

Agile Working Policy

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1. Introduction

Purpose

We are adopting agile working to maximise the benefits for the SSSC to meet our business needs and to improve the service we provide to our customers.

We have developed modern ways of working that help you to do your job, while at the same time allowing you to balance work and life demands. We know that work performance is better where you have flexibility in your working arrangements and we want to help with this.

Agile working arrangements (also known as hybrid working, remote working, blended working or split-working arrangements or patterns) allow you to arrange your work time and work location in the most appropriate way for a given activity. This includes working in an office, at home or at another remote location. Full time office based working remains available for employees who prefer to work in this way

This policy sets out SSSC principles and practical guidance for agile working. We know that agile working may not be for everyone but we are committed to making sure that we find a workable solution as often as possible to maximise the benefits for the SSSC and you.

Scope

This policy applies to all permanent and temporary employees. This policy does not apply to social service employers, workers, contractors or social work students.

Legislation, codes of practice and guidance

This policy has also considered the following legislation:

- Data Protection Act 2018
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- UK General Data Protection Regulation
- Working Time Regulations 1998

Data protection

We will process any personal data collected in relation to this policy keeping to our [Data Protection Policy](#) and will record only the personal information required and keep the information only for as long as necessary.

Monitor and review

Human Resources and the Partnership Forum are responsible for monitoring this policy to make sure that we are fairly and consistently applying it and that we meet the stated principles and values. We will review this policy every three years (or earlier if legislation changes) and make appropriate amendments in consultation with the Partnership Forum. We will outline minor amendments in the change log and update the version control. Where there are major changes, we will consult more widely and follow the consultation cycle.

2. Principles

Guiding Principles

The following principles apply to this policy.

- Our highest priority is to satisfy our customers by providing a public service. We will use agile working to improve on our high standards.
- We will trust our employees to act responsibly and to support each other as we adopt agile working as our operating model.
- We will operate with maximum flexibility and minimum constraints to maximise the benefits of agile working for our customers, our staff and ourselves.
- We recognise outcomes and performance are important to our customers and will focus on these in adopting agile working.
- We will embed a culture and working practices that encourage employees to use the new flexibility to have their best day at work every day wherever they are.
- Our leadership style, values and skills are explicitly supportive of agile working for all aspects of the business.

3. Values

In everything we do, we believe the people of Scotland have the right to be safe when accessing social care services. We do this by listening, learning and doing the right thing.

Work together

We treat each other with kindness and respect and value the contribution every member of staff makes.

- We will work together to make sure that agile working is successful for all.
- We will recognise that different people have different requirements and preferences and will support you as much as possible to meet them while balancing our business needs.
- We recognise the value of positive and constructive involvement and participation from the recognised trade union. Our commitment to partnership working is integral to the development and maintenance of harmonious employee relations.

Accept responsibility and accountability

We recognise the trust placed in us to ensure the safety and wellbeing of people who use social services and that is our guiding mission.

- We will assess the suitability of your work environment and provide you with training, equipment, resources and working practices to keep you safe.
- We respect confidentiality wherever we work and will only share information with those who require to have access to it.

Recognition and respect for others

We value the social service workforce and the life changing work they do. Our work increases recognition of, and further develops, their role. All our stakeholders contribute to our success and we recognise and respect their views.

- We treat each other with kindness and respect and value the contribution you make.
- We will treat you fairly and consistently under this process and if you require specific support and assistance due to having a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, we will accommodate you appropriately.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Council

Council have reserved people management policies which include any of the following:

- associated extra costs that are out with the current budget
- any proposed fundamental change to terms and conditions of employment
- where the Council has a clearly defined role to play.

Council is responsible for:

- approving this policy and procedure
- making sure that the application of this policy does not breach any statutory requirement placed upon the SSSC
- making sure that the Chief Executive and EMT have in place appropriate and up to date policies and procedures for the effective management of employees
- making sure we apply policies and procedures fairly and keeping to the law.

4.2 Executive Management Team

The EMT is responsible for:

- overall responsibility for the implementation and review of the policy and creating a culture in which employees can flourish through interesting and rewarding work
- delegating responsibilities related to the policy to the Operational Management Team (OMT) and line managers
- making sure that managers and employees receive appropriate development, support and training to implement the policy appropriately
- making sure that the application of this policy and procedure does not breach any statutory requirement placed upon us.

4.3 Operational Management Team

The OMT is responsible for:

- making sure their managers and employees are aware of and understand the processes within this policy and procedure
- embracing and realising the benefits of agile working to achieve business objectives

- making sure that we treat employees consistently and fairly, being mindful of the needs of the organisation as well as that of the employee
- reviewing and updating policies within their own specialist areas to support the implementation of this policy.

4.4 Line managers

Line managers are responsible for:

- acting in a fair and consistent way, being open and honest
- dealing with issues kindly, sensitively and showing compassion
- respecting confidentiality and only sharing information, as appropriate, with relevant employees
- considering our responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and, where appropriate, putting in place risk assessments, mitigation and other measures to make work a safe activity
- considering our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and, where appropriate, making reasonable adjustments for any employee who may have a disability or other protected characteristic
- considering any health impact and considering supports such as occupational health.

4.5 Employees

Employees are responsible for:

- complying with our Code of Conduct for Employees. We expect the highest standards of integrity and conduct from all employees
- working in partnership with their manager to identify how they will carry out their role in a more agile way
- asking questions and raising concerns directly with their team/line manager
- following their duties and obligations to work safely
- taking care to protect IT and data security
- making sure that their working environment allows them to deliver their objectives.

4.6 Human resources (HR)

Human resources are responsible for:

- updating this policy and procedure in line with the agreed schedule or as changes occur to comply with employment and other pertinent legislation, best practice and the SSSC People Strategy
- developing this process and procedure collaboratively to meet legal and business requirements
- developing template letters, forms and guidance
- offering advice on how to apply the policy and procedure
- making sure we follow the process in line with the policy and procedure
- reminding employees and managers of their responsibilities under the policy and procedure, if required
- monitoring the use of the policy and processes and reporting any non-compliance to Heads of Department / Directors.

5. Policy

Agile working presents many opportunities for you and for SSSC as an employer. We want to realise these benefits as fully as possible and this policy outlines the key provisions to make agile working a success.

Agile working gives you more choice over deciding how, when and where you work best in a way that balances your needs and those of our customers, our staff and ourselves. It's about giving you more choice about how you do the right work, in the right place, at the right time. Where, when and how you choose to work may depend on the task you are doing and the kind of role you have.

We know that agile working is not for everyone. It is our intention to make agile working the default working practice wherever we can. We will provide office accommodation where required.

6. Procedure

6.1 Working hours and keeping in touch

We want you to balance your home life around the needs of your role. We trust you to manage your own time and make sure you work your contracted hours. There are some important things to know.

- Although agile workers don't necessarily have to work regular office hours, you must plan and agree a work programme with your manager to make sure that appropriate contact and appropriate cover is always in place.
- You must make yourself available to others during reasonable working hours when your colleagues need you.
- If you choose to work earlier or later during unsociable hours within the scope of our flexi time scheme, please be courteous and respectful to your colleagues. You must not expect your colleagues to respond during unsociable hours.
- We know that working in this way can help you balance your home and work life. You must not use agile working as a way of masking illness or your need for emergency leave or dependents leave.
- Your manager can still require you with fair notice to attend the office for certain occasions or routine work where this is necessary to meet our requirements.

What is fair notice will vary on the circumstances. In an emergency you may be required to attend on a same day basis. In normal circumstances being asked to attend with seven calendar days' notice is considered fair. You must plan on the basis that you will be in the office rather than working elsewhere. While we want to support you, it is your responsibility to put in place arrangements for you to attend your place of work.

6.2 Wellbeing

We know that for many of you, agile working can boost your wellbeing and work life balance. You can help your wellbeing in the following ways:

- You must take regular breaks away from your screen and desk as this is important to help maintain good health.
- One way to help you stay well is through collaboration, connection and having a sense of belonging. We encourage you to think about what this means for you and to actively make time to connect with your colleagues.
- Consider establishing a consistent routine at the end of your workday as this is a great way to switch off.
- We expect you to take the time off if you are ill. You must not use agile working as a way of working when you are sick.

6.3 Equipment

It is important for us to know that wherever you are working from, you have the equipment that is suitable and sufficient for you to do your job well and that you feel safe, well and comfortable. We will provide you with the workstation and IT equipment that you need to do your job. You cannot claim expenses for any equipment that you buy yourself. The Support Desk can support you where you need specialist workstation and IT equipment.

You must read our [IT Security Policy](#) before using IT equipment when you are working out of the office environment.

Display screen equipment

We issue those who work remotely with display screen equipment (typically a laptop, docking station, monitor, keyboard and mouse). When you set yourself up to work remotely, you must do the assigned display screen equipment learning. The learning will take you through a workstation self-assessment to help you make sure that your place of work is suitable and sufficient for you. You must review this assessment when there is a substantial change or as requested on a periodic basis.

Desk and chair

Many of us will spend most of our working day using display screen equipment at a desk and chair. It is important that any desk, chair or similar equipment is suitable and sufficient for its intended purpose. Part of the display screen equipment learning will help you to identify whether your desk and chair are appropriate. Where they are not, Health and Safety will be notified and we will work with you to find safe solutions.

You will need to let your manager and Digital Services know if you lose any equipment or if it is damaged or stolen. You might also have to tell our Data Protection Officer where you have lost information or personal data. Details of how you report a potential data breach are available here: [Data Breach Response Procedure](#)

It is important that you report faults with your equipment to the Support Desk quickly so that they can support you to fix any issues. Details of how you report an issue are available here: [Support Desk](#).

6.4 Environment

We have designed our offices as safe, secure and comfortable spaces for you to work in. We have risk assessed them for a range of issues (eg fire safety, water safety, manual handling, lone working etc). We have put in place measures to mitigate these risks in the environments that we can control.

When you work remotely it is important that you make sure that your workspace is similarly suitable and safe on an ongoing basis. You must always consider whether the lighting, temperature, noise, ventilation, maintenance, cleanliness and available facilities are suitable. The work-station self-assessment will help you to assess suitability of your work area. Where we have a concern that your environment is not safe we will discuss our concerns with you in the first instance. You will be required to work in another location that is safe until our concerns are satisfied.

6.5 Internet connection

You must have access to a secure and stable internet connection and Wi-Fi. We do not normally provide these to you and cannot provide technical support on equipment that is not ours. You must consider and plan for alternative arrangements if your connection(s) do not work.

6.6 Resources

You must discuss any extra equipment, software or services you need to help you do your job with your line manager. More information on how to order equipment and other supplies is available on the intranet. You are required to discuss any technical or supportive equipment requirements that you have with your line manager and seek their agreement before ordering.

6.7 Confidentiality

You will have access to confidential information and have discussions about confidential matters. It is important that you are alert to the risks of breaching confidentiality. It is very easy for others to overhear your conversations, see your screen or gain access to information that they must not have access to.

To read more about keeping any SSSC information safe and confidential you can access our [Data Protection Policy on the intranet](#).

6.8 Meetings

We will put in place facilities so that we can run all meetings we have in our office using an agile approach. This means those who are not in the office can contribute on the same basis as those who are there. It is normally expected that those attending or presenting during any meeting must have their cameras and audio turned on throughout the meeting and must do so where the host of the meeting requires it.

6.9 Reasonable adjustments

If you have a disability and would benefit from any reasonable adjustments whether in the office or in another location, please let us know. You must discuss any adjustments with your line manager in the first instance. They may need to discuss your circumstances with a member of HR or Health and Safety to seek specialist advice. We want to help and support everyone with reasonable adjustments. Where you have a disability, you have a legal right to reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act.

6.10 Costs and expenses

Your contractual normal location of work will not change so your entitlement to claim expenses will remain the same. For more information you can read the [Business Travel and Subsistence Policy](#). Any costs (eg refreshments, Wi-Fi, heating, lighting and electricity and commuting costs to and from your designated place of work) are a personal expense in line with HMRC guidelines. Where you meet people (who do not work for the SSSC) in external locations you can provide modest hospitality, you must refer to our guidance on hospitality in our [Financial Regulations](#). Where you are not meeting an external person you are required to pay for your own refreshments.

6.11 Mortgage, leases and insurance

We recommend that you check your mortgage, lease or insurance for any provision that would prevent you from working at home. We also advise that you seek confirmation of cover from your home insurer if work equipment causes any damage to your home.

6.12 Working outside the UK

We are supportive of colleagues working from outside the UK in emergency or other exceptional situations when it is necessary for specific roles or for short periods of time. Due to the potentially complex legal and tax implications, we are unable to support long term arrangements (ie working outside of the UK for longer than 30 days per year) or requests for permanent relocations outside the UK. Your line manager and the Head of Digital Services must both confirm that they are satisfied that you can work outside of the UK before you perform any work for us.

7. Further information

7.1 Learning and development

To support the fair and consistent application of this policy, we will identify the opportunities and implications for managers. We will do this by incorporating training on this policy within line management development programmes. We will consider the implications for you and make sure that you receive suitable training. We will also provide refresher training.

7.2 Sources of support

Further sources of support include:

- day to day support from line managers
- the employee assistance programme
- help advice and support from recognised trade union representatives
- ACAS
- Health and safety
- Human resources.

7.3 Related documents

This policy has strong links to other people management policies and guidance. We have listed these below.

- [Business Travel and Subsistence Policy](#)
- [Data Protection Policy](#)
- [Financial Regulations](#)
- [Health and Safety Policy](#)
- [IT Security Policy](#)
- [Maximising Attendance Policy](#)
- [Overtime and Additional Hours Policy](#)
- [Safer workplaces guidance](#)
- [Special Leave Policy](#)



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If you would like this document in a different format, for example, in larger print or audio-format, or in another language please contact the SSSC on 0345 60 30 891.

We promote equality by removing unlawful and unfair treatment on the grounds of any protected characteristic wherever possible.

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