



**Flexible  
FUTURES**

**Flexible Futures Policy  
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## **Flexible Futures Policy**

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Herefordshire Council recognises the need to develop modern working practices that enable empowerment and engagement whilst maintaining a good work life balance.
- 1.2. The council's aim is to deliver a modern, vibrant workplace where creativity and collaboration is actively encouraged, and staff feel engaged, whilst ensuring we maintain our customer needs as a priority.
- 1.3. The council's vision is for its employees to feel empowered to work whenever and wherever is most appropriate for the delivery of services whilst always meeting customer need.
- 1.4. This policy outlines the working principles of Flexible Futures established by the council and provides a framework for consistent and fair practice on the issues taken into account when considering working arrangements.
- 1.5. The council is committed to ensuring that all policies are reflective of the Equalities Act 2010 and support all employees regardless of disability, sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, and age. These are called 'protected characteristics'. This policy should therefore be used with a view to ensure that the Council continues to support all employees equally and does not disadvantage anyone with a protected characteristic.
- 1.6. If you are in any doubt about any aspect of this policy, please consult with your manager.

## 2. General Principles

- 2.1 Employees will be issued with the appropriate equipment and support required for them to work efficiently and effectively as detailed within this policy.
- 2.2 The decision about which worker style an employee or group of employees is aligned with lies with the line manager and in line with council policy.
- 2.3 In line with the council's vision to move towards a culture from time management to where outcomes are managed, there must be clear objectives set with and measurable outcomes which are regularly reviewed between the manager and employee.
- 2.4 During hours worked at home, the employee must ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for dependants who may be present at the home. Provisions for carer responsibilities should still be arranged during your working hours, and it is to be noted that working from home is not a substitute for those responsibilities.

- 2.5 All workers, regardless of worker style will be expected to comply with all council policies, procedures and guidance.
- 2.6 Terms and conditions of employment are unaffected by these arrangements.
- 2.7 For administrative purposes, including the claiming of travel expenses, employees will retain a designated contractual workplace and business mileage will therefore not be claimed from an employee's home address.
- 2.8 Expenses are not payable for flexible working itself, however employees may wish to claim a taxable benefit from HMRC, if they believe they are eligible.
- 2.9 Electronic diaries must be kept up to date and open access granted for all staff.
- 2.10 The usual reporting procedures in respect of sickness absence and accidents/incidents remain in place
- 2.11 All staff are expected to attend designated face to face meetings, learning and development sessions and appointments, as necessary to meet the needs of the service

### **3. Definitions of Worker Styles**

- 3.1 Flexible Futures allows employees to influence how they carry out their role and promotes varying levels of flexibility within the workplace.
- 3.2 It is based on the concept that 'work is an activity we do rather than a place we go' and is built upon a foundation of trust.
- 3.3 The different ways in which Flexible Futures allow staff to undertake their roles are dependent on the nature of the role and service requirements.
- 3.4 The council has identified three 'worker styles' that will determine the amount of flexibility your role will have in terms of working patterns, location and equipment. All roles will have a council location / base set in their contracts of employment. The worker styles are a managerial consideration and not a contractual obligation.
- 3.5 The three worker styles are explained below:

Worker Style	Flexible Worker	Fixed Worker	Field Worker
<b>Definition</b>	Can work from a variety of locations to meet the council's needs which can include a mixture of home, MAO, office, or other suitable workspace.	Work predominantly from a set work location. For example, roles which provide vital support to those accessing our services and so need to be in situ to complete their individual role	These roles work predominantly remotely, including in the community to deliver a service.
<b>Workspace</b>	Will have the availability to book desks at their base or at one of the MAOs when required.	Will be a fixed workspace in a fixed location	Will work predominantly in the community to deliver a role or service, wont; have a fixed office or desk in a council setting.
<b>Standard Kit to be issued</b>	Laptop, headset, mobile phone. An additional monitor can be supplied upon manager's request	Laptop, headset and additional monitor	The nature of the role will inform the level of kit required
<b>Typical Roles:</b>	HR, finance, project managers, social workers	Customer service advisors, library assistants	Regulatory, highways and transport

#### 4. Benefits of Flexible working:

4.1 There are a number of differing benefits to all three workstyles and not all benefits apply to each style. Some of the benefits listed are:

- Improved service delivery
- Employee engagement
- Builds a culture of trust
- Greater productivity/efficiency
- Retention/recruitment of all employees
- Retention/recruitment of staff with disabilities or caring responsibilities
- Reduced travel problems and environmental impact

#### 5. Criteria to be used for defining Worker Styles:

5.1 The line manager will consider each post individually taking in to account any potential impact on the service area, including consideration of customer needs.

5.2 The following will be considered:

- The ability to meet customer demand
- The impact on work quality and performance

- Planned structural change to departments
- The rotas of individual departments

## 6. Employee Responsibilities:

- 6.1 Employees are encouraged to work from whichever location is most appropriate and easiest for the delivery of the service and tasks of that day
- 6.2 Employees are must have face to face contact at work with their team members to promote collaboration, socialisation, peer to peer support and learning as agreed and in line with service needs
- 6.3 Employees understand and agree that there may be a requirement to attend the workplace for meetings or IT requests
- 6.4 Employees must inform their manager if they are working beyond their contracted hours on a regular basis
- 6.5 Employees will have more choice regarding when they work, allowing for more work-life balance whilst expected to fulfil their contract. It is advised that employees discuss and agree working patterns with their line manager, and where there are changes, ensure that your diary is transparent and updated.

Employees should be able to demonstrate that they can:

- 6.6 Consider their own health and safety when deciding on the most appropriate working location to carry out their role.
- 6.7 Advise their line manager if flexible working is adversely affecting their work performance or health, or that of their team
- 6.8 Carry out regular DSE assessments and undertake the annual DSE mandatory training. A copy of the user assessment form can be found here: [Herefordshire DSE assessment form](#)
- 6.9 Attend meetings and training as and when required, at the location required by the council
- 6.10 Report any system defects to ICT Hoople via the helpdesk portal on theirdesktop, or by contacting the number on the front of their laptop.
- 6.11 Immediately report any loss or theft of equipment or documents, or data protection breach, to their line manager and the Information Governance Team by emailing [informationgovernance@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:informationgovernance@herefordshire.gov.uk).

## 7. Manager's Responsibilities

- 7.1. Managers will focus on agreed outcomes and targets, rather than presenteeism, to support staff wellbeing and ensure that these positive benefits are realised; and proactively manage instances where flexible work is not delivering expected outcomes for the individual or organisation.
- 7.2. Managers are also responsible for ensuring that:
  - Employees understand and comply with this policy and all supporting procedures and guidelines, including health and safety requirements
  - The employee is fully trained on the equipment and technology provided

- They keep in touch with the employee as regularly as they would under normal circumstances, as far as reasonably practicable
- The employee does not become isolated by ensuring that arrangements for regular 1:1 and team communication are in place
- The employee is included in all scheduled team meetings, or any other work-related event and does not suffer a detriment due to the working style they are assigned to
- The working style is reviewed with the employee to ensure agreed outcomes are being delivered. This could be done as part of the My Conversation discussion but at least on an annual basis.
- The employee's career development and training opportunities are not adversely affected and employees receive the appropriate training
- The employee's wellbeing is not adversely affected
- The employee does not exceed their contracted hours and follows the provisions of the working time regulations regarding hours and breaks.

## 8. Performance & Development Planning – My Conversation

- 8.1 Line managers and employees are required to take part in the My Conversation process on an annual basis, reviewed by regular 1:1s. It covers the following four areas:
- Health & Wellbeing
  - Performance Review
  - Outcomes
  - Personal Development
- 8.2 This should also cover issues such as productivity, quality of work, working patterns, service standards and timeliness.
- 8.3 Employees and line managers must complete the performance appraisal process as outlined in My Conversation. [Learning and development - My Conversation \(herefordshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/learning-and-development-my-conversation)

## 9. Equipment

- 9.1. Any equipment provided must be used in line with the Council's Information Security Policy and Health & Safety Guidance on DSE.
- 9.2. Where an employee requires specialist equipment in the office because of a workplace assessment, consideration will be given to whether this support can be incorporated in to the flexible working arrangement / working environment on a case by case basis. Whilst the council will consider providing specialist equipment, it reserves the right to allocate a fixed worker style if the provision of the specialist equipment is deemed not possible.
- 9.3. It's an employee's responsibility to ensure they have a suitable internet connection when working from home. Broadband or telephone costs will not be subsidised by the council; nor will any technical faults be supported by ICT.



9.4. All equipment, materials or stationery supplied by the council will remain the property of Herefordshire Council, only to be used for work purposes and returned to the council at the end of the arrangement / employment. All allocated equipment must be returned within 4 weeks of the leave date or the employee will be charged for the replacement products.

9.5. Where equipment is provided by the council, the employee must:

- Take reasonable care of it
- Use it only for council business
- Use it only in accordance with any operating instructions
- Return it to the council when requested, i.e. PAT testing
- Use it in accordance with any existing council policies

## 10. Information Security

10.1. Employees are responsible for the confidentiality, integrity and availability of information assets. Information assets take many forms including, but not limited to, information which is:

- Stored on computers
- Transmitted across networks
- Printed
- Written down
- Stored on removable media
- Sent via email
- Spoken in conversation e.g. by telephone
- Stored in databases.

10.2. The council's Information Security Policy **MUST** be adhered to at all times.

10.3. It is essential that employees work in a space that is private. It is important that computer screens are kept private and if you are having a conference call or video meetings, flexible workers must be aware of their surroundings and others who may overhear – headsets or earphones must be worn for these purposes. Hard copy documents must be stored securely and any council ICT equipment or paper documents that are transported must be securely stored in the boot of the car – out of sight from opportunist thieves.

10.4. Employees must dispose of documentation in accordance of the Information Governance Printing and Clear Desk procedure.

10.5. Employees should not have any personal items on desks within council hot-desking or shared workspaces to aid flexibility and desk booking.

## 11. Insurance

11.1. The Council will be responsible for any necessary insurance of equipment supplied and for employee liability insurance.

11.2. Flexible working may affect the home and contents insurance policies of the householder. Employees are advised to check with their insurance providers if changes need to be made to their policies and make any necessary adjustments.

11.3. Payments of any additional premiums is the employee's responsibility and will not be reimbursed by the council.

11.4. The Council will not accept liability for damage caused to the employee's home or its contents, or any personal items.

## 12. Policy Compliance

12.1. Failure to observe the standards set out in this policy may be regarded as serious and any breach may result in disciplinary action

## Document Classification

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0.01	Draft	17.06.22	Creation of document	-	All
0.02	Draft		Inserted FF branding	Amended branding	All
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1.0	Final				