

AGILE WORKING POLICY**Introduction**

The pace of change for Angus Council employees is fast as we constantly seek new ways to become more efficient while continuing to deliver first class services. Angus Agile will contribute to the rationalisation of the Council's property estate and improve service delivery and organisational effectiveness through the successful adoption of agile working practices and workplace design. The scope of the programme includes all council staff and jobs that are considered suitable for agile working. We use the term agile working to refer to new ways of working made possible by technology and made essential by economic, social and environmental pressures. Agile working incorporates five different workstyles which can lead to improved work life balance as well as the improved use of technology and accommodation.

In short, how and where we work is key in ensuring we have the right people, in the right places, at the right time. The aim of this guidance is to promote and support agile working and to enable employees and managers to consider how the ways in which we work can become more diverse and how the time we spend at a particular workstation might reduce. Employees may wish to consider how they might achieve a better work life balance while maintaining or improving service provision, and managers should consider potential benefits of agile working to their service such as improved efficiency, reduced property and travel costs, reduced absence and environmental impact.

The introduction of agile working requires employees and managers who are in the scope of the programme to determine which Workstyle is the best fit for achieving required outcomes using the five definitions provided at Appendix 1. We will ensure that our working environments support these different Workstyles and encourage more collaborative, integrated and cross functional activity.

Moving to Agile Working

Angus Agile will communicate and engage with employees regarding plans, developments, progress and timescales. Support and training will be available to give a clearer idea of what working within these workstyles actually means for individuals - what is expected of employees and what they can expect in terms of systems, support, management etc.

There will also be training or guidance on the use of technology, including the use of equipment and any new software. HR policies and guidance regarding flexible working, home working and business mileage as well as the flexitime guidance have also been updated. Colleagues from Angus Agile will assist with the following:

Engaging with managers and employees

Setting up regular meetings

Providing information sessions for employees and managers/management teams

Carrying out any business analysis required

Ensuring that IT and technical requirements are assessed

Providing support to determine and agree desk to employee ratios

Co-ordinating training for employees and managers

Supporting and Managing Agile Working

Agile working will create a different working culture with new and different management styles, support systems, working practices and team working. This will inevitably impact on all council employees. For example, the clear desk policy applies across the council regardless of whether the individual employee's job is in the scope of the Angus Agile programme. Similarly, records and document management good practice will be implemented to support the programme.

For some employees (e.g. those in Workstyle 2) the biggest impact of agile working will be the move from having an individual workstation/desk to having shared team workstations. The other major change for both Workstyles 1 and 2 is in the relationship with colleagues who are using a different Workstyle. For example, an awareness of colleagues' various working arrangements is required so that the same level of support can be provided. Communication and diary systems must be effective to ensure communication is not adversely affected.

Employees in Workstyles 3, 4 and 5, and their managers, need to be focussed on outputs and outcomes rather than inputs and on performance, including productivity and quality of the service rather than time and attendance.

There is an even greater requirement for individual and/or team meetings in order to ensure performance targets and work objectives are agreed, monitored, reviewed and revised. In the periods between meetings and other means of communication, employees will have a greater degree of autonomy than would previously have been the case. As a result, managers need to feel confident that employees are fulfilling their duties and responsibilities whilst ensuring employees have the support and back-up required in terms of systems, procedures, equipment, administration and peer/team support.

This relies on good communications and information systems appropriate to the team and its tasks. It also requires a greater awareness of team dynamics and the individual's ability to operate outside of a fixed workplace.

Clear objectives should be agreed along with arrangements for monitoring progress with regular contact and review sessions. A work plan or schedule will provide a framework for both manager and employee so that there will be a clear understanding of what work will be undertaken and what work needs to be produced daily/weekly/monthly/quarterly. Managers should be aware of the need to help employees adjust to agile working and increase their effectiveness as a result. Identifying and dealing with difficulties at an early stage is critical as is ensuring that agile workers have the same promotion and development opportunities as their colleagues who are office based on a full time basis.

Working Time

The very nature of agile working means that, from a management perspective, attendance and working time arrangements are not as important as achieving performance objectives including productivity and quality outcomes. Employees have the responsibility for their own time and attendance management.

Normally, there will be no requirement to change the number of hours worked or the working pattern of agile workers. However, for those groups of employees within the scope of Angus Agile there is an opportunity to completely change the way they work.

In addition, many employees will continue to be eligible to make a Flexible Working request. For further details on how to make a flexible working request please refer to Personnel Advisory Bulletin No. 48 - Flexible Working.

To support more flexible and agile ways of working the council's flexitime scheme has been updated. For some employees there may be no need for 'core hours' to be worked and contracted hours may be worked at any time. In other areas core hours will be essential to ensure effective communication and the maintenance or improvement of service delivery. The need for and times of any core hours will be agreed within each service.

However, in all areas there is a requirement under the Working Time Regulations that working time is accounted for and therefore records are still required. Managers and employees must ensure that records of working time are completed by the employee and that these are monitored to ensure compliance with council policy and legislation. For many employees working time will be recorded and monitored through the flexi-time scheme. However, for those who are not in the flexi-time scheme an alternative means of recording and monitoring working time should be agreed.

If a home working employee chooses to work unsocial hours ie between 2200 and 0700, either whole or in part, the hours worked should be recorded, but there will be no entitlement to receive 'unsocial hours' enhancements of allowances in respect of these hours.

Work base

All employees, regardless of their Workstyle, will have an agreed work base for travel claims and HMRC purposes; this will normally be the location of their team zone. Homeworkers should not use their home as their work base for the purposes of claiming expenses but should have an identified administrative base. However, services may wish to identify a more operationally appropriate base taking into account local circumstances and service needs. For further information Please refer to Personnel Advisory Bulletin No 6 – Business Mileage Allowances and Claims.

For specific information on home working and managing home workers please refer to the Homeworking Policy.