FLINTSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL

(Excluding staff employed by School Governing Bodies)

Agile Working Policy

Policy owner for review	Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development
Date implemented	
Date last reviewed	
Date of last amendment	October 2013
Date of next review	October 2014

Sir y Fflint
Flintshire
CYNGOR
COUNTY COUNCIL

Contents

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
AGILE WORKING POLICY

1. Introduction

Flintshire County Council recognises that developing flexible and modern working practices which enable employees to maximise their performance whilst maintaining a work life balance is key to improve service delivery.

2. Aim

The principle drivers for Agile working arrangements are to deliver Council Services in the most effective way and provide a better work life balance for employees. The development of agile working is part of our continuous change management process which supports the modernisation of our working practices and adapts the way we use our workspace and technology.

This policy aims to ensure that agile working at Flintshire County Council doesn't compromise service delivery in any way. The introduction of agile working practices aims to improve service delivery, increase employee engagement, and optimise the use of work space whilst improving the work life balance for employees.

This policy will provide a framework for consistent and fair practice on the issues to be taken into account when considering and implementing agile working arrangements. Employees should know what is expected of them when working in this way, to ensure that there is fairness, equality and that working arrangements are safe.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all employees at any level within the organisation. The nature and extent of agile working will depend upon the job undertaken and considerations will include the impact on access to services by customers and employee welfare.

This policy covers all agile working arrangements, and there is an expectation that sharing of workstations (known as "hot-desking") will apply. However, it must be made clear that any form of working from home will be with the consent of the employee and with management agreement. Working from home will not be imposed upon employees.

4. Agile Working Definition

Agile Working replaces the traditional working practices of employees at a fixed desk in one location with a more flexible, responsive and customer focussed approach. Employees will share work space and desks, work from various locations enabled by appropriate technology and more flexible working time arrangements.

Agile working is a term used to describe:

- **W**here employees can work; whether it is from a Council building, in the community, from home or any combination of these
- **H**ow employees can work: with appropriate technology
- **W**hen employees can work: with appropriate working time arrangements

The nature of most of the Council's services place certain requirements that will shape the extent of flexibility and agile working. The different ways in which agile working can be undertaken is dependent on the demands and needs of the Council, but can include; a mutually agreed change to contractual hours e.g. compressed hours or the use of other policies and agreements. Appendix 1 provides more detailed considerations for:

- What Agile working means at Flintshire County Council
- Guidelines for changing hours
- Other relevant policies / procedures

5. Policy Details

Each post will be considered separately according to the potential impact of using agile working practices on the service area, including consideration of customer needs and the effect on work colleagues.

The manager and employee will determine and agree the extent of agile working that is appropriate to the role.

This policy needs to be read in conjunction with the Flexible Working Hours Scheme.

Regardless of where an employee is working, the Council must comply with applicable legislation including Health and Safety, Working Time Regulations and Information Security.

Regardless of where and when work is carried out, all of the Council's terms and conditions of service are unchanged and will still apply to employees who undertake agile working, including: sickness reporting, booking leave, training, lone working etc.

A commitment from all parties must be obtained for effective communication to be maintained. A Team Agreement template is available (Appendix 1)

An Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken where necessary; Equalities screening forms are available on the infonet.

An employee's designated base must be agreed with the line manager and used in relation to mileage claims. The work base is an important distinction for travel expense purposes.

The designated base must be a Council office (usually the office / locality where the team's shared work space is located.)

Travel time must be managed in order to limit travel and achieve the environmental benefits of agile working.

Mileage claims will be reimbursed under the usual terms and conditions of claiming expenses and subsistence allowance.

Travel time between the designated office base and home is not reimbursable.

Working from Home is a voluntary decision and will not be imposed upon employees.

When working from home, even on an ad-hoc basis, The Home working Corporate Standard incorporating the Agile Working Corporate Standard Checklist and DSE assessment must be completed and reviewed before commencing working from home; these can be obtained from the Health and Safety Management System on the Infonet.

Employees who want to access the workplace electronically from home will do so at their own expense. In the same way they are responsible for getting to an office at their own expense.

When working from home employees are responsible for:

- Any energy or heating costs
- Providing their own broadband and PC ("dial up" is not an option for anyone wishing to access the Council's systems from home)
- Completing the PC technical requirements checklist and reviewing this with their manager
- Consulting anyone with an interest in their property such as mortgage lenders, landlords, leaseholders etc of the agile working arrangement (a standard statement is attached)
- Consulting their Building and Contents insurer of their working from home arrangement (a standard statement is attached)

It is expected that employees will utilise council facilities wherever possible in order to minimise personal costs i.e. photocopying, postal services.

Employees are not expected to hold meetings at their home, there are suitable and adequate meeting facilities at Council premises for undertaking meetings.

Computers and other items of equipment provided by the Council as part of the agile working arrangement will be covered by the Council's insurance policy. If health and safety risk assessments are completed satisfactorily, the liability insurance arranged by the Council will operate. If, as a result of the risk assessment, risk control measures are identified, then these must be addressed prior to the arrangement commencing.

Agile working is part of the continuous change management process, requiring the organisation to adapt the way it uses its current workspace and equipment. To support this change managers and employees must work to the following principles:

- Office redesigns must result in a reduction in space and desks, with a re-design start point of 2 people to 1 workstation
- Future workspace will be "open plan" and single offices will remain only where it is impracticable to remove or transfer use
- Employees have an allocated office /team zone where they will have access to desk space and normal office facilities
- All employees will adhere to a clear desk policy as they can expect to share desks with other employees

Appropriate facilities will be provided to secure personal effects e.g. lockable pedestals /cabinets

Fixed desk PCs will be gradually replaced by the provision of a suitable device that supports agile working. The Council will provide employees with suitable equipment that will enable them to perform their role. The particular device provided will be dependant on the degree of mobility and what access to systems and information is required for the role. All equipment can be shared and no employee will have a workstation which is for their exclusive use only.

Where employees do not have portable devices e.g. laptops or /and they wish to use their own personal PC equipment outside of FCC offices they will be provided with an RSA key fob to ensure data security or other relevant access devise. (GCSX users will require a Council issued devise).

Mobile phones or blackberries will only be issued where the job role demands it, in accordance with the Council's Mobile Phone Policy.

Employees will be able to use FCC laptops or similar portable devices in an FCC office or any other remote location where public access WiFi connectivity is available.

6. Procedure

Managers and Employees will come to an agreement about the application of agile working practices including the degree of flexibility to suit the service and the extent to which practices are used. A team approach and flexibility will be required to reach a decision, and discussions are expected to be conducted in an open and constructive manner, in order to reach agreement.

It must be remembered that the final decision about the nature and extent of agile working will be based on the impact it has on the Service, so although all employees have access to agile working in principle, it may not translate into the same outcome for all teams and all employees. A variety of factors need to be taken into consideration, and their impact on different Services may not be the same.

7. Responsibilities of Managers

Managers must come to an agreement with employees about the application of suitable agile working practices

The following will be taken into account:
- The effect on the ability to meet customer demand
- The ability to organise work among team members and teams
- The impact on work quality or performance (SMART objectives will be set during the Appraisal and reviewed at each one-to-one meeting)
- Planned structural changes to the team or service
- Team or individual departmental rotas
- Whether the job can only be carried out in an office environment (but shared working space will always apply)
- Performance related issues (as already discussed between the manager and employee)
- Work life balance requirements for individuals

In the exceptional circumstance where agile working practices cannot be applied, due to the nature of the role, managers should aim to gain a shared understanding about the rationale for their decision.

Regardless of the type of agile arrangements in place, the manager should always:-
- Make arrangements for both regular individual and team meetings, ensuring communication is maintained between themselves and team members, providing support for employees and implementing ways of measuring work output
- Agree working hours in advance, facilitated by the Council's Flexible Working Hours Scheme
- Allow 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.

- Identify any additional training needs as a result of agile working, at Performance Appraisals.
- Consider "Reasonable Adjustments" that are relevant under the Equality Act 2010.

A Team Agreement Template is available to support this process in Appendix 1.

The manager must ensure compliance with Health and Safety policies available on the infonet. The Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) requires that appropriate risk assessments must be carried out on the work activities of agile workers in order to comply with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. The Agile Working Corporate Standard Checklist and Checklist must be completed. <u>Display Screen Equipment (DSE) must also be completed</u> for (i) at the Councils premises (ii) at Home and (iii) whilst in the community

Managers must ensure the Council's Remote Access Policy is adhered to.

If employees do not have access to the infonet the Manager should provide the information in an appropriate format.

Managers are responsible for monitoring employees compliance to the Working Time Regulations.

Managers must carry out Appraisals annually, with regular reviews in order to monitor performance of each employee and assess any concerns.

Managers must ensure the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 are complied with in relation to the security of information; this includes information held in electronic and physical formats. Where there is a need to remove personal information held in physical format a risk assessment must be completed (http://infonet.flintshire.gov.uk/servlet/intranet/Data-Protection/Data-Protection--Policy-on-Security-of-Documents-Containing-Personal-Information).

Where personal information is being accessed electronically the following must be adhered to:

- Personal data must only be stored on Council owned devices
- Under no circumstances is personal data be saved to unencrypted laptops, tablets or USB sticks
- Under no circumstances is personal data permitted to be emailed to personal/private email accounts. The only approved email system is that provided by the IT department
- Personal data displayed on screens must not be viewed by unauthorised persons i.e. customers, members of the public, friends or family
- Passwords must not be shared or written down
- Any loss or theft of personal data or IT equipment storing personal data must be reported to the Information Governance Manager immediately

Further details can be accessed via the Infonet.

Managers should screen any changes using the Equalities Impact Assessment tool on the infonet and then where necessary undertake an Equalities Impact Assessment,

Managers will provide appropriate employees with an RSA key fob.

8. Responsibilities of Employees

When working from home, even on an ad-hoc basis, employees must 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. The Agile Working Corporate Standard Checklist Checklist and Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Risk Assessment must be completed.

The Council's Remote Access Policy must be adhered to.

Employees who work in an agile way have the same responsibilities as all employees under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and must take reasonable care of their own safety and maintain a safe working environment

Employees must complete the Council's Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Risk Assessment Checklist (i) at the Councils premises (ii) at home (iii) whilst in the community and review this with their manager.

Agile working will be supported by various Flexible Working hours. Employees should not exceed an average of 48-hours working time over each period of 7 days. (This is averaged over the previous 17 weeks). Overtime and second jobs count toward this.

Employees should ensure they take breaks in accordance with the Working Time Regulations. Any employee who works more than 6 hours in a day must have a 20 minute break. A break is defined as an uninterrupted period where an employee may freely dispose of their time. This break must be taken during the working day - not at the end or beginning of a shift.

Employees must take a weekly and daily rest periods. The rest period must be not less than 11 consecutive hours in every 24 hours. (This does not have to be on the same day). In addition employees should have an uninterrupted rest period of not less than 24 hours in each seven day period. This is in addition to the daily rest period, but the two can overlap.

Employees who are night workers should not work more than an average of 8 hours in every 24-hour period. The 48-hour a week rule also applies to Night workers. (Night time is defined by the Regulations as between 11pm and 6am.) To be classed as a night worker the employee must work a minimum of three hours within that period, as a matter of course.

Drivers are also subject to rules for European and UK Drivers hours. Specific advice from HR should be sought.

When working in an agile manner, the employee is responsible for the security of equipment, software, files and any other information in their possession. It is particularly important to ensure that non-authorised personnel (in the home environment or whilst working off site) cannot gain access to confidential or personal information as defined by the Data Protection Act 1998.

- All Council paperwork should be securely locked away and only be accessible to the employee.

- Information on IT equipment should be safe and precautions taken to ensure that the screen cannot be overseen by others

Employees must attend team meetings and maintain communication between themselves and other team members / colleagues.

Employees must ensure that they transfer their own telephone extension number to each place of work

Employees must not give out personal telephone numbers for work purposes.

It is important that all employees manage their travel and limit it in order to achieve the environmental benefits of agile working.

Where an employee cannot connect to the central Citrix facilities it is their responsibility to travel to their designated office or contact their manager to be delegated work which they can continue to do effectively away from the office/ base.

Where employees have their own personally adapted equipment (e.g. left hand orientation) they will be able to keep this for personal use and move it with them when working at other locations. For Health and Safety reasons if employees can't work safely from remote locations without their specially adapted equipment they won't be able to do so.

9. Monitoring

Agile working arrangements will be open to review at any point because of the need for continuous improvement and acknowledging that not all agile working arrangements will always be successful, either from the service or the individual's point of view.

If problems arise, every effort will be made to resolve these however; in some cases it may be necessary to end the arrangement. If that is necessary, the employee will revert to the previous working arrangements.

Managers will only end agile working arrangements for sound business or performance reasons and after consulting fully with the employee.

10. Training and Development

An Agile working "Toolkit" is available on the Council's infonet to provide Agile working support.

Training and Development will be available for managers and employees. Individuals should contact a member of the Learning and Development team for specific advice.

11. Appendix 1

Agile Working Team Agreement Template

Directorate/ Service		
Team(s)		
Manager(s)		
Team Members (list names party to this agreement)		
Date Agreement Finalised		
Date Reviewed		

This table is designed to support teams in reviewing and reaching Agreement to support Agile Working in practice. The headings and questions are not exhaustive and should be added to and adapted as appropriate.

Once Agreement is reached, each team member should be given a copy of the Team Agreement by the Manager. It should be regularly reviewed (at least annually) and adapted to support the on going development of Agile Working as a team.

Agile Working Boundaries	Issues raised	Agreement
☐ Are people clear on the Agile Working boundaries within the team? ☐ Are there core periods when everyone/individuals need to be available?		
Communication:		
☐ How regularly does the team need to meet face 2 face? ☐ How regularly does the manager/ team leader need to meet face 2 face with individuals? ☐ Does the team need to have regular teleconferences? If so, how often will these be held? ☐ Does the team need to establish any ground rules to ensure successful teleconferences? ☐ Does the team need to agree appropriate response times to e-mails/voicemails sent by		

colleagues/ team members/customers? ☐ Do the team want to have social events?		
Team Flexibility:		
☐ What are the expectations around people's flexibility to attend meetings/ training on days people are not planning to be in the office? ☐ How much notice can they reasonably be expected to be given?		
Customers:		
☐ Does the team need to communicate its working arrangements to its customers? If so, how will it do this? ☐ How will the team maintain an appropriate level of contact with its customers? ☐ Will there be any peak in demand and how will the team deal with this? ☐ How will the impact to the customer be assessed? ☐ As a customer, are you aware of other key teams' working arrangements and will this affect you?		
Contact:		
☐ Does the team need to agree emergency situations where people may be contacted outside of these hours? ☐ Is the team aware of each other's contact details and who they can/cannot be issued to? ☐ Does the team need to agree appropriate response times to e-mails/ voicemails sent by colleagues/team members/customers?		
Training & Development:		
☐ Would it be helpful for team members to have mentors or buddy's identified? ☐ How will the team ensure that Agile workers have the same		

opportunities to get involved in particular projects or development activities within the team? ☐ Are there any specific training needs that need to be addressed for individuals/ managers as a result of Agile working?		
Knowledge Sharing:		
☐ How will new employees be inducted to Agile team? ☐ How will the team need to set-up a 'share drive' /EDRMS or make better use of technology to share information?		
Help & Support:		
☐ How will people get help/support from their Agile team ☐ Is there a need for a 'buddy' system within the team ☐ What support/direction does the team/each team member need from his or her manager? It is recommended this form part of the ongoing 1:1 meetings ☐ Would it be useful/practical to have 'team office days'? e.g. a 'Team Tuesday' every other week so the team is together ☐ How will the team ensure workload is evenly shared among team members so people do not feel overloaded?		
Performance Management:		
☐ Are team members aware of the team's objectives? ☐ Do the team objectives need to be recorded in writing and a copy issued to each member of team? ☐ Are each of the team members aware of their individual objectives and are these recorded in line with the Council's performance appraisal process? ☐ How regularly will the manager/ team leader speak to/meet individual team members to review progress against individual objectives? ☐ Is this sufficient for each team		

member? Less experienced employees/new employees may want/need more regular conversations/meetings? ☐ Is the team clear on what information the manager/team leader regularly requires from them to be assured they are meeting their objectives? Providing the manager with information about everything the individual is doing will be too much/not providing enough information can make the employee feel their work is not being recognised		
Absence:		
☐ How will absence be communicated within the team? i.e.holidays/sickness. ☐ Do special arrangements need to be made to ensure any 'handover' of work which might not have been necessary when everyone was working in the same environment?		

12. Appendix 2

Agile Working - Home Based Workers Letter to Mortgage Lender, Landlord etc

Address Line 1
Address Line 2
Address Line 3
Address Line 4   <date>

Dear <salutation>

Policy No. (Where appropriate)

I have agreed with my employer, Flintshire County Council that I may work at home on occasions under Flintshire County Council's Agile Working Employment Policy.

Any equipment I use which is provided by Flintshire County Council will remain the property of Flintshire County Council, and is insured by them in respect of property damage and third party liability risks.

I will also be using my own equipment and furniture whilst working at home, which is covered by my home contents insurance.

The area set aside in my home will not be used exclusively for business purposes and there will be no structural alterations to the property. There will not be a marked rise in traffic or in people visiting at the property and there will be no disturbance to neighbours as a result of my working from home.

I require written confirmation of receipt of this letter and acceptance of these terms. I would be grateful for an early response.

Yours sincerely

Agile Working - Home Based Workers Letter to Insurers

Address Line 1
Address Line 2
Address Line 3
Address Line 4   <date>

Dear <salutation>

Insurance Policy No (where appropriate)

I have agreed with my employer, Flintshire County Council that I may work at home on occasions under Flintshire County Council's Agile Working Employment Policy.

Any equipment I use which is provided by Flintshire County Council will remain the property of Flintshire County Council, and is insured by them in respect of property damage and third party liability risks.

I will also be using my own equipment and furniture whilst working at home, which is covered by my insurance policy with you.

I would appreciate your confirmation that my policy includes public liability cover and this will not affect in any way the validity or cost of my household insurance cover which is placed with you (policy number as above).

Yours sincerely