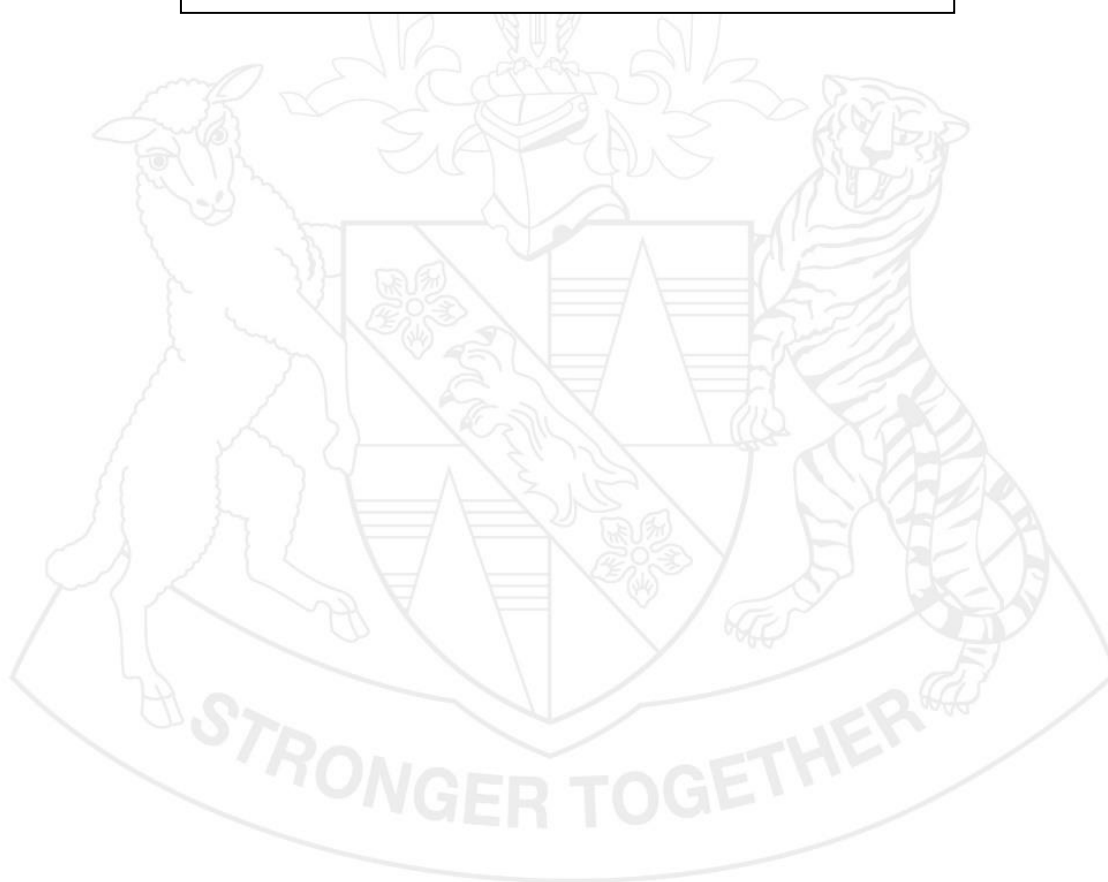


OADBY & WIGSTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

AGILE WORKING POLICY

2021



Policy Version Number: x
Committee Approval:
GMB: xxxxx
EIA: xxxxx

Policy Author: xxxxx
TU Approval: xxxxx
Unison: xxxxx
Date of Policy Review: xxxxx



Oadby & Wigston
BOROUGH COUNCIL

PART 1
PART 2
PART 3
PART 4
PART 5

PART 6
PART 7
PART 8

PART 9:
PART 10:
PART 11:

Appendices

Appendix 1:
Appendix 2:
Appendix 3:
Appendix 4:
Appendix 5:

Please refer to the FAQs for further guidance

1. Introduction

The recent Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in staff having to very quickly adapt to new ways of working. This rapid change in a short space of time provided us with the opportunity to reflect on how and where we work and to evaluate our overall approach to agile working and what this means for our people, the tools required to enable agile working and the impact of this on our future accommodation requirements.

We expect to see a home-working setting as the default workspace for many of our staff, only coming into offices where collaboration with others face-to-face for example, is a preference in order to deliver a better outcome.

This document covers how our employees can carry out their role in a agile way, balancing the needs of our customers, colleagues and team. The principles and guidelines captured here are the basic requirement for all staff. There may be further specific requirements agreed locally for some teams and for some staff the nature of their role means they are required to deliver a service from a specific location or at a specific time. The option for working flexibly is greatly reduced for these members of staff, however we will agree locally options to allow as much flexibility as possible for all staff.

The focus for working flexibly is work being something you do and not somewhere you go. It is about delivering agreed outcomes, as opposed to the number of hours worked. However, staff still have a total contracted number of hours and how these are worked will vary from person to person. The hours may differ from core business hours, be completed remotely or working in one of the Council or partner's buildings or vehicles and will require the use of both virtual and digital working.

Flexibility in working means there will not be a requirement for a formal flexi time scheme, however we understand for many staff this scheme is a helpful way to record and manage their hours. All our staff where their role allows are empowered to manage their hours of work to ensure customer needs and partner requirements are met and our agreed outcomes delivered.

Health and Wellbeing of all staff remains very important to us and any concerns or challenges, because of working more flexibly should be raised directly with your manager, and we do understand for some working from home is not feasible.

We are committed to providing the right tools wherever you may be working and have therefore agreed a set of worker profiles, which ensures we are able to have a set of standardised equipment for each profile.

Managers will agree with team members the best way to build and maintain a high performing team and all team members are expected to support and participate in any agreed activity or request related to this.

2. Agile Agile Working Principles

At Oadby and Wigston Agile Agile Working is:

- Centred around our customer, balancing the needs of the customer, organisation, teams, and ourselves, to support the delivery of our agreed outcomes,
- Where work takes place at the most effective location and time, relevant to the outcome, and enables the need for collaboration and connectivity to be fulfilled,
- Respects and supports individual circumstances, concerns, and the changing needs of our staff, providing wellbeing support and development as required,
- Ensures consistency of approach in how we manage agile working, using pragmatism to accept that specifics may differ for each team, role, and person,
- Provides fit for purpose digital and virtual tools to enable the best delivery of services and interactions, automating processes and eliminating need for paper,
- Enables reduced carbon emissions and accommodation costs.

As an Organisation We Will...

- Provide training, equipment, and the tools required to fulfil your role effectively and efficiently,
- Support our managers to:
 - ensure safe and effective working practices can be easily understood and adhered to by you,
 - take accountability for team's progress and commitment to workplace culture,
 - manage individual requirements, including specifics such as reasonable adjustments and the needs of newly appointed staff,
 - undertake regular performance development conversations and be both intuitive and available to provide necessary support,
- Ensure information about the Council, your employment and specifics related to your role are kept up to date and easily accessible via a staff intranet,
- Provide as much notice and detail as possible about activities and duties which need to be completed at a specific location and time,
- Enable face to face collaboration to be completed in any suitable space appropriate to the confidentiality of the discussion,

As Staff We Will...

- Maintain positive communication and engagement within and across teams, including delivering virtual meetings and interactions in an appropriate manner,
- Ensure a working environment which is conducive to delivering our very best, meeting health & safety and working time directive requirements,
- Respect and support individual circumstances, participating in team activities, sharing learnings and best practice with colleagues,
- Manage our time to ensure delivery of agreed outcomes, sharing any challenges or concerns so a solution can be found,
- Work with our teams to ensure cover for our customers and colleagues, ensuring calendars and communication tools are effectively used,
- Agree as a team when we will have collaborative time and actively participate in this,
- Comply with ICT security and data protection requirements, taking care of all equipment provided,

3. Our approach to Agile Working

Work styles and agile working practices

In many cases, staff will blend different agile working options, according to the need of the tasks in hand. This involves a substantial move away from the idea that an individual applies for and is granted a single work pattern that is set in stone. It is important to take a team approach so that agile working arrangements can be planned to cover the service needs as well as promote more agile working arrangements for employees.

To consider the agile working arrangements which would be suitable for a specific role or team we will first analyse the tasks involved in the job role, in terms of how effectively they can be done at different times and in different locations. We will then consider the impact on teamwork and/ or customer service to agree the worker profile for each role.

The worker profile will be the same for every role in a team and enables the member of staff and their manager to be clear about how much flexibility there is to deliver a role. This is then overlaid with the individual personal preference as captured in the table below.

Worker profiles

Role type	Personal preference within role type	Detail
Hybrid role – a role which in the main can be completed in a flexible way – both in terms of location or hours	Hybrid and prefers to work in a fixed office location.	A person whose role can be conducted from various locations and although they may have some pre-determined hours/location requirements, the majority of their work can be completed in an agile way. However, they prefer to work from an office location.
	Hybrid and prefers to work from remote location.	A person whose role can be conducted from various locations and although they may have some pre-determined hours/location requirements, the majority of their work can be completed in an agile way. However, they prefer to work from a remote location.
Fixed job/role – a job that has to be completed during set hours and/or location	Fixed with pre-determined hours and/or work location.	A person whose role requires them to work pre-determined hours in a fixed place of work e.g. Cemetery team.
	Fixed with pre-determined hours and/or field-based locations.	A person whose role requires them to work pre-determined hours and can be asked to complete their work all over the Borough e.g. Waste, Repairs, Parks team

4. Agile Workspace

Working from a Oadby and Wigston building

Our new office accommodation will be set up with:

- Spaces for collaboration equipped with appropriate technology to connect virtually with remote colleagues/ customers and partners,
- Touch-down spaces for people working on the move,
- Special project areas,

A key constraint on the introduction of agile working is a perceived dependency on paper documents, storage, and other physical resources. While there are some statutory obligations to retain paper documents, the reasons for using and generating paper are becoming less and less compelling in an age of electronic based working. The use of electronic processes and appropriate on-line storage and filing is essential to agile working, enabling more effective working from any location. Managers and staff should feel empowered to continuously challenge traditional and new approaches to work, making sure they are fit for purpose but do not suppress agile working practices.

Working agilely

We have three different forms of agile working available to our staff, the key ones are captured below:

Home - When employees are working from home, it is important that the home working environment is set up properly, your home must:

- provide you with a space which is free from interruptions and distractions,
- comply with the needs of the home workplace assessment,
- not be used as a work location for face to face (in person) meetings with members of the public,
- enable you to always keep all documents and information associated with council's business secure,
- have adequate insurance cover to enable you to work from home, the Council will not fund any additional premiums. (*refer FAQs for more information on this*)
- have no restrictions which would stop you working from home e.g., specific clauses in a mortgage or rental agreement,

Hub - work may be able to be carried out in 'third places', for example: client offices, organisational partners, shared offices, cafés, hotel lobbies, libraries and on public transport. Staff accessing the network via such external WiFi hotspots signals should always use the correct security procedures and be mindful of information security and confidentiality when working from alternative locations.

Roam - For some of our staff work is completed either on the move or from various sites. The main issues with working on the move relate to confidentiality, security, safety and health. Safety concerns relate both to personal security.

All staff should follow the lone worker policy (refer xxx) and whatever your work style, you should never give out your home address or personal phone number.

5. Agile Teams

When working in different locations and at different times, social relationships need to be maintained and appropriate online and offline mechanisms need to be developed, such as buddy schemes for new recruits, regular team meetings, staff briefings etc.

It is the responsibility of teams to look out for each other, and for managers of dispersed teams to spot problems and resolve them before they become major issues. These may be teased out through regular conversations, or clues may be spotted in terms of performance. If necessary, the manager and team member can agree an alternative work style. It is about finding the right work style for the individual, and about providing the appropriate support to overcome the problem.

The aim in moving to agile working is to create the context in which teams can operate more dynamically and have better physical and online spaces in which to interact. Though they may no longer sit next to one another, the new technologies should allow much more effective sharing of work and enable team members to communicate more effectively than before. Agile working will also support more effective cross-team working amongst services.

It is important to have clear expectations about what is to be done and about communications within the team. A team should ensure should there is:

- clear reporting structures,
- sharing of calendars and schedules,
- rigorous use of electronic document management systems, to ensure work is easily accessible,
- no member of the team disadvantaged by the choices of others, e.g., in providing office cover or attending meetings,
- useful online communications, and etiquette in virtual meetings is followed,
- signposting and availability for phone contact or online discussion,
- fairness in use of space when in the office.

6. Managing Agile Teams

Managing a agile workforce involves a new kind of dialogue with staff, based on clarity of expectations and good communications and much more trust.

Managing outputs/outcomes

Managers should obtain regular progress updates so they can monitor service delivery and performance as well as checking in on their team members. The frequency and method of these updates will depend on the type of work being carried out, but could include a mixture of:

- Review meetings/team meetings,
- Daily/weekly email updates,
- Video meetings,
- Scheduled catch ups.
- Regular 1:1 and regular review of objectives, behaviours and deadlines through performance conversations

Managing outputs and outcomes may be a different management style to what colleagues are used to. It is important that managers explore the different options above with their teams and develop solutions together which work best for the team, management and service users. This process should enable managers to gain employee support and commitment.

One of the major concerns that people have about agile working is about maintaining the integrity of teams and preventing isolation. Good communication planning can help overcome this as well as effective use of technologies for remote meetings using phone and video conferencing. Managers and staff should agree on the level of contact and how and when this contact will be made.

Further resources are available at xxx (would suggest link to your e-learning tool and intranet – where tools can be accessed e.g. virtual meeting etiquette etc)

7. Agile Tools

Data security & Information Management (include if not covered in IT, security or data policy – if covered in other places, need to reference)

Maintaining the security of the information we work with is vital and those working remotely are responsible for the security of the data they keep and should comply with all relevant legislation, just as if they were working in a fixed council office.

Specifically:

- Confidential or sensitive conversations/work should not be carried out whilst in any public areas,
- Other individuals (including family members) should not have any access to personal data either on paper or as electronic records,
- All printed or other paper records must be safely locked away when not in use,
- Confidential waste should be disposed of in the normal way,
- All council data stored outside of the councils network, must only be stored on council systems and/or encrypted council owned devices. Council data must not be stored on any personal devices and/or staff should not send work related emails to their personal email address,
- If staff are using a Laptop or other portable device, they must be aware of the additional security risks if leaving this device unattended,
- If staff become aware of any loss of council data they must contact the **xxxxxx**

It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure that information is handled correctly and not used for personal benefit or gain.

Personal usage of equipment and technology

Please refer to our IT policy xxx

8. Agile Wellbeing

Health & Safety

The employer's duty of care is the same wherever employees are working, whether in the employer's workplace, at home, on the move or in some other working environment. In general, when it comes to health and safety, the aim has to be to enable rather than prohibit – that is to enable staff to work safely wherever is the most effective and efficient location to get the work done.

Employees also need to be responsible for ensuring their workstation is fit for purpose and that they follow the health & safety tips and guidelines provided. Further information can be found on the health and safety pages on the intranet: [xxxx](#)

It is a requirement that you complete the Workplace DSE workstation assessment form which should be returned to your line manager. To download the DSE assessment form for working at home, go to the Intranet and [xxx](#)

If you are working remotely then your comfort and safety is just as important as it is when working in an office. Using laptops for prolonged periods in an office or home office environment may require the use of a laptop stand and/or additional properly positioned screen, with a separate keyboard and mouse.

There are also some simple steps you can take to increase your physical wellbeing whilst working from home or remotely:

- breaking up long spells of DSE work with rest breaks (at least 5 minutes every hour) or changes in activity,
- avoiding awkward, static postures by regularly changing position,
- getting up and moving or doing stretching exercises,
- avoiding eye fatigue by for example changing focus,
- wiping down hard surfaces at the end and start of every working day.

Working hours

One of the benefits of agile working is that it can help create a positive work-life balance. For example, it can ease the daily commute and/or help employees manage family, caring or domestic responsibilities during lunch breaks or directly before and after they work. Staff should ensure that whilst working from home they do not work excessively long or low hours on a regular basis and should only work their contracted hours. More information can be found on the gov.uk website:

<https://www.gov.uk/maximum-weekly-working-hours>.

Please also refer to the FAQ about working extra hours

Alongside other initiatives to promote a healthy workplace, agile working practices can reduce absence and in particular reduce stress. A significant proportion of absence from work is due to minor ailments that make the thought of commuting and sitting in an office with colleagues not feasible but manageable if working from home – being able to work from home on these occasions can have a significant impact on 'sick leave'. In these instances, employees should speak with their line manager to agree if working from home is a viable option; staff should not feel obliged to work from home if they are sick - if the staff member is not well enough to work from home, then the normal sickness absence procedure will apply. Staff should also ensure that annual leave is taken on a regular basis for their wellbeing and to ensure adequate rest.

Environmental sustainability

One of the primary components of the carbon footprint of work relates to travel. Travelling thousands of miles each year for work/ meetings that can be carried out using video or telephone conferencing is an unsustainable and unproductive thing to do. Decisions about where we work, where we expect our colleagues to work, and the ways in which we communicate can increase or reduce our need for travel, our energy consumption and consumption of physical resources.