Agile Working Policy

'work is an activity we do, rather than a place we go'

Version Control

This document is intended for:

☒ Council staff only ☐ School-based staff only ☐ Council & School-based staff

Version	Key Changes	Approved By

This document may be reviewed and amended at any time and without consultation in response to legal requirements, in line with best practice or in response to an organisational requirement and where the changes do not affect the spirit or intent of the document.

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (the "Council") recognises the need to develop modern working practices to enhance employees' working experience and to maximise performance and productivity and deliver the greatest value to the organisation. This policy will focus on employee well-being by promoting a good work life balance. In addition, new technologies are making it easy to access information remotely and work from a variety of locations within the community, whilst promoting a more joined up service.

1.2 The introduction of a new modern model of working across the Council will improve service delivery as well as realising financial benefits for the organisation. It also links to the Council's vision for sustainable development; placing emphasis on the importance of sustainable economic growth, de-carbonisation and the health and well-being of both staff and the community. The benefits of improved work life balance, employee engagement and reduced travel make a direct contribution to this strategic priority.

1.3 Home/agile working supports the modernisation of our working practices and is part of the continuous change management process. Welsh Government ("WG") has detailed its clear ambition to see around 30% of the workforce working from home or working remotely. In accordance with WG's aspiration, this policy promotes a shift towards home/agile working wherever possible.

1.4 The new workforce model will designate roles in one of three categories:

- Homeworker
- Agile Worker
- Service/Community Worker

Although the nature of most of the roles within the Council cannot be classed as totally flexible, there is considerable scope in many cases for some form of agile working. The different ways in which agile working can be undertaken is dependent on the demands and needs of the role and the service within which the role is based.

2. The Potential Benefits

2.1 It is anticipated that the implementation of home/agile working will offer benefits to our employees, customers and the Council.

For employees, home/agile working can:

- provide an opportunity to manage their working day more efficiently;
- increase engagement as a result of autonomy and trust at work;
- improve work life balance;
- enable them to work more effectively on a particular piece of work, where concentration is important, by avoiding the interruptions that are part of the office environment;
- reduce travelling time and related costs; and
- increase their wellbeing, health and happiness through a better sense of control.

2.2   The key benefits for the Council are as follows:

- allows the Council to provide improved services to our customers;
- allows the Council to focus time and money spent on services not buildings to ensure delivering services takes priority over occupying buildings;
- reduces unnecessary travel time, which increases productivity and reduces cost;
- creates an environment which allows employees to achieve an improved work life balance, greater job satisfaction, motivation, morale and productivity;
- results in reduced costs through reduced travel and expense claims;
- lowers our carbon footprint, through reduced emissions from reduced travel;
- improves the recruitment and retention of employees via the Council becoming an employer of choice; and
- reduced absenteeism and related costs.

3.   Scope

3.1   The Policy applies to all Council employees working at any level within the organisation but will exclude school based staff under the delegated powers of the Governing Body. The nature and extent of home/agile working will depend upon the role undertaken and considerations will include the impact on the ability to meet customer demand (internal and external) and employee welfare.

3.2   The policy will enable both managers and staff to gain a better understanding of home/agile working and understand the basic principles, which can then be considered and applied to specific roles.

4.   Agile Working

4.1   The image below defines the three workstyles for Council staff:

Homeworker	Agile Worker	Service/ Community Worker
❖ Home is the base – defined as the permanent residence as recorded with the Council ❖ All work can be carried out from home ❖ Appropriate workstation and tools to do the job at home ❖ No need to access an alternative base to work on a frequent basis ❖ Occasional attendance at an alternative base for e.g. team meetings/ training ❖ Council will make a payment of £26 per month	❖ Home is the base – defined as the permanent residence as recorded with the Council ❖ Work time split between homeworking and alternative Council locations/community ❖ Work is carried out at home and an alternative base – requiring desk space (e.g. using a booking system) ❖ Appropriate workstation and tools to do the job at home ❖ Could be required to attend meetings in an alternative base ❖ Council will make a payment of £12 per month	❖ Work is carried out 100% from a base in a building or 100% community working ❖ Some roles would require desk space – no fixed work station ❖ Roles/worker not possible to work from home ❖ No allowance will be paid by the Council

4.2 A workstyle will be designated to each post based on service needs ("the proposed designation"). Reasonable adjustments must be considered, where necessary. Review of the workstyle designation will be carried out in line with any service review, redesign or change.

4.3 Managers should consider the best practical and operational arrangements for working in accordance with the workstyle designation including:
- Clear and realistic objectives and expected work outputs for the employee, should be agreed between the employee and their manager and employees will be expected to deliver the agreed outcomes.
- Regular performance coaching and 1 to 1 discussions.
- Methods of, and arrangements for, communication and support need to be agreed. Regular communication is imperative to promote employee well-being and to ensure that employees do not feel isolated, lonely or frustrated, using a combination of face to face conversations, emails, telephone and team meetings/briefing, etc.

4.4 Home/agile workers will not have fixed hours (unless the role dictates this) and will be able to perform their work at times convenient to them in line with the flexible working hours scheme, however employees must be available for online meetings and to respond to calls and emails etc. in line with business needs. In particular:
- Employees should ensure that their electronic diaries are up to date so that others are aware of their availability. It is imperative that wherever individuals are working, others e.g. the manager, the team and other colleagues, know how to contact them.
- When individuals are not working, laptops and phones should be switched off to enable individuals to have a right to privacy out of hours and be able to separate their working and home lives.

4.5 Home/agile working must not affect the provision of services and therefore managers must ensure that they have systems in place to maintain the correct compliment of staff, as required, and to monitor the level of available front line staff working at any one time.

4.6 Employees must note that during active work, time at home is not a substitute for childcare or similar carer responsibilities. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure adequate provision is in place although there are other policies, which offer options and support to staff in such circumstances.

4.7 All staff must ensure that adequate breaks are taken, whichever workstyle is adopted with a minimum of 30 minutes taken for lunch. Those working at desks should take a short break from the desk/screen and move around often, ideally at least every hour. In addition, as a minimum, all staff must comply with the requirements of the Working Time Regulations 1998. Managers should discuss health, safety and well-being at every 121 session.

4.8 For administrative purposes, including the claiming of travel expenses, all employees will retain a designated contractual work base, as per 4.1. The agile working hub arrangements will include the General Offices (at which the new democratic facility will also be based), Anvil Court, the Depot, ViTCC and other appropriate Council buildings.

5. Reporting and other requirements

5.1 The Council's normal workplace rules, code of conduct and procedures apply to all employees, whichever workstyle is adopted. The contractual obligations, duties and responsibilities (apart from place of work) remain unchanged and the Council's workplace policies continue to apply including, but not limited to, GDPR compliance, as detailed in clause 11 of this policy.

5.2 All employees are expected to report to their manager in accordance with an agreement reached. Each employee must also comply with any formal reporting procedures set out in their contract.

5.3 All managers must keep in regular contact with their staff, via phone, email, meetings or Microsoft teams conferencing.

6. Illness or injury

6.1 If an employee cannot work on a day on which it has been agreed that they will work from home because they are ill or injured, they must follow the procedure set out in the Council's Attendance Management Policy to report their absence.

7. Payment of Allowances

7.1 An employee who is a home/agile worker will be provided with the necessary ICT equipment and technology to work in this way. The employee should use the Council's equipment whilst home/agile working and will not be eligible to claim expenses for use of personal equipment such as home phone lines.

7.2 The Council will make the following payments:

- Homeworkers - £26 per month per employee (which is the maximum amount payable in line with HMRC guidance).
- Agile workers - £12 per month per employee.

Employees will not have to pay tax and national insurance contributions on these payments. As these payments are intended to contribute towards home-related expenses, these payments will not be paid to service/community based workers.

7.3 The payment of these allowances should be reviewed during any periods of sustained absence, normally at the end of three months continued absence.

8. Allocation of Equipment

8.1 The Council will be responsible for determining and providing the equipment and technical requirements for the employee undertaking a home/agile working arrangement.

8.2 The Council will provide anyone working from home (whether fully or partially) with all equipment reasonably required to work from home. This provision does not extend

to the installation of or subscription for the home broadband connection, which is the responsibility of the employee. All equipment provided will remain the Council's property at all times. Only equipment which the Council has provided to employees, or which the Council has authorised employees to use, may be used for homeworking. Equipment which may be provided to homeworkers includes:

- Desk,
- Chair,
- Computer and pulse fob,
- Monitor,
- Softphone or mobile,
- Mouse,
- Riser,
- Headphones (if required).

8.3 Employees can use their own equipment e.g. desks, chairs, provided that such equipment is compliant with the requirements of the Council's risk assessments (Appendix D and Appendix E).

8.4 Additional equipment may be provided for staff who require reasonable adjustments as determined by occupational health. Where equipment is issued to support home-working it is essential that managers keep a log using: **this link.**

8.5 Personally adapted equipment will be provided to an individual should a workstation assessment deem this necessary; however, this equipment will be provided at the place where they predominantly work and not across multiple sites. Therefore, the individual will be responsible for ensuring that this equipment is available for their use wherever they work. If, as a result of a risk assessment, other equipment is identified as necessary, this will also be provided, subject to the agreement of the employee.

8.6 Where the Council has provided equipment, employees must:

    8.6.1   take reasonable care of it;

    8.6.2   use it only for the purposes for which it was provided;

    8.6.3   make it available to the Council for inspection at any time if requested, and for collection if homeworking arrangements cease, if applicable, or on leaving employment;

    8.6.4   not remove it from their home without the prior permission of their manager; and

    8.6.5   promptly report any damage to or malfunctioning of any item to their manager.

8.7 The Council will maintain the equipment but employees will be responsible for any damage to the equipment that goes beyond reasonable wear and tear.

8.8 If an IT issue or other equipment problem prevents an employee from working effectively from home, employees should contact their manager as soon as possible and agree what needs to happen.

9. Responsibilities

9.1 **Corporate responsibilities**

- The Managing Director, on behalf of the Council, carries overall responsibility for ensuring that the Council has the appropriate processes in place, which adequately and appropriately support its employees, regardless of what working pattern or arrangement they have.
- The OD Service is responsible for providing advice and guidance on this policy and is responsible for reviewing, updating and amending this policy to reflect changes in legislation or employment practice in conjunction with trade unions.
- Corporate Leadership Team is responsible for establishing their own arrangements to ensure:
  - o Effective implementation of the policy
  - o Continued service delivery; and
  - o Consultation with their employees on these arrangements.

9.2 **Management Responsibilities**

Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring flexibility, openness and constructiveness in relation to discussions and agreements about home/agile working with employees within their area of responsibility, whilst remaining focused on the needs of the service.
- Ensuring good communication with employees and agreeing clear communication lines and methods, including arrangements for employees to report sickness absence. Making arrangements for both regular individual and team meetings, ensuring regular communication is maintained between themselves and team members, providing support for employees and implementing ways of measuring and monitoring work output that have been mutually agreed.
- Setting and monitoring defined performance measures in line with the Council's performance coaching and regular 1 to 1 meetings.
- Allowing employees who are using their homes to work from to have a right to privacy out of working hours and the ability to separate their working and home lives.
- Meeting their duties in relation to health and safety and welfare by undertaking appropriate risk assessments and acting on any areas of concern for employees who they are responsible for, as outlined in section 10 of the policy.
- Any recruitment going forward based on the designation of the role.
- Undertaking a regular review of the home/agile working arrangements. If it is not working, every effort will be made to resolve any issues.

9.3 **Employee Responsibilities**

Employees are responsible for:

- Complying with this policy in a reasonable, constructive and appropriate manner.
- Being flexible, open and constructive in discussing and agreeing home/agile working arrangements, whilst remaining focused on the needs of service.
- Maintaining regular contact with their manager.
- Working as agreed (appropriate work area for working at home etc.) and abiding by all the Council Policies (available on the intranet) whilst working in this way.
- Optimising meetings to minimise the amount of travel time.
- Complying with Health and Safety policy and procedures by participating in and undertaking risk assessments; carrying out any necessary actions to minimise risk; maintaining a safe working environment and taking reasonable care of their own safety, as outlined in section 10 of the policy.
- Complying with confidentiality, data protection and information security policies.
- Ensuring that all reasonable care is taken of all Council supplied ICT equipment.
- Reporting immediately once known, any loss, theft or damage to Council IT equipment or the loss of confidential information.
- Consulting with any necessary parties, such as landlords, insurance or mortgage companies, regarding home working.
- Ensuring that any personally adapted equipment (e.g. left-hand orientation or widescreen laptop), required in order to undertake their duties, is available for their use wherever they are working under this arrangement.

10. Health and Safety

10.1 In addition to the employer, employees have a responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of themselves and others while they are carrying out work activities, regardless of the work location. Homeworkers/agile workers have the same health and safety duties as other workers and will be required to take reasonable care of their own health and safety whilst working from home. All employees must comply with all health and safety instructions issued by the Council.

10.2 Where employees use Council locations to work they should familiarise themselves with the local arrangements for managing health and safety. They should ensure that they are aware of fire safety arrangements to ensure they are fully conversant with the actions to be taken in the event of discovering a fire or on hearing the fire alarm signal and ensure they adhere to the local signing in and out arrangements.

10.3 Due consideration to lone working arrangements should be explored fully between the line manager and employee to ensure safe working arrangements are in place.

10.4 The Council retains the right to check all homeworking areas for health, safety and welfare purposes, including carrying out risk assessments, to consider, for example, work equipment, in cases where reasonable adjustments may be necessary, and display screen equipment. All access requirements will be discussed prior to the visit, and appropriate notice given. A Working from Home Self-Assessment (Appendix D) and Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Workstation Checklist (Appendix E) will be carried out if any part of an employee's working style requires them to work from home. This will need to be carried out again if any substantial changes are made to the working environment or arrangements. Employees must fully participate in completing the necessary risk assessment paperwork and review this with their manager.

10.5 When working from home, even if only partially, the employee has a responsibility to ensure they have an appropriate workspace with adequate security, storage and screening from activities and noise in the rest of the home. There must also be adequate ventilation and lighting.

10.6 Homeworkers who need to attend site meetings should be aware that the Council has a Corporate Employee Protection Register ("CEPR"), which holds details of any violent individuals/dangerous incidents against Council employees. Any employee whose role involves personal contact with members of the public should initiate a search of the database prior to any visits/interviews in order to make an informed assessment of any potential risk. Employees should also comply with the Lone Working Policy and departmental procedures.

10.7 Employees must not, under any circumstances, give details of their home address or telephone number to clients/customers or third parties. No formal or informal work related meetings of any kind are to be held in any employee's home (save that employees may, of course, attend meetings virtually from their own home).

10.8 Employees must report any accident at home to their manager, in line with current arrangements.

10.9 Employees should report any health and safety concerns to their manager, as soon as possible.

10.10 Managers should focus on, and prioritise, employee well-being. Employees should contact their manager if they have any concerns regarding well-being. The employee assistance helpline, Care First, is also available.

10.11 Employees working from home should ensure that the general fabric of the home and its fixtures and fittings, including in any area in which they work, is/are maintained in a safe and functional state for performance of work there e.g. electrical sockets. Staff should ensure that no equipment is left to charge unattended and that the correct charging device is used in relation to each item of equipment.

10.12 Staff working from home will be required to bring equipment into a specified Council building for PAT testing, when requested to do so.

10.13 Managers should seek advice regarding any specific concerns around health and safety issues as all health and safety requirements must be appropriately addressed if full or partial homeworking is to occur.

10.14 Copies of completed Appendices D and E should be submitted to the Organisational Development Service.

11. Data Protection, Security and Confidentiality

11.1 The Council provides employees with access to the personal and confidential information they need to do their job. The Council's Information Security and Information Governance Policies including, but not limited to, the Information Security Policy and the Acceptable Use Policy, apply at all times regardless of the working location. It is particularly important to ensure that non-authorised personnel cannot gain access to confidential or personal information. This includes, but is not limited to, the requirement to prevent unauthorised personnel from:

- seeing and/or accessing, electronic and/or paper files;

- being able to overhear telephone/Microsoft Teams conversations etc.

11.2 When working in a mobile manner, the employee is responsible for the security of equipment, files and any other information in their possession, including the transportation of such items whenever outside Council premises.

11.3 Employees working from home, whether fully or partially, will be responsible for ensuring the security of all Council equipment, documents and information and must take all necessary steps to ensure that private and confidential information is kept secure at all times. Wherever possible, this equipment should be locked away. At a minimum, all equipment should be stored out of sight of windows and doors to deter equipment from being stolen.

11.4 In particular, every employee must:

11.4.1 screen lock their computer whenever it is left unattended;

11.4.2 store confidential papers securely when not in use;

11.4.3 ensure the secure disposal of confidential materials by returning items to Council premises for disposal using the contracted confidential waste arrangements. Where this is not feasible, employees should contact their line manager or the Data Protection Officer to make alternative arrangements;

11.4.4 report any data security breach to their manager immediately.

11.5 No work related emails or sensitive data should be sent to the employee's home email addresses. No work related files should be stored on an employee's personal computer.

11.6 All employees should make every effort to minimise the amount of paper records which they use, carry or transfer and should consider using more secure electronic methods wherever possible. Not only is this better for the environment, but it reduces costs for the Council and is more secure.

11.7 Where employees do need to print documents and send in the post, the Council's hybrid mail system must be utilised to do this and staff should not print and send documents on home equipment using standard public postal arrangements. Staff are reminded that the Council's Information Security Policy includes the requirement that staff should not connect their own unapproved hardware (e.g. a printer) to their Council devices.

12. Equal Opportunities/Reasonable Adjustments

12.1 The Council will ensure that all staff are treated in a fair, equitable and consistent manner. It undertakes to comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and will identify appropriate reasonable adjustments and options for those employees who may require specific support in planning and undertaking any homeworking arrangements.

12.2 Particular reference should be made to the provisions of the Act to ensure that appropriate communication and monitoring is in place to support an employee with any matters arising from the protected characteristics and requirements of the Act.

12.3 The employee is responsible for ensuring that they inform their line manager of any issues that may need to be addressed under the Act. This is particularly pertinent to homeworkers where equalities matters may be undetected for a prolonged period.

12.4 Where an individual has been assessed as requiring a specific workstation set-up as part of reasonable adjustments made following an Occupational Health referral under the Equality Act they will, should these not be able to be accommodated at home, be provided with a desk allocation at a hub and be expected to consider this their base.

13. Insurance, Mortgage/Tenancy Arrangements

13.1 In general, working from home should not give rise to any special difficulties from an insurance point of view. The guiding principle is that good practice should reduce or eliminate the possibility of injury or loss to employees. Insurance by itself does not prevent injury or loss and good risk management techniques are required.

13.2 It is vital that employees and managers adhere to this Agile Working policy and associated guidelines, in order to maintain the validity of the insurance provision.

13.3 Employees' own insurance policies are unlikely to be affected by working from home. However, employees are **strongly advised** to inform their insurers of working at home arrangements. If in doubt, employees should let their insurance company know to ensure there is no risk of non-disclosure invalidating a policy. No formal or informal work related meetings are to be held in any employee's home as this would affect the employee's home insurance policy.

13.4 Liability insurance protects the Council and its employees jointly for accidental death, injury and loss of property where the Council has been negligent. This insurance will operate in respect of employees who are working at home with the knowledge and consent of their manager, subject to the appropriate risk, health and safety assessments and training and support being in place. Employees must comply with Section 10 (Health and Safety) of the Agile Working Policy and any accidents must be reported immediately in accordance with the Council's health and safety guidelines.

13.5 Computers provided by the Council as part of the home/agile working arrangement will be covered by the Council's insurance policy. Employees must not do, cause or permit any act or omission which will avoid coverage under the Council insurance policy and reasonable care must be taken to avoid loss or damage to the equipment. If in doubt as to whether particular acts or omissions will have this effect, employees should consult their manager immediately. It is essential that any loss, theft or damage to Council IT equipment is reported immediately. Computer equipment should not be left in an unattended vehicle.

13.6 There is no formal insurance cover for work equipment provided aside from a computer however, employees must report promptly any damage to or malfunction of any work equipment to their manager for consideration to enable the Council to ensure that a safe working environment is maintained.

14. Temporary arrangements

14.1 If there is the need to temporarily cover a post, if leave is taken (other than sickness absence leave) which lasts for over 1 month, including, but not limited to, maternity leave, parental leave, adoption leave, employees who have been provided with Council equipment, should return equipment provided (with the exception of the desk and chair) to a Council location, which will be stipulated by the line manager prior to the commencement of their leave.

15. Domestic abuse/violence

15.1 Any individuals who are experiencing domestic abuse/violence, who do not wish to work within the home, will be accommodated in Council locations and are referred to the Council's [Domestic Abuse, Violence and Sexual Violence Policy](#), which offers further support.

16. Review and Revision Arrangements

16.1 This policy will be reviewed in line with HR processes and a formal review will take place after one year.

16.2 Employees should familiarise themselves with other Council policies to include:

- [Flexible Working Scheme](#)
- [Information Security Policies](#)
- [Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Policy](#)
- [Lone Working Policy](#)

Designation of workstyle

As per clause 4.2, a workstyle will be designated to each post based on service needs ("the proposed designation").

Individual discussions with current staff

Managers should then consider the proposed designation during a one to one consultation with each directly reporting employee. Managers should discuss, with each employee, the designation of their role, considering any individual/reasonable adjustments where necessary.

Criteria which could justify an adjustment being made to the proposed workstyle include but are not limited to:
- Health and well-being (e.g. mental health);
- Inability to work safely and effectively from home (e.g. insufficient space for necessary equipment);
- A reasonable adjustment due to disability;
- Domestic violence.

For all staff whose proposed designation involves full or partial homeworking

Appendix B

Appendix B (Individual Assessment Role Designation) must be completed for all employees in roles designated as home/agile working. Managers cannot impose a workstyle on employees. The workstyle needs to be mutually agreed.

Where the proposed designation is varied based on individual/reasonable adjustments

If the manager and/or the employee consider that the employee is unable to work in line with the proposed designation, consideration must be given to varying the proposed designation based on individual/reasonable adjustments, in line with the above criteria. Any adjustments should be detailed in the box in section 2 of Appendix B and managers should please tick the agreed workstyle which is being adopted based on the agreed adjustments. In relation to any employees for whom the proposed designation is varied to service/community based worker, an allocated base must be identified on Appendix B for mileage purposes. Both employee and manager should then sign and date the form.

Where the proposed designation is not varied

Where the designation proposed is mutually agreed and there is therefore no change to the designation, both the manager and employee should simply go from section 1 to section 3, sign and date Appendix B and the manager should please forward a copy to Organisational Development.

Appendix C

All homeworkers and agile workers must also complete and sign Appendix C (Homeworking Agreement) and managers should please forward a copy to Organisational Development.

The Homeworking Agreement will be the agreement from the individual to vary their contract.

If any homeworking is proposed, can the employee work safely and effectively from home?

Appendices D & E

If home or agile working is being considered as an agreed designation, Appendix D (Working from home self-assessment) and Appendix E (DSE) must be completed prior to the proposed designation being agreed. Appendices D and E should already have been completed for any staff who have been homeworking (fully or partially) due to the coronavirus pandemic but must, in any event, be completed again as part of this consultation exercise to check that these risk assessments are up to date and accurate. Only if an employee can work safely and effectively from home pursuant to these risk assessments, will any kind of homeworking be permitted pursuant to this Agile Working Policy. Managers must please forward the completed, signed copies of Appendices D and E to Organisational Development.

Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
Blaenau Gwent
County Borough Council

Further to the designation of roles in line with the Agile Working Policy this form should be used for ALL employees in roles designated as Home/Agile Working. Managers should complete this form when undertaking individual consultation on the proposed role designation.

Section 1 - Employee/Role Details

Employee Name:	
Position Title:	
Contract Type:	☐ Permanent ☐ Fixed Term ☐ Temporary
Position Ref:	_____ Contact Phone Number: _____
Work Base (Pre COVID):	
Service:	_____ Manager: _____

Role Designation: ☐ Home Worker ☐ Agile Worker

Section 2 - Individual/Reasonable Adjustments

The role designation set out above must be discussed with the employee and where consideration is being given to vary this based on individual/reasonable adjustments these should be set out below. In relation to all roles for which any homeworking (whether full or partial) is being considered, Appendices D & E must be completed and must evidence that homeworking can be carried out safely and effectively.

Where there is no change to the designation detailed above please simply go to Section 3 and sign.

> Please outline the change in workstyle being adopted based on the agreed adjustments
> ☐ Home Worker   ☐ Agile Worker   ☐ Service/Community Worker*
> Please specify the designated base for the Service/Community Worker: _____
> *Those unable to work from home based on individual/reasonable adjustments should be included in the Service/Community Worker category and a designated base must be detailed.

Section 3 - Agreement & Authorisation

Employee Signature: _____   Date: _____

Manager Signature: _____   Date: _____

Designated Home/Agile Workers must complete a Homeworking Agreement

Please forward a copy of this document to Organisational Development

Homeworking Agreement

Employee Name:	
Position Title:	Position Ref:
Service:	Manager:

It has been agreed that from the   [Insert Date] you will be designated a Home/Agile Worker as defined in the Agile Working Policy, you are therefore required to complete this Homeworking Agreement.

Employee:

- I agree to provide an appropriate safe workspace in my home to enable me to work effectively.

- I am aware of my responsibility to inform as appropriate my landlord/mortgage/Insurance company in writing of my intention to work at home.

- I understand the requirement for me to continue to comply with all Council policies, practices and procedures whilst working from home including all Health and Safety requirements.

- I will maintain regular contact with my manager and inform them of changes to my home or personal circumstances, which could affect my ability to undertake my work effectively including health and safety.

- I understand that I have a duty to ensure, insofar as is reasonably practicable, that I work in a safe manner and follow all health and safety requirements of the Council including participating in and undertaking risk assessments; carrying out any necessary actions to minimise risk; maintaining a safe working environment and taking reasonable care of my own safety.

- I am aware and understand the requirement to report any work-related accidents whilst working at home or other locations.

- I agree to provide reasonable access to my home by an employee of the Council, or their representative to support home working arrangements (but not for meeting purposes). All access requirements will be discussed prior to the visit, and appropriate notice given.

- I am aware of the information security measures required and the sensitive nature of data with which I work. I agree at all times to protect access, maintain and store the data securely and confidentially in line with the Data Protection Acts and Council requirements.

- I understand that I am responsible for the proper care of Council equipment and that the computer and other equipment must be used for work purposes only and will not be used by anyone other than myself.

- Reporting immediately, once known, any loss, theft or damage to Council IT equipment or the loss of confidential information.

- I understand that I may be required to attend an alternative hub (location to be confirmed as appropriate) from time to time for specified communications/meetings/training as defined by my manager.

- I am aware and understand the requirements to notify my manager when I am unable to work or absent from work due to sickness or any other reason. I will also continue to use the My Options flexible working to record my times whilst working at home or otherwise in line with relevant Policy, including taking adequate rest breaks.

- In the event of home or agile working ceasing or leaving the employment of the Council, I will co-operate with the Council in arranging a time for any equipment to be collected or I will return the equipment to the Council within 5 working days of home working ceasing.

Employer:

- The Council has a range of policies and guidance to support employees working from home including the Agile Working Policy.

- Under health and safety legislation the Council is obliged to ensure the health and safety of homeworkers in the same way as for office-based staff.

- The manager will ensure that the appropriate risk/DSE assessments are carried out in respect of the work that you carry out.

- Reasonable adjustments will be considered and put in place where necessary.

- The standard equipment required to work from home as set out in the Agile Working Policy will be provided by the Council and any relevant testing of equipment will be facilitated by the Council.

- An allowance as set out in the Agile Working Policy will be paid by the Council with the employees' monthly salary.

- Regular performance coaching/supervision/reviews will continue to be conducted in line with Council Policy.

Employee Declaration

Please sign to confirm that you have read, understood and agree to the conditions relating to home working in line with the Council's Agile Working Policy and that you agree to the varying of your contract of employment.

Employee Signature: [   ]   Date: [   ]

The Agile Working Policy can be accessed on the intranet or from your Manager.

Please forward a copy of this document to Organisational Development

Working from Home Self-Assessment

Please complete this self-assessment form for discussion with your Manager and it will assist them in ensuring that your working conditions comply with current best practice whilst working at home.

Name: [   ]   Date of Completion: [   ]

Directorate: [   ]   Service: [   ]

Fire	Yes	No	Comments
Is your work area tidy?			
Are waste materials regularly disposed of?			
Are your exit routes clear?			
Do you have an escape plan?			*i.e. know exactly what to do in an emergency*
Is a smoke alarm fitted?			*Alarms should be tested regularly & batteries changed as required*

Electrical Equipment (either the Council's or your own but used for Council work).	Yes	No	Comments
Any apparent damage?			*Cracked casing, missing screws, etc.*
Any evidence of overheating?			*Look for discolouration*
Any obvious damage to leads or plugs?			
Are the cables secure in all plugs?			

Slips, Trips & Falls (Work areas)	Yes	No	Comments
Floor coverings sound, and without defects?			
Are walkways clear of tripping hazards e.g. trailing cables?			

Ventilation/Noise/Lighting	Yes	No	Comments
Does your workspace provide adequate ventilation?			
Can noise be kept to an acceptable level whilst working?			
Does the lighting around you workstation provide adequate light for working?			*Consider prevention of eyestrain from bright or low level lighting*

Manual Handling	Yes	No	Comments
Do you carry out any abnormal Manual Handling activities?			*If yes, complete a separate Manual Handling risk assessment*
Do you carry a lot of equipment?			*Consider bags with wheels, do not overload yourself and only take the files/equipment you require*

Display Screen Equipment	Yes	No	Comments
Do you use DSE for more than an hour a day on a regular basis?			*If yes, complete a separate DSE Risk Assessment Checklist. Use the principles set out to assist you in setting your workstation up properly.*
When seated at your desk, can you move your legs & upper body together without twisting?			

Lone Working	Yes	No	Comments
Have you discussed the need for a 'call in' procedure with your manager?			*Ensure you follow the controls your Manager has implemented for working from home, this could be the use of Skype, Logging in and out system, etc.*

Accidents/First Aid	Yes	No	Comments
Do you know the procedure for reporting any accidents or work related illness?			*All work related accidents (including those that take place in your home whilst working) must be reported as quickly as possible via the Accident/ Incident on-line system and directly to your Manager*
Do you know where the nearest hospital/contact point is?			

Well being	Yes	No	Comments
Do you suffer any discomfort or ill health that you believe has resulted from your work?			*If yes, report to your line manager and/or Occupational Health*

Security	Yes	No	Comments
Are external doors adequately secured?			*e.g. mortised security bolts*
Do key operated window locks secure all accessible windows?			
Are laptop and confidential files locked away when not in use?			

Council Supplied Equipment (Please list below)	Serial No.	Inspection Dates		

Any other comments you have regarding your working environment, please list here:

	Yes	No
Have any relevant risk assessments been completed?		

Signature (Homeworker):   Date:

Signature (Line Manager):   Date:

Appendix E:
Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Workstation Checklist

Workstation location and number:

User:

Checklist completed by:

Assessment checked by:

Any further action needed? ☐ Yes ☐ No   Follow-up action completed on:

The following checklist can be used to help you complete a risk assessment and comply with the Schedule to the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 as amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002.

The questions and 'Things to consider' in the checklist cover the requirements of the Schedule. If you can answer 'Yes' in the second column against all the questions, having taken account of the 'Things to consider', you are complying. You will not be able to address some of the questions and 'Things to consider', e.g. on reflections on the screen, or the user's comfort, until the workstation has been installed. These will be covered in the risk assessment you do once the workstation is installed.
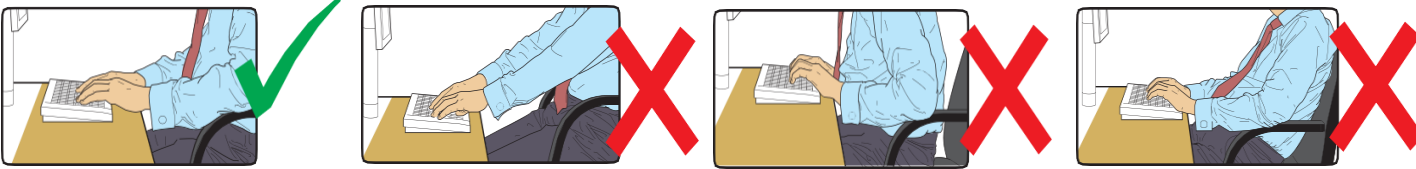
Work through the checklist, ticking either the 'Yes' or 'No' column against each risk factor:

- 'Yes' answers require no further action.
- 'No' answers will require investigation and/or remedial action by the workstation assessor.

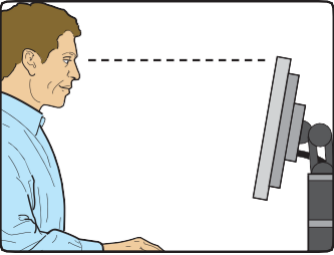They should record their decisions in the 'Action to take' column.

Managers/Assessors should check later that actions have been taken and have resolved the problem. Remember, the checklist only covers the workstation and work environment. You also need to make sure that risks from other aspects of the work are avoided, e.g. by giving users health and safety training, and providing for breaks or changes of activity.

Watch this short video: Temporary Working at Home - Workstation Setup - YouTube

Risk Factors	Yes	No	Things to consider	Action to take
Keyboards				
Is the keyboard separate from the screen?	☐	☐	This is a requirement, unless the task makes it impracticable (e.g. where there is a need to use a portable).	
Does the keyboard tilt?	☐	☐	Tilt need not be built in.	
Is it possible to find a comfortable keying position?	☒	☐	Try pushing the display screen further back to create more room for the keyboard, hands and wrists. Users of thick, raised keyboards may need a wrist rest.	

Risk Factors	Yes	No	Things to consider	Action to take
Does the user have good keyboard technique?	☐	☐	Training can be used to prevent: • hands bent up at the wrist; • hitting the keys too hard; • overstretching the fingers.	
Are the characters clear and readable?	☐	☐	Keyboards should be kept clean. If characters still can't be read, the keyboard may need modifying or replacing. Use a keyboard with a matt finish to reduce glare and/or reflection.	
Mouse, trackball, etc.				
Is the device suitable for the tasks it is used for?	☐	☐	If the user is having problems, try a different device. The mouse and trackball are general-purpose devices suitable for many tasks, and available in a variety of shapes and sizes. Alternative devices such as touch screens may be better for some tasks (but can be worse for others).	

Risk Factors	Yes	No	Things to consider	Action to take
Is the device positioned close to the user?	☐	☐	Most devices are best placed as close as possible, e.g. right beside the keyboard. Training may be needed to: • prevent arm overreaching; • encourage users not to leave their hand on the device when it • is not being used; • encourage a relaxed arm and straight wrist.	

Is there support for the device user's wrist and forearm?	☐	☐	Support can be gained from, for example, the desk surface or arm of a chair. If not, a separate supporting device may help. The user should be able to find a comfortable working position with the device.	
Does the device work smoothly at a speed that suits the user?	☐	☐	See if cleaning is required (e.g. of mouse ball and rollers). Check the work surface is suitable. A mouse mat may be needed.	
Can the user easily adjust software settings for speed and accuracy of pointer?	☐	☐	Users may need training in how to adjust device settings.	

Display Screens

Are the characters clear and readable?	☐	☐	Make sure the screen is clean and cleaning materials are available. Check that the text and background colours work well together.	

Risk Factors	Yes	No	Things to consider	Action to take
Is the text size comfortable to read?	☐	☐	Software settings may need adjusting to change text size.	
Is the image stable, i.e. free of flicker and jitter?	☐	☐	Try using different screen colours to reduce flicker. If there are still problems, get the set-up checked, e.g. by the equipment supplier.	
Is the screen's specification suitable for its intended use?	☐	☐	For example, intensive graphic work or work requiring fine attention to small details may require large display screens.	
Are the brightness and/or contrast adjustable?	☐	☐	Separate adjustment controls are not essential, provided the user can read the screen easily at all times.	
Does the screen swivel and tilt?	☐	☐	Swivel and tilt need not be built in; you can add a swivel and tilt mechanism. However, you may need to replace the screen if: • swivel/tilt is absent or unsatisfactory; • work is intensive; and/or • the user has problems getting the screen to a comfortable position.	
Is the screen free from glare and reflections?	☐	☐	Use a mirror placed in front of the screen to check where reflections are coming from. You might need to move the screen or even the desk and/or shield the screen from the source of the reflections. Screens that use dark characters on a light background are less prone to glare and reflections.	
Are adjustable window coverings provided and in adequate condition?	☐	☐	Check that blinds work. Blinds with vertical slats can be more suitable than horizontal ones. If these measures do not work, consider anti-glare screen filters as a last resort and seek specialist help.	

Risk Factors	Yes	No	Things to consider	Action to take
Software				
Is the software suitable for the task?	☐	☐	Software should help the user carry out the task, minimise stress and be user-friendly. Check users have had appropriate training in using the software. Software should respond quickly and clearly to user input, with adequate feedback, such as clear help messages.	
Furniture				
Is the work surface large enough for all the necessary equipment, papers, etc.?	☐	☐	Create more room by moving printers, reference materials, etc. elsewhere. If necessary, consider providing new power and telecoms sockets, so equipment can be moved. There should be some scope for flexible rearrangement.	
Can the user comfortably reach all the equipment and papers they need to use?	☐	☐	Rearrange equipment, papers etc. to bring frequently used things within easy reach. A document holder may be needed, positioned to minimise uncomfortable head and eye movements.	
Are surfaces free from glare and reflection?	☐	☐	Consider mats or blotters to reduce reflections and glare.	
Is the chair suitable? Is the chair stable? Does the chair have a working: • seat back height and tilt adjustment? • seat height adjustment? • castors or glides?	☐	☐	The chair may need repairing or replacing if the user is uncomfortable, or cannot use the adjustment mechanisms.	

Risk Factors	Yes	No	Things to consider	Action to take
Software				
Is the chair adjusted correctly?	☐	☐	The user should be able to carry out their work sitting comfortably. Consider training the user in how to adopt suitable postures while working. The arms of chairs can stop the user getting close enough to use the equipment comfortably. Move any obstructions from under the desk.	

Risk Factors	Yes	No	Things to consider	Action to take
Is the small of the back supported by the chair's backrest?	☐	☐	The user should have a straight back, supported by the chair, with relaxed shoulders.	
Are forearms horizontal and eyes at roughly the same height as the DSE top?	☐	☐	Adjust the chair height to get the user's arms in the right position, and then adjust the DSE height, if necessary.	
Are feet flat on the floor, without too much pressure from the seat on the backs of the legs?	☐	☐	If not, a footrest may be needed.	
Environment				
Is there enough room to change position and vary movement?	☐	☐	Space is needed to move, stretch and fidget. Consider reorganising the office layout and check for obstructions. Cables should be tidy and not a trip or snag hazard.	
Is the lighting suitable, e.g. not too bright or too dim to work comfortably?	☐	☐	Users should be able to control light levels, e.g. by adjusting window blinds or light switches. Consider shading or repositioning light sources or providing local lighting, e.g. desk lamps (but make sure lights don't cause glare by reflecting off walls or other surfaces).	

Risk Factors	Yes	No	Things to consider	Action to take
Does the air feel comfortable?	☐	☐	DSE and other equipment may dry the air. Circulate fresh air if possible. Plants may help. Consider a humidifier if discomfort is severe.	
Are levels of heat comfortable?	☐	☐	Can heating be better controlled? More ventilation or air conditioning may be required if there is a lot of electronic equipment in the room. Or, can users be moved away from the heat source?	
Are levels of noise comfortable?	☐	☐	Consider moving sources of noise, e.g. printers, away from the user. If not, consider soundproofing.	

Final questions to users

- Has the checklist covered all the problems that exist when working with DSE?

- Have there been any discomfort or other symptoms which can be attributed to working with DSE?

- Are you aware that you can ask for spectacles to wear when working with DSE?

- Regular breaks from using DSE should be taken. Does the user take regular breaks working away from DSE? Take short breaks often, rather than longer ones less often. For example 5 to 10 minutes every hour is better than 20 minutes every 2 hours. Ideally, users should be able to choose when to take breaks. In most jobs it is possible to stop DSE work to do other tasks, such as going to meetings or making phone calls. Breaks or changes of activity should allow users to get up from their workstations and move around, or at least stretch and change posture. See the link below for some ideas about moving:

  Posturite_A4-Advice-Sheet_Agile-Working-timings_241016.pdf

DSE Arrangement

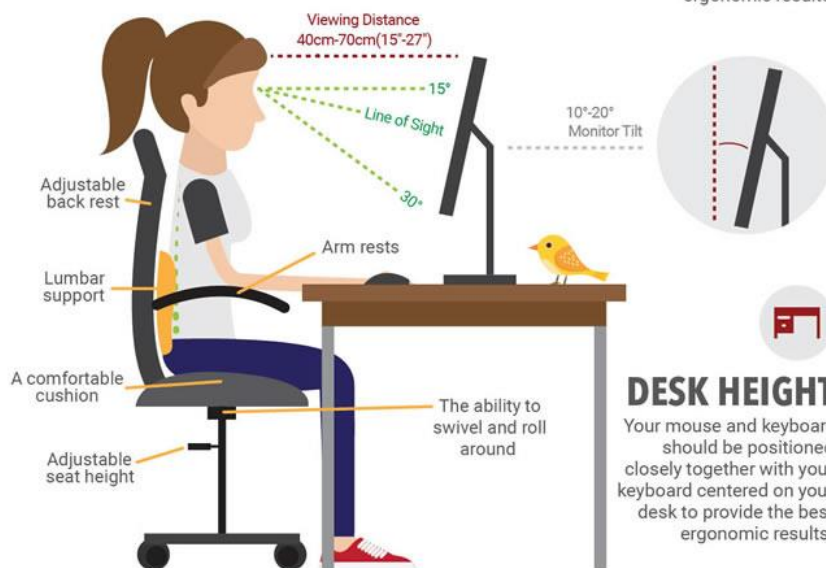

Monitor
Viewing distance 40cm–70cm (15"–27"), line of sight 15°-30°, and monitor tilt 10°-20° is a visually comfortable range for a majority of sitting users.

DESK
Your mouse and keyboard should be positioned closely together with your keyboard centered on your desk to provide the best ergonomic results.

Viewing Distance 40cm-70cm(15"-27")

15°
Line of Sight
30°

10°-20° Monitor Tilt

Adjustable back rest

Arm rests

Lumbar support

A comfortable cushion

The ability to swivel and roll around

Adjustable seat height

DESK HEIGHT
Your mouse and keyboard should be positioned closely together with your keyboard centered on your desk to provide the best ergonomic results.

Write down the details of any problems here: