HR Guide: Workstyles

Version: 1.2

Focus. Passion. Inspiration.

North Ayrshire Council
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Tuath

Contents

Related HR links

Workstyles, work life balance, and flexible working

Health and Safety guidance

Version Control

Version Number	Effective Date	Details of Last Revision
1.0	12/8/21	Creation of HR Guide incorporating HR Guide: Agile Working
1.1	1/2/22	Updated links to new Connects
1.2	12/7/22	Updated links

Equality Impact Assessment: 1/7/21

Prepared by: HR Team

1. Introduction

North Ayrshire Council recognises the need to create a modern and digital future for the workplace promoting remote working to support service delivery. To do this effectively with consideration to the changes in government guidance on how employee's work, employee's health and wellbeing will continue to be at the forefront of our working policies and practices.

North Ayrshire Council supports a flexible and skilled workforce by introducing more flexibility around how and where employees carry out their work, enabling them to maximise their productivity and performance, whilst embracing the changes that have evolved around the ways we are working

This guidance has been developed to provide a consistent framework to enable employees to work in different ways effectively and safely.

1.1 Aims and Scope

1.1.1   With advances in technology, there are numerous tools available to help employees work in new and different ways, to meet customer needs, reduce costs, increase productivity, and improve work life balance.

1.1.2   North Ayrshire Council believes that service provision can be enhanced by employees being able to work in a different way which could also assist in achieving a better balance of home and work life. Alternative working arrangements can also enhance the efficiency of service delivery.

1.1.3   It is anticipated that the application of Workstyles will:

- allow the Council to be more efficient through better use of employee resources.

- improve the recruitment and retention of skilled and experienced employees by offering a range of Workstyles to match individual work preferences.

- reduce unnecessary travel time, which increases productivity, allowing us to provide improved services to our customers.

- create an environment which allows employees to achieve an improved work-life balance, greater job satisfaction, motivation, morale and productivity.

- result in reduced costs through reduced travel and expense claims.

- lower our carbon footprint, through reduced emissions from reduced travel to support our Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy.

1.1.3 For employees, flexibility in ways of working can:

- Provide an opportunity to manage their working day more efficiently.

- Enable them to work more effectively on a particular piece of work, where concentration is important, by avoiding the interruptions that can be part of the office environment.

- Reduce the time spent travelling to a specific base in order to access administrative systems.

All posts within North Ayrshire Council will be designated a particular Workstyle.

2. Definitions

2.1 North Ayrshire Council has identified, through consultation, four different Workstyles. Each post in the council can be attributed to one of these styles:

In Building

More than 90% of time spent primarily at a single base or location.

Mobile

More than 90% of time spent primarily working on a mobile basis across multiple Council facilities and out in the community. There may be some limited opportunity to work from home.

Agile

100% of time spent working agile (flexibly) and interacting with others. Able to work at home, office or multiple locations.

Home

More than 90% of time working at home, with the requirement to attend Council locations as the role requires.

2.2 Should an employee wish to be considered for an alternative Workstyle from the one allocated to their post they should complete the Workstyle/Work Life Balance request form which can be found on Connects and submit to their line manager.

2.3 If an employee wishes to work at a set location/ or on a particular day/time each week they would need to apply via the Council's Work Life Balance Policy, as this would be considered a fundamental change to the contract of employment. For example, if an employee wanted to work from home every

Monday, this would need to be agreed through the Work Life Balance Policy. Employees should informally discuss the details of their request with their line manager to decide whether a formal Work Life Balance application is required.

3. Management and Supervision

3.1   Allocated Workstyles must not affect the provision of services and therefore managers must ensure that they have systems in place to maintain suitable office presence, if required.

3.2   Generally staff will be expected to manage their own diaries in line with service requirements, however there may be occasions where an employee's manager may request that they return to the office to work instead of working from another location. As noted above, if an employee wishes to work from an alternative location on a regular/set basis they would need to apply for this through the Work Life Balance Policy.

3.3   It is important that employees and managers agree a process for keeping each other up to date with work location and work undertaken out with the employee's normal workplace.

3.4   Employees may be required to attend council buildings as requested by their manager for team meetings, training and development or other such event as instructed.

3.5   Some Workstyles will result in little or no direct supervision of work, and it is important that employees are aware of their managers expectations and feel supported. Our Visible Leadership Guide, found on the Leadership Academy Sharepoint, provides useful information on managing various Workstyles. This is contingent on a high level of trust and confidence between the line manager and the employee. This can be achieved by keeping lines of communication open, checking in with staff regularly and remaining accessible.

3.6   Local arrangements must be put in place to monitor work output and performance including effective workplace communication and support. If there are concerns about an individual's work performance, then this may lead to a review of that individual's Workstyle.

3.7   Both parties must recognise that the success of any arrangement will depend on this collaborative constructive relationship being in place and requires a different approach to managing the team.

3.8   The line manager must establish clear arrangements for managing their teams including:

A. Setting clear objectives and targets in relation to the work complete but trust your teams to manage their workloads and diaries.

B. Use Microsoft Teams to work effectively together and to remain visible and available and to encourage your teams to communicate with each other.

C. Schedule in time to check in with your team and prioritise this time so that they feel supported and engaged.

3.9   All employees are responsible for and required to record hours worked via timesheets, electronic diaries and other formal means as instructed by their line manager.

4. Working from home

4.1   Most Workstyles (with the exception of In-Building and some Mobile posts) will afford the opportunity for the employee to work from home at some point.

4.2   If an employee wishes to work from home, either on a regular or ad-hoc basis, then they must take responsibility for their own health, safety and wellbeing and an appropriate home office set up which allows them to work comfortably must be in place. Full guidance can be found on the Health and Safety guidance page on Connects.

4.3   There is significant guidance to provide support for homeworking including the Working from Home Guidelines document HR Guide: Working from Home.

5. Working from Council Premises

5.1   There is a master list of available locations available on Connects.

5.2   Employees should ensure that they respect any premises where they are a visitor and are considerate of other users.

5.3   Employees with Council laptops or tablets can use allocated free desk space to work from buildings with Wi-Fi. A list of available wireless access is available on Connects.

5.4   Some Workstyles may incorporate the concept of desk sharing. There will also be employees who do not have their own desk who always desk share. However, they may have a dedicated zone of desks for their use. If you do share a desk, or use another desk which is not your own, it is important that clear desk principles are followed.

5.5   Adopting clear desk principles will ensure that employees feel more comfortable working from a desk that has not been personalised. There is a clear expectation therefore, that when an employee vacates a desk to enable usage by another member of staff, it will be left clear, with no materials left other that the standard desk equipment provided by the Council and that they have cleaned the desk to ensure it is hygienically safe to use.

6. Health and Safety Implications

6.1   Employees have a responsibility on a day-to-day basis for their own and others health and safety while they are carrying out work activities regardless

of the work location. Any work should always be in accordance with the Council's Health & Safety Policy.

6.2 Most employees at Council locations and the home environment will generally be considered to be low-risk office type work but employees should make sure they abide by our Home Working Health and Safety Focus Points. Where employees use other Council locations to work, they should familiarise themselves with the local arrangements for managing health and safety and ensure that they exercise reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others at all times.

6.3 Employees should also ensure that they are aware of the fire safety arrangements to ensure that 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 that where there may be local arrangements for signing- in/ out that they adhere to these arrangements.

6.4 The main risks to health and safety will be related to computer use and where this exceeds 1 hour per day at home or at an alternative Council work location, then employees will require to complete the 'Display Screen Equipment' training module available via the iLearn Portal to ensure they are aware of the risks to health from computer work and that they have the necessary training to reduce those risks. In addition, staff will also be required to complete a display screen equipment risk assessment for their home/ other Council location workstation.

6.5 The completed Display Screen Risk Assessment must be passed to the relevant line manager and any issues identified should, in the first instance, be actioned by the line manager.

6.6 Where a Workstyle involves the use of Council or privately owned motor vehicles used on official Council business, then the Council's Driving at Work guidance should be consulted by the line manager and the general risk assessment must reflect any use of vehicles for work. Similarly, any instances of lone working must also be reflected in the general risk assessment. For further information and guidance on lone working refer to the Council's Lone Working Guidance.

6.7 In the event of any work- related incidents of an injury, illness or near miss, then Council employees have a duty to report these in accordance with the Council's Health and Safety Policy using the Incident Report Form. Employees who have any concerns relating to any health and safety aspect of their work they must raise this without delay with their line manager.

7. IT and Equipment

7.1   The manager, in consultation with the employee and based on the work activity, will be responsible for determining the equipment requirements for the designated Workstyle. Any additional IT equipment required should be purchased via IT and paid for by the employing service.

7.2   If there is an issue with hardware or connectivity, employees are expected to ensure that the matter is escalated to IT via the portal in the first instance to resolve the matter and keep their line manager advised. Where the issue is ongoing the line manager should give consideration to the employee attending the workplace.

7.3   Employees who access their email while at home should note that they are only obliged to respond to work emails within their normal working hours and should not feel pressured to respond out with these times.

8. Data Security

8.1   All of the Council's policies and procedures relating to Data Protection, Security and Confidentiality apply when employees are working from any location.

8.2   North Ayrshire Council provides employees with access to the personal and confidential information they need to do their job. This information must not be disclosed to others who are not authorised to see it.

8.3   In general, employees must ensure that; North Ayrshire Council advocates a paperless environment wherever possible, when this cannot be avoided:

- Printouts or documents containing personal or other confidential data are not displayed where they can be seen by unauthorised persons.

- Confidential documents which are no longer required MUST be returned to the main office for appropriate confidential disposal.

- When not in use any print outs or documents are locked away in a secure container.

- If data is stored on a memory stick this must be encrypted.

- If employee is using a council laptop for this must also be encrypted.

- No work-related emails or sensitive data is sent to their home email addresses.

- No information is stored on their personal computer.

- Any loss of equipment or information is reported immediately to the employee's line manager.

8.4   When transporting equipment or files these should not be left unattended in any location out with secure Council offices, and never left in plain sight in unsecured office areas, cars, a, public areas, public transport, or hotels. Where available, employees should use a locked box/case for transporting information.

8.5   Where an employee is working from home, they should use the same principles which would apply in a public area when viewing and storing documents. Any confidential information should not be visible to other people who may live in the home.

8.6   All of the relevant ICT policies are available on Connects, e.g. Acceptable Computer Use Policy, Information Classification Guidance, and Information Security Management Policy.

8.7   Should an employee be required to report a security breach they should inform their line manager in the first instance and then contact the Council's ICT Cyber Security Officer.

9.   Review of Workstyles

9.1   The Council will keep all Workstyle arrangements under review and, with the exception of any trial period, will reserve the right to end the arrangement with reasonable notice and following consultation with the postholder.

9.2   Where there is a change in the employee's personal circumstances in respect of their Workstyle arrangement, then in the first instance the employee should discuss this with their line manager. If the employee wishes to be considered for an alternative Workstyle this should be requested through the process outlined in the Work Life Balance Policy and Procedure.

Appendix 1

North Ayrshire Council has identified, through consultation, four different Workstyles. Each post in the council can be attributed to one of these styles:

- **In Building** – More than 90% of time spent primarily at a single base or location.

- **Mobile** – More than 90% of time spent primarily working on a mobile basis across multiple Council facilities and/or home.

- **Agile** – 100% of time spent working agile (flexibly) and interacting with others. Able to work at home, office or multiple locations. Information on managing an Agile team is contained within the Managers Guide to Agile Working.

- **Home** – More than 90% of time working at home, with the requirement to attend Council locations as the role requires.