

## AGILE WORKING POLICY

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<b>Effective Date of Policy</b>	
<b>Review Year:</b>	<b>Biennial</b>
<b>Applicable To:</b>	<b>All Caerphilly employed staff whose posts are designated 'Mobile', 'Home' or 'Flexible'.</b>
<b>Equalities:</b>	<p><b>Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg, ac mewn ieithoedd a fformatau eraill ar gais.</b></p> <p><b>This document is available in Welsh, and in other languages and formats on request.</b></p>



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## INTRODUCTION

1. At Caerphilly County Borough Council our workforce has been innovative, collaborative, resilient and resourceful in the face of extreme pressure and from early 2020, we have embraced the opportunities that agile working arrangements provide.
2. Aligned to our vision for sustainable development which places an emphasis on the importance of economic growth, de-carbonisation and the health and well-being of our employees, we fully endorse and are committed to developing and resourcing agile working across our Council on a sustainable basis.
3. Tailored to meet the complex and varying needs of our services, 'Agile Working' is a transformational tool that allows us to work smarter by eliminating all barriers to working efficiently. It can promote maximum flexibility and minimum constraints in terms of promoting choice of location and working time to enable employees to optimise their performance in their delivery of the Council's business.
4. Using the categorisations of 'Fixed', 'Flexible', 'Mobile', 'Home' and 'Community' as below, our Heads of Service have quantified the basic level of location and time flexibility that exists in every one of the services provided by the Council:

Category	Role Determining Factors
Fixed	<p>Your role requires you to work in a fixed location all the time. You may need a desk in a fixed location, for example, a reception area. You may share that desk. You may need to use specialist equipment which cannot be moved.</p> <p>Your role is location dependent. Your role may or may not support time independence.</p>
Flexible	<p>You may spend time in the office but you may also choose to work from home or out and about. You could work from any office or from home given the right equipment and access to systems.</p> <p>Your contractual work base will remain as the Council offices. You will be required to attend the Council offices when asked to do so by your manager e.g. for meetings, specific tasks, supervision and appraisals.</p> <p>Your role is location independent. Your role may or may not support time independence.</p>
Mobile	<p>You have an office base or you can choose to work from home but spend more than half your time out on site either visiting customers, residents or businesses at various locations.</p> <p>Your role is location independent if you can also choose to work from home rather than the office. If not, your role is location dependent. Your role may or may not support time independence.</p>
Home	<p>Through mutual agreement, a homeworking agreement is in place that confirms your entitlement to work from home a 100% of the time.</p> <p>Your home is your work base. Your role may or may not support time independence.</p>

Community	<p>Your role has never required you to attend an office base or designated Council building. You leave home each day to work in the heart of community, for example visiting clients' homes for the purpose of providing care.</p> <p>Your role is location dependent as you provide a service to residents / clients in their homes or in the community.</p> <p>Your role could be time dependent or independent, depending on the service being provided.</p>
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5. Heads of Service will regularly review the ongoing relevance of the categorisations of 'Fixed'; 'Flexible'; 'Mobile'; 'Home' and 'Community' in their individual service areas linked to business needs. They will also ensure the relevant categorisation of any new post that they introduce to the service.
6. In the agile working arrangement, work becomes something that we do, not somewhere we go. Employees whose jobs are location independent will be trusted to work from any location. This could be from a Council building, from home, in the heart of the community or in line with individual preference, any combination of these.
7. Where job roles also support time independence, this can lead to Heads of Service entrusting staff to have more control over when they work.
8. We know that by introducing this new modern model of working wherever possible in the Council, we can amongst many other benefits, improve service delivery. We can also support inclusion and diversity, the better health and wellbeing of our employees, improve work life balance, employee engagement, and mitigate our carbon footprint with reduced travel.

## POLICY SCOPE

9. This Policy applies to employees whose posts in the Council are location independent and time independent in line with the post categorisation table shown on page 3. These are the posts that offer the employee choice over where and when to work.
10. This Policy also applies in part to employees in the Council whose posts are time independent but not location independent. These are the posts that offer some or significant flexibility over when to work but no choice over where to work.
11. This Policy does not apply to employees whose posts in the Council are location dependent and time dependent. For example, schools and customer facing front line service roles in care and waste collection. There are many roles in the Council that will require the employee to always attend a specified workplace at a specified time.
12. The Council's recognised trade unions have been consulted on the introduction of this policy.
13. The effective date of this policy is (*Insert Date*).

## **MAIN CONSIDERATIONS:**

14. Agile working can produce benefits and innovation through collaboration. With a particular focus on customer satisfaction, quality, teamwork and effective management, this modern way of working can provide mutual benefits for the Council and the employee.
15. The agile working arrangement supports flexibility and thus it is difficult to establish a rigid set of rules around it. Not all jobs or employee situations will be suitable for agile working. Some jobs are intrinsically not suitable, and some proposed arrangements may not be considered safe and secure in individual circumstances.
16. The principles of this Policy are based on equity and fairness, but it must be accepted that in the application of this Policy, there will be different outcomes for employees relating to the job that they do, relating to the service, its business needs, and its client base.
17. Heads of Service/Managers must ensure employees working in an agile way are clear of the expectations on them and that effective communication and an effective managerial relationship is maintained.
18. Employees must take responsibility for the security of Council equipment and for sensitive, confidential data. They must continue to comply with the Data Protection Act, reporting data breaches or loss or theft of such to the Council immediately. While working in an agile way, employees remain accountable to all the Council Policies that underpin their employment.
19. Employees are required to familiarise themselves with this Policy, and with the health and safety requirements relating to agile working. Employees must ensure that they protect their own health, safety and wellbeing when working in an agile way.
20. It is important that all employees limit their travel to achieve the environmental benefits of agile working. Teams conferencing is to be used wherever possible and appropriate to do so in place of travelling to meetings.
21. Working outside of the UK is not permitted. The agile worker must be available to attend the office base at any time.
22. We recognise that most of the jobs that do not suit agile working in terms of where to work and when to work will be in the lower quartiles of the Council's pay bandings. This policy is considerate of this in supporting equity and fairness when considering any personal expenses that underpin this policy.
23. If an employee is disabled and does not already have access to the beneficial aspects of this Policy and/or limited access to the benefits of this Policy, accessibility issues must be considered to enable them to take part.

## **OFFICE SPACE FOR THE AGILE WORKER**

24. All jobs that suit agile working will require attendance at an office base for the delivery of essential services and/or the undertaking of some essential tasks. For this purpose and for the purpose of claiming business mileage, every employee whose post has been designated 'fixed'; 'flexible', or 'mobile' will be allocated a designated office building, which could be in the form of a department/team zone and/or agile workspace.

25. The agile workspace will be modernised to deliver an inviting and aesthetically pleasing workspace. Our administrative buildings will be repurposed to provide an appropriate mix of fixed desks / hot desks, touch down points, quiet space, and meeting space to effect this.
26. In the repurposed workspace, there are limited storage facilities and all who work in that space will be expected to use the electronic storage on their laptop. A clear desk policy applies.
27. No limitation on employee attendance at the office is envisaged but this assumes that all who can work in an agile way will be taking advantage of the opportunity to do so.
28. Attendance at the office will be directed by the Head of Service in consultation with their teams to suit business needs and team development as appropriate. Any directed attendance at the office will be subject to regular review in line with business needs.
29. Heads of Service will advise and keep their teams informed of the agile working space that is available for use and they will outline any limitations that may accompany its use.

#### **WORKING TIME FOR THE AGILE WORKER**

30. The agile working arrangement must support the employee to meet their contractual working hours, but it may also offer them greater freedom over when they can work.
31. Heads of Service and their management teams will continue to plan and agree a work programme that ensures business continuity. This will include communicating the core operational hours of the service/team.
32. In supporting flexibility of working time, managers must be able to:
  - a. effectively organise work amongst team members aligned to the working hours of the client/customer base;
  - b. ensure that they know where the employee is and what they are doing;
  - c. set and monitor work performance and output expectations.
33. Employees must be able to:
  - a. commit to work rotas and/or work collaboratively with their colleagues to ensure work attendance around the core hours of the client/customer base,
  - b. ensure the delivery of essential services/the undertaking of essential tasks and,
  - c. meet work performance and output expectations.
34. In support of the agile working arrangement, managers will entrust employees to work effectively with team colleagues to ensure that the core hours of the business of the service are consistently covered.
35. In support of 'greater flexibility' around working time, a simplified time recording system has replaced the current time recording system. In the simplified system, there is no bandwidth that restricts working hours.
36. The simplified time recording system will enable employees to record all hours worked at any time of the day throughout Monday to Sunday. Employees must continue to clock in

and out and/or keep a transparent record of their working time in line with the agreed process of the service/team.

## **GREATER TIME FLEXIBILITY EXPLAINED**

37. Where the work of the service/team supports time 'flexibility', employees in collaboration with their colleagues and manager, may be entrusted to have greater control over their working hours. They could choose for example, with the permission of their manager, to manage their working time around their childcare, caring and/or work life balance preferences, providing that service needs can be met.
38. An employee could with the permission of their manager, work in 'bursts of time' throughout the day, stepping out of work for the school run/for caring responsibilities, or for a fitness class or to take the dog for a walk/take themselves for a walk, etc. providing that this is supported by service needs and does not negatively impact business delivery.
39. Having a greater expanse of days and hours to work over makes it easier for the employee to manage their working time and commit to their contractual working hours. An employee who works Monday to Friday may welcome the opportunity to catch up with some work in the early morning/late evening and/or on the weekend if it suits them to do so and if the post offers them this level of flexibility whilst supporting the needs of the service and business delivery.
40. Greater flexibility over 'when to work', does not mean that employees can fundamentally change their core working days which have to be aligned to business needs, without the prior agreement of their Manager/Head of Service. This means that employees who work Monday to Friday will still be expected to be in work predominantly on those days unless the needs of the service change.
41. Greater flexibility over 'when to work' also does not mean that the Council can fundamentally change the core working days/core working hours of the employee under this Policy. If the service is proposing employment contract changes, the service must fully consult with all affected employees and any relevant employee representatives.
42. Absence from work on any contracted day must be requested as usual in line with the Council's annual leave, flexi leave and leave of absence policies. Employees must work more than half of the hours of their contracted shift for this requirement not to apply. For example, an employee whose contractual working hours are 7 hours 24 minutes a day must work at least 4 hours.
43. The extent to which a job will offer time flexibility will depend on the business needs and the client base of the service. Heads of Service via their management teams will ensure that employees are aware of the level of flexibility the service can reasonably support.
44. There will always be jobs that support very little or no working time flexibility. Public facing front line roles that can operate remotely may fit this description. In some services, the need to commit to the office hours of 8:30am to 5:00pm or an alternative bandwidth of hours to meet customer expectations may remain necessary.

## **COMMUNICATION AND CONTACT**

45. In the agile working arrangement, openness, team communication and learning from each other remains as important as ever. Building in regular social and human connection

opportunities into the agile working arrangement can support employee engagement and assist team building.

46. Arrangements must be made for effective communication to be maintained between employees, line managers and colleagues. It is essential for regular team meetings and “My Time” meetings to be held.
47. Communication and support channels must also be made available.
48. Our digital journey supports the agile workforce to communicate and remain in contact using a modern desktop.
49. All employees are provided with laptops with an integrated phone system and video conferencing facilities. This ensures that employees when not in the office, are contactable as if they were.
50. Whether working at home, working in the community, or working in the office, the laptop supports the same level of contact. The device is mobile and will need to accompany the employee wherever they choose to work, including to the office, if the functionality of a laptop is needed for work that day. Laptops have predominantly replaced workplace PC's and workplace I-Gels.
51. Electronic diaries must be always used, and they must be open for colleagues to view. Employees must ensure that their contact details are up to date.
52. The [Digihub](#), which is presented and administered by the Council's Digital Services team, dedicates a whole section to remote working which is full of information and advice including good tips about maintaining security when using the Council's devices.
53. Any employee undertaking client visits or attending meetings must follow the same “lone working principles” of contact that they would if leaving from the office.

## **SUPPORTING SAFE AGILE WORKING PRACTICES**

### **Remote Working and Data Protection:**

54. In the agile working arrangement, the employee must take relevant action to safeguard themselves, service users and the Council.
55. On the matter of data protection, employees must:
  - a. be aware of the environment/surroundings when working, especially if working in public spaces;
  - b. keep work mobile devices safe and maintain information securely ensuring that family members, visitors and others are not able to view Council information, and/or overhear confidential conversations. This includes voice controlled electronic devices such as Alexa and Amazon Echo and public wi-fi;
  - c. ensure a secure place to store any information taken from the workplace when it is not in use;
  - d. never dispose of confidential information in household/public waste;
  - e. always use the Council's Virtual Private Network (VPN) to access information and if using their own device, always remember to connect using



Council-issued token/app so that the information being worked on remains within the Council's secure networks. Saving work to personal devices is not permitted.

- f. ensure compliance with the Council's IT Policies and report any matters of potential data breach in line with the Council's procedure. (Insert relevant link).

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY:**

56. The incorrect setup of workstations (including chairs, monitors, keyboards, mouse, and desk layout) is a common cause of discomfort in the back, arms, and hands of users of such equipment.
57. Employees working from home are required to have a suitable and compliant workspace. They will be required to complete a DSE Homeworking Self-Assessment Form and discuss any concerns with their Line Manager.
58. Employees that work in a CCBC office will be required to complete a DSE Workstation Risk Assessment Form. Employees that work at multiple locations will be required to implement the principles of safe DSE working at each workstation, for e.g. chair, screen and keyboard adjustments.
59. Employees who need to carry equipment and documents must ensure they use handling aids where required such as trolleys and carriers.
60. Resources including guidance and videos that set out responsibilities and advise on how to set up workstations correctly is available on the Council's Health & Safety Intranet Page (Insert relevant link).

## **PROPERTY AND INSURANCE**

61. Computers, laptops, phones, and other items of equipment provided by the Council are covered by the Council's insurance policy.
62. If working from home, employees should inform their household insurer of this fact. This should not result in any increase in personal cost.
63. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development suggest that employees should also inform their mortgage lender.
64. Employees working at home are covered by the Council's Employer's Liability Insurance and Public Liability Insurance in the same way as if they were working from an office, providing that employees adhere to this Agile Working Policy and associated guidelines.

## **PERSONAL EXPENSES**

### **Mileage claims:**

65. Every employee who can work agile (i.e. where posts are categorised as 'flexible' or 'mobile') will be able to access a designated office base and there is an expectation that these employees will be required to attend the office in accordance with service needs.

66. For employees whose posts are designated 'flexible' or 'mobile', mileage claims will be reimbursed under the same terms and conditions for claiming expenses that apply to all employees whose posts are designated 'fixed'. The employees whose roles are designated as 'fixed' are required to travel to work each day. The mileage scheme can be seen here (insert relevant hyperlink).
67. Travel time and mileage incurred between the designated office base for employees whose posts are designated 'fixed'; 'flexible'; or 'mobile' is not refundable. Refer to mileage scheme for further information.
68. If the employee chooses of their own volition to travel to an alternative workplace that is not their office base and incurs additional mileage because of this, they may do so but at their own expense.
69. For employees whose posts are designated 'home' or 'community', please refer to the mileage scheme for further detail.

**Working from home expenses:**

70. It is anticipated that, in the majority of cases, the costs of working from home will be offset by the savings in the cost and time of commuting to work, and the benefits of an improved work/life balance. Therefore, any additional costs incurred by working at home will not be met by the Council.
71. HMRC and Tax relief. In accordance with HMRC guidance, employees cannot claim tax relief if they choose to work from home. This includes if the employment contract lets them work from home some or all of the time or they work from home because of COVID-19 or the employer has an office that they cannot always go to because sometimes it is full.

**Other expenses:**

72. Employees should speak to their manager about any furniture and/or additional equipment they require to undertake their jobs remotely. These resources may be provided at the Council's expense wherever appropriate.

**INTERPRETATION OF THE POLICY**

73. In the event of a dispute relating to the interpretation of the policy, the Head of People Services or a HR Service Manager along with a Corporate Director in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services will make the final decision on interpretation.

**REVIEW OF THE AGILE WORKING ARRANGEMENT**

74. Not all agile working arrangements will be successful either from the service point of view or the individual's point of view, so they must be subject to regular review.
75. Managers will only stop agile working arrangements for sound business or performance reasons and after consulting fully with the employee.
76. An employee who disagrees with their manager's position on the agile working arrangement, may issue an appeal to their Head of Service.