

**(effective from 1 August 2022)**  
**HYBRID & HOMEWORKING POLICY**

**1. Introduction**

The council recognises the need to create a modern and digital future for the workplace, and hybrid and homeworking supports the council's agile working strategy to ensure services are delivered and our customer's needs are met. Hybrid and homeworking can also provide several potential benefits to employees

**2. Scope**

This policy applies to local government employees and employees working under SNCT conditions who work at home or remotely and includes managers of staff who work remotely. It includes those whose posts have been allocated an Agile 2 workstyle 3,4 or 5 or who have approval to work at home more occasionally.

**3. Definition and Frequency of Homeworking**

Homeworking is where an employee carries out their duties from their own home, or other permitted location, as part of their working week or as part of one of Hybrid workstyles.

The proportion of time spent homeworking will vary depending on the employee's workstyle. The workstyle categories and more information on the Agile 2 workstyles, including the equipment and resources for Agile 2 workstyles can be found [here](#). For example, those in workstyle 5 will spend the majority of their working time at home or in other permitted locations. Others may be homeworking on a more occasional, ad hoc or part-time basis because their job is hybrid such as in workstyle 3 or 4, or they are unable to attend their normal workplace due to a critical incident e.g. pandemic, severe weather, or because they have not opted in to the Agile 2 workstyles but have an agreement to work from home on an ad hoc basis.

There may be occasions where an employee who is not assigned to workstyle 5 makes a flexible working request to work in a hybrid workstyle or from home. Such requests should be treated using the [Flexible Working Procedure](#) to assess whether the service can approve the request.

Unless otherwise stated in this policy, all council policies, procedures and practices e.g. sickness absence, booking of leave and discipline and grievance procedures apply as normal to all hybrid and homeworkers regardless of workstyle. All employees will have a council premise or locality specified in their statement of employment particulars (contract of employment) as their base which will be used when an employee claims business travel expenses.

#### **4. Working in someone else's home, public places or abroad**

##### **Working in other people's homes / public places /second homes**

It is recognised that from time to time employees who are homeworking may be permitted to work from a second home or a home that is not their own e.g. a partner or family member's home or in other locations such as another organisation's property.

Any permitted location must be approved by the line manager. This is so that the manager can be confident there are no risks to the employee e.g. privacy or confidentiality issues with IT and physical files, health and safety etc. and that there is no detrimental impact on service delivery. See section 16 below for information on Security and Data Protection.

Where appropriate, the employee and manager may wish to agree the type of work that may be carried out in these locations.

It should be noted that there is no change to the council's insurance policy. This means that IT equipment is not covered for theft or accidental damage. Therefore, employees must continue to ensure that particular care is taken with their equipment at all times.

##### **Working abroad**

Employees are not permitted to work abroad for their own purposes. Only in exceptional circumstances e.g. family illness or emergency, employees may wish to request that they be allowed to work abroad for a maximum period of two weeks to support their situation, subject to the conditions set out below.

An employee on official council business may require to work abroad and in such cases a risk assessment must be completed, and any incidents reported to the Safety Team.

This should be discussed in the first instance with their line manager who will consider if the full remit of their job can be effectively and safely completed during the period of the request. The manager should also consider any adverse impact on colleagues or the service and if there are any privacy or confidentiality concerns. Where this is not considered feasible the request will be declined. There is no right of appeal in these circumstances.

Where carrying out the full remit of the job is considered feasible without adverse impact on colleagues or the service, and to do so requires access to the council's network and/or systems, approval may be granted subject to the following:

[Note: at time of writing the council's security settings do not permit working abroad]

- An IT service desk request to work outside of the UK must be logged which will be subject to security review and approval. Where approval is not granted the request will be declined with no right of appeal.

- Access to Angus Council systems may be blocked if working abroad. This would be due to a cyber security threat/s and would be without notice. If, during the period of working abroad, IT requires to block access from the relevant country for any reason or/and the employee experiences IT/ laptop issues or failures, any period during which the employee is unable to work must be taken as annual leave/TOIL/unpaid leave or a combination of these.
- IT may not be able to provide IT support to employees working abroad.
- Employees granted approval to work abroad must ensure IT equipment is contained in hand luggage while travelling. It should be noted that there is no change to the council's insurance policy. This means that IT equipment is not covered for theft or accidental damage. Therefore, employees must continue to ensure that particular care is taken with their equipment at all times.

Section 12 covers the expectations of employees to attend a council office or location.

## **5. Communication and Management of Hybrid and Homeworkers**

A relationship of mutual trust and respect along with fair expectations from both parties can result in increased productivity as well as improved work life balance and alignment with organisational values.

It is important that managers and employees are in regular contact and that arrangements to hold regular one to one meetings by telephone or video conferencing, are agreed. It is recommended that contact with hybrid and homeworkers should be much more frequent and if possible weekly, and that these discussions focus on an employee's wellbeing as well as their workload. Face to face meetings are recommended on a regular basis.

It is also important to establish communication methods with team members, other colleagues and wider contacts. Being in regular contact with colleagues will help to avoid feelings of isolation and informal communication between colleagues should be encouraged.

It is particularly important that hybrid and homeworkers have a forward work plan or schedule. This will provide a framework for both the manager and the employee so that there will be a common understanding of outcomes/outputs required i.e. what tasks will be undertaken, what work will be produced and what is expected.

Where a manager is inducting a new employee who will be homeworking in workstyle 5, either through a request to work flexibly, or who has been recruited to workstyle 5, consideration should be given to the new employee spending time face to face with their manager, team members and allowing them time to visit appropriate council offices and to interact with other colleagues to establish themselves, build relationships and to experience onsite working.

Managers should avoid contacting employees during their non-working hours. The employee's home should not normally be used for in person meetings, e.g. with the line manager or colleagues, and never with service users. Under normal circumstances, in order to protect the privacy and security of the homeworker, neither the employee's

telephone number nor address should be used for business purposes (e.g. provided to service users/customers). A dedicated business number should normally be used and wherever possible employees should use 'soft' phones. A work mobile will only be provided where a soft phone does not meet business operational requirements. However, if employees have to use their private telephone number for any outgoing calls the employee should bar identification of their number.

## **6. Working Time - Getting the Right Balance**

Hybrid and homeworking allows employees to be efficient and effective in delivering their objectives and outcomes. These should be SMART outcomes which are monitored regularly by the manager to ensure alignment to contractual working hours. Where there is a mismatch of outcomes and contractual working hours these should be discussed between the manager and employee to identify the reasons why outcomes cannot be met. This could be unrealistic timescales, inadequate resourcing, unclear objectives, other prioritisation of work, increase in delegation etc.

Although hybrid and homeworking can enable many employees to achieve greater flexibility and a better work life balance, it is also recognised that working excessive hours and not taking adequate breaks is a risk.

While employees have responsibility, under the Flexitime Scheme, for their time and attendance management there is a requirement under the Working Time Regulations that working time is monitored and that adequate breaks are taken. If the manager or employee has concerns about the employee working consistently over their contracted hours or not taking adequate breaks, or working under contracted hours, the manager should discuss this with the employee. Managers and employees should ensure their discussion includes:

- Actual hours and pattern of hours worked matches contracted hours i.e. that there is not a pattern of consistently working over contracted hours
- Flexibility in start and finish times or more defined working hours / opt out of flexitime scheme
- Flexibility needed to meet outcomes
- Legally required rest breaks i.e. at least 20 minutes break each working day lasting more than 6 hours, period between stopping work one day and beginning the next not less than 11 hours, at least one complete day each week when no work is done
- Tips for differentiating work and personal time e.g. sticking to a routine start and finish time, setting a separate work-space, if space allows, clearing work things away at the end of the day, trying to get outside every day.

Flexible working requests may be made by homeworkers on the same basis as any other employee using the [Flexible Working Application Form](#). If the request is refused, the employee will be advised, in writing, of the reasons (following the procedure and based on the grounds detailed in the [Flexible Working Policy](#)).



## 7. Caring for Dependants

Employees with dependants must make sure that they are able to fulfil the requirements of their job by making adequate provision for the care of dependents during working hours.

It is recognised that during critical incidents this may not be possible. In these circumstances hours of work and output should be agreed with the manager. Suitable temporary arrangements to support the employee should be discussed and agreed e.g. more flexible working patterns, focus on manageable outputs, opt-out of the Flexi-time Scheme, temporary reduction in working hours, use of leave/TOIL etc. Refer to [Special Leave Policy](#) for local government employees.

## 8. Health, Safety and Wellbeing

The Council has a general duty regarding the health and safety of employees and others who may be affected by their work, under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (MHSWR) 1999 require us to put in place effective management arrangements for the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of preventative and protective measures to control health and safety risks.

As part of that general duty, managers must ensure that risk assessments, including DSE and other hazards related to homeworking are undertaken. Guidance is available on Display Screen Equipment (DSE) for employees to follow.

### **Risk assessment**

Many of the health and safety issues around homeworking are no different from those of conventional office working. Some risks that must be considered are risks associated with using computers and other work equipment, the work environment, mental wellbeing, lone working, manual handling, fire and travelling. Others include electrical wiring, lighting, heating, ventilation and slip or trip hazards. For example, work with DSE can give rise to back pain or repetitive strain injury (RSI), stress or visual discomfort if adequate precautions are not taken.

The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations require managers to assess and reduce risks, ensure workstations meet minimum requirements, plan breaks or changes of activity, provide eye tests on request and provide health and safety training and information.

To take account of the specific work environment and needs of each homeworking employee the following assessments and checklists must be completed:

- Homeworking Risk Assessment / Checklist

- DSE Workstation Assessment (Angus)
- Feedback Checklist for Home Workers
- Managers Audit Checklist for Home Workers

Lone Working Checklist - Additionally, if homeworkers are travelling remotely from home to undertake activities, then you must complete the lone working checklist. The checklist will confirm if there is a significant risk to the employee. Should there be a significant risk then you must complete a risk assessment:

- Lone Workers Checklist (The checklist will confirm if a risk assessment is required)
- Risk assessment (if there is a significant risk)

These assessments and checklists are available on the Council's Health and Safety management system <https://app.uk.sheasure.net/EastScot/p/Angus/> and our arrangements and guidance on the Health and Safety Compliance page under [Remote Working](#).

### **Responsibilities**

Every employee has a responsibility for their own health, safety and welfare and that of others, in addition employees must cooperate with the council to meeting their health and safety statutory obligations.

### **Team Leaders and Line Managers must:**

- Implement their responsibilities under the organisational responsibilities of managers as contained within the corporate health and safety policy;
- Inform the employee of the arrangements and guidance applicable to occupational health and safety including homeworking (includes working remotely);
- Ensure the employee applies these arrangements and guidance;
- Ensure a Homeworking Risk Assessment / Checklist for the employee is undertaken and reviewed as required;
- Ensure a DSE Workstation Assessment is undertaken by the employee and reviewed as required;
- Complete any outstanding actions from Homeworking Checklist and DSE Workstation Assessment to ensure the employee has the correct equipment to work from home safely;
- Carry out a Managers Audit Checklist of homeworkers compliance;
- Complete a risk assessment for lone workers where a significant risk is identified from the lone working checklist;
- Ensure they are familiar with resources and support available to assist with mental health, wellbeing and stress;
- Address any health and safety issues found or reported;
- Maintain good communication systems and formal means of contact with home workers through regular meetings between home workers and their co-workers to minimise feelings of isolation which can affect stress levels and mental health.

### **Employees must:**

- Implement their responsibilities under the organisational responsibilities of employees as contained within the corporate health and safety policy and their responsibilities within this document;
- Complete the Homeworking Risk Assessment / Checklist and raise concerns or requests with their managers for them to action;
- From the completed DSE Workstation Assessment and Homeworking Risk Assessment / Checklist that they accept and take responsibility of the equipment issued;
- Complete a lone workers checklist and discuss with their line manager if a significant risk is identified;
- Assist the line manager in completing a risk assessment where a significant risk is identified from the lone workers checklist;
- Co-operate on health and safety matters and use work items and equipment correctly and complete relevant training;
- Work required hours;
- Take regular breaks;
- Report any issues which may be a risk to their own or others' health, keep in touch with colleagues to avoid feelings of isolation and tell their manager if they are feeling stressed or anxious;
- Discuss as soon as possible with their manager any disability or any other special circumstances where an adjustment to working arrangements is required.

**The Health and Safety Compliance Team must:**

- Implement their responsibilities under the organisational responsibilities of health and safety compliance team as contained within the corporate health and safety policy;
- Provide health and safety arrangements and guidance for home workers DSE (Display Screen Equipment) users, Risk Assessment and Lone Working;
- Assist managers to ensure that they monitor homeworkers (including lone working) health and safety. This will be done by issuing managers with a manager's audit checklist, feedback checklist for employees to complete, lone workers checklist and risk assessment;
- Provide, maintain and review systems in place for reporting of accidents, incidents, near misses and investigations relating to home working (including lone working);
- Provide, maintain and review arrangements, guidance and systems in place for recording risk assessment;
- Ensure that mandatory training is available for employees at induction, annually and in the event of a significant change.

**Organisational Development must:**

- Develop, review, monitor and make available learning and support tools for employees to access.

**Human Resources must:**

- Provide advice and guidance to managers to support the employee's mental health, wellbeing and stress as a result of remote working (including homeworking);
- Co-ordinate employee access to our Occupational Health Service.

## 9. Expenses

IT/Office equipment and supplies will be provided by the council and the employee should not incur any costs for these. See section 10 below.

Telephone costs should not be incurred as wherever possible employees should use 'soft' phones or Microsoft Teams for calls. A work mobile will only be provided where a soft phone does not meet business operational requirements.

Printing costs should not be incurred as employees will be working with electronic files.

No allowance will be paid by the council for any costs associated with homeworking, i.e. electrical (heating, lighting etc), broadband/internet provide charges, home insurance etc.

You are advised to seek your own advice on benefits from the Welfare Rights Team, local Citizens Advice Bureaux or a financial adviser and on tax from a qualified tax accountant/financial adviser.

## 10. IT/Office equipment and supplies

Managers must ensure that all homeworkers complete a [workstation self-assessment](#) and inventory of required equipment and supplies which the manager should request through DSEAH@angus.gov.uk. Once completed and approved, colleagues will liaise as necessary e.g. [IT](#) (for IT equipment), Facilities Management (for office furniture) [FMSupport@angus.gov.uk](mailto:FMSupport@angus.gov.uk) and Procurement (should there be a requirement to procure specific pieces of equipment not available within the council).

Where council equipment is supplied for use in an employee's home, the items supplied are for the sole use of the employee and unauthorised use is not permitted. Employees are responsible for the safe use and storage of all items supplied. The council remains responsible for equipment repairs and/or maintenance. This might involve the employee returning equipment to council premises and so suitable arrangements will be agreed following any necessary procedures and guidance.

The provision of equipment supplies or services to an employee homeworking does not produce a liability for income tax or National Insurance charges if they are used by the employee for work and private use is insignificant.

Although any equipment supplied by the council will be covered under the council's insurance policies (see below under Insurance) this does not include theft or accidental damage. Homeworkers are expected to look after these items and keep them as safe as possible. Avoid obvious hazards such as having liquids near to electrical equipment and take particular care if consuming food and drink near the workstation.

Where employees leave the service of the council, the uplift/return of all council supplied equipment will be arranged at a time agreed with their manager.

A homeworker can use their own equipment, for example table/chair/keyboard/monitor where this meets minimum requirements of the law following workstation self-assessment. However, if the homeworker does not have appropriate equipment this will be supplied by the council.

## **11. Business Mileage**

All employees are expected to undertake only essential travel and to manage their time as effectively as possible to minimise the frequency, duration and cost of travel.

Electric Pool Cars are available for employees to use for business travel. These should be considered for both occasional and regular/daily business journeys, and where it is more cost and time efficient than using a personal vehicle. Electric pool cars can be provided, for an extended period, to an employee for their sole use if it is cost effective and feasible to do so. Use of an electric pool car is for business use only.

Should an employee need to use their own personal vehicle for business travel, they can claim business mileage in accordance with the Business Travel Policy and Procedure.

Employees will have a council base which must be used for calculating any personal vehicle mileage incurred in line with the Business Travel Policy.

## **12. Attending an office/council location**

Some employees e.g. Workstyle 5 may spend the majority of their working time at their home. They will however be expected to attend their base or other council premises for events such as one to one and team meetings, collaborative working, training etc as appropriate.

Where a new employee is recruited into workstyle 5 and lives a considerable distance from their council base/team zone/location, it is a condition of employment that they are available to attend their council base/team zone/location and other locations, regularly and possibly at short notice to meet operational needs.

## **13. Equality Considerations**

If any adjustment to working arrangements is required due to a disability or any other circumstances, employees should discuss their needs with their manager.

## **14. Changing workstyles**

Whilst changing workstyle should occur infrequently, it is recognised that employees and management might wish to change the workstyle or flexible working arrangements occasionally.

For example, an employee's domestic circumstances might change to such an extent that it is no longer feasible or safe for them to work predominantly at home. In these circumstances, it might be appropriate for the employee to change workstyle. In addition, management may require an employee to work at another location for a variety of reasons e.g. the nature of the work changes requiring more face to face contact, closer supervision becoming necessary due to performance concerns, the cyclical nature of the work etc.

Ideally, agreement will be reached, and changes made within a mutually agreed timescale. Where this is not feasible, reasonable notice will be given to the employee.

There may be occasions where an employee who is not assigned to workstyle 5 makes a flexible working request to work from home. Such requests should be treated using the [Flexible Working Procedure](#) to assess whether the service can approve the request.

## **15. Learning and Development**

Continuing to develop knowledge and skills is important to ensure that employees are able to perform to the best of their ability and managers can effectively manage employees working at home.

To support specifically with working effectively from home, there is an e-learning module available on [Always Learning](#) which is complimented by an online discussion session and there will also be range of learning resources available that individuals can access to grow their skills. These take the form of e-learning, video tutorials and briefing sessions.

A critical component of being able to work from home successfully is having appropriate digital skills. To support the workforce with this, digital champions are being identified within each Directorate. Their role will be to provide 'how to' information as required.

Employees can also access a wide range of just-in-time digital learning resources through the [Digital Learning Hub](#).

Performance and Development Reviews (previously appraisals) will continue to take place annually. The method by which these are conducted should be agreed between the line manager and employee, whether these are held virtually or in person.

All resources from Organisation Development are available [here](#).

## **16. Security and Data Protection**

Employees who work from home, or other permitted locations, are responsible for keeping all information associated with the council secure at all times. This includes being under a duty to:

- maintain service user confidentiality
- carry out sensitive conversations in confidence

- comply with council requirements to maintain the confidentiality and security of information as detailed below.

[Working Remotely – Handling Information Policy](#)

[Secure Transportation of Paper Records](#)

[Data Protection Policy](#)

## **17. Insurance, Mortgage and Lease Agreements**

Employees should check with their home and contents insurance provider that they have adequate cover for work from home.

It is also recommended that mortgage or rental agreements are checked to ensure permissions to work from home are in place or if necessary, to obtain any permissions.

Where costs are incurred, no reimbursement will be made by the council. In the unlikely event that homeworking is not permitted the employee should contact their manager as soon as possible to discuss the situation.

## **18. Data Protection**

When managing the information provided in the assessment and arrangements for employees working at home the council processes personal data collected in accordance with its data protection policy, human resources data protection policy and employee privacy notice. Data collected is held securely and is accessed by, processed by, and disclosed to, individuals only for the purposes processing the information required under the home working policy. Further information can be found at [Human Resources – Data Protection](#) or contact [Human Resources](#).

Human Resources  
May 2022

Document Control

Date	Brief Summary of changes	Review Date
May 2022	New Homeworking Policy to replace the existing PAB66 Homeworking Policy and Interim Homeworking Policy (for COVID). Changes from Interim Policy – Mileage, allowances, and flexi working hours. Clarity on other areas of policy, IT, health and safety, governance, communication and management to align with future ways of working (Agile 2 workstyles).	May 2024