We have assessed that employees with limited work experience, most likely young workers, may not develop as quickly due to having less exposure to colleagues. We will mitigate this through managers discussing employee development through their development discussions. Human Resources will also provide advice.

CONCLUSION

29. The Agile Working Policy will help us to improve our guidance for employees working in an agile manner. It will support meeting our public sector equality duties and will further aid our healthy working lives initiatives to support staff wellbeing and we will be better able to recruit and retain our staff. There are significant benefits to our adopting this policy and the negative implications of adopting this policy are limited.
30. We recommend that Council approves the Agile Working Policy, endorses the changes to the Recruitment and Selection Policy and Special Leave Policy and agrees that we will no longer ask Council to endorse EMT approved policies.