

Flexible Working - A Guide for Employees

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Introduction

There are three important areas that you will need to consider if you wish to be a flexible worker that is Customer/Service needs, Council needs and your needs. Ideally all three needs will need to be met to progress on to be a flexible worker.

Also it requires changes in your working behaviour as you will need to be accessible during working time via Instant messaging, telephone and keep your Calendar up to date. You and your manager will need to focus on what work outcomes you need to complete, set timelines and monitor progress. You will need to change your thinking to what work needs to be completed, what work activity needs completing and where you need to be to collaborate with whom, rather than going to your normal office space automatically. You and your manager need to develop an understanding of trust when you are working remotely; also you need to agree your SMARTER targets and to look to refocus your targets to be outcome based where appropriate. Work is something you do, not somewhere you go.

HR & OD Workforce Strategy 2014 - 2018

HR / OD's purpose is to ensure that WCC has the workforce that it needs to deliver its objectives, that it is motivated, developed, and works to ensure that delivery and that the services provided within those objectives reflect the needs of the different groups and communities who live in Warwickshire. Click [link](#) to Workforce Strategy.

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Flexible Working & the 6 Workforce Strategy themes

It's important to understand how Flexible Working interacts with the 6 deliverable themes of the Workforce Strategy and also the links to the Council's core competencies. Flexible Working has to support the way we work to enable the Council to deliver services in an efficient, cost effective and customer focused way.

1. Leadership

All leaders need to role model Flexible Working to adapt quickly, flexibly to new demands and drive change. Also, to continuously improve the way services are delivered through the effective use of innovation and technology.

2. Productivity

Increasingly behaviour change has to take place to drive continuous improvement through Flexible Working, smarter working and more importance on outcomes. Leading to health and well-being benefits such as reduced stress.

3. Collaboration

We need clarity of joint vision and purpose when working collaboratively, which Flexible Working can enable. All leaders can empower and support people to work collaboratively across organisational boundaries.

4. Efficiency

Flexible Working will help you review working methods to implement effective change for benefit of customers. We need changes in behaviour to constructively challenge more commercial thinking. We need to consider how Flexible Working will impact on the operational influence of strategic changes on resources. Flexible Working will help with managing staff attendance as it's known to have reduced sickness absence rates.

5. Flexibility

Flexible Working will help deliver services by translating strategic objectives into effective operational actions. Flexible Working will identify the generic IT skills needed to work flexibly. Flexible Working makes the best use of working arrangements to meet the needs of the service.

6. Agility

Flexible Working will lead to smarter workforce planning to make best use of the workforce and the talent available to deliver the changing service requirements.

Flexible Working will help to align priorities for learning and development with the changing organisational priorities.

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WFW [DP041](#) Flexible Working eLearning

To support staff and managers to understand flexible working better we have developed this eLearning module on WILMa. The aim of the e-learning Flexible Working module is to provide a comprehensive overview to flexible working, aims to raise awareness of the benefits of Flexible Working to your service, yourself and most importantly to improving service delivery to your customers. It is only a starting point and there is other support available with workshops, policies and guidance documents to help you with your journey.

Corporate Accommodation Standards

The Property Rationalisation Programme driven by the need for a consistent use of building space. The need for the efficient use of overall floor space, open plan working, shared office space, change in office culture, pointed to the necessity for a Corporate Accommodation Standard. You can access the Corporate Accommodation Standard document via this [Link](#).

Underlying Principles of the Corporate Accommodation Standard

To realise the benefits of working in the shared office space changes are necessary to get the best from the Corporate Accommodation Standards. A set of underlying principles are necessary to make the transition from working in an old office accommodation to working in the “new” office space, as follows:-

Different thinking - focus on sharing resources

- v shared desks & fuzzy boundaries
- v clear desks & welcoming areas
- v reduced physical storage

Different thinking - trust & empowerment

- v flexibility assessed on roles (not individuals)
- v clarity on Flexible Working agreements
- v activity based working - right space at right time

Different thinking - technology

- v key information is available any time, any place, any where
- v get the best from technology - new channels for communication

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The “new” office space will be open plan with new furniture including chairs and will operate a clear desk policy. Each team member will be given a locker with a plastic box to secure their Laptop/Tablet and other personal items. There will be reduced storage with each team member having one locker and one shelf in a tambour unit. There will be shared workspaces and team zones including flexibility to share desks in other team zones. There will be one Resource Room and Kitchen for all teams within the open plan area. Dependent on the space available there may be a collaboration room, activity based working zones and quite rooms.

Benefits

The benefits of flexible working arrangements, for customers, employees and the Council include:-

- Delivering services in the most effective way possible;
- Increased employee job satisfaction, personal responsibility, and flexibility;
- Helping employees balance their work and home lives;
- Enabling employees to work closer to communities and improve service delivery;
- Ensuring the most effective and efficient use of the skills of the staff we employ;
- Generating savings on office accommodation and reduce demand on car parking;
- Reducing travelling time and unnecessary journeys;
- Enabling people to enter/remain in employment when personal circumstances might otherwise prevent this.

Flexible Working Proposal

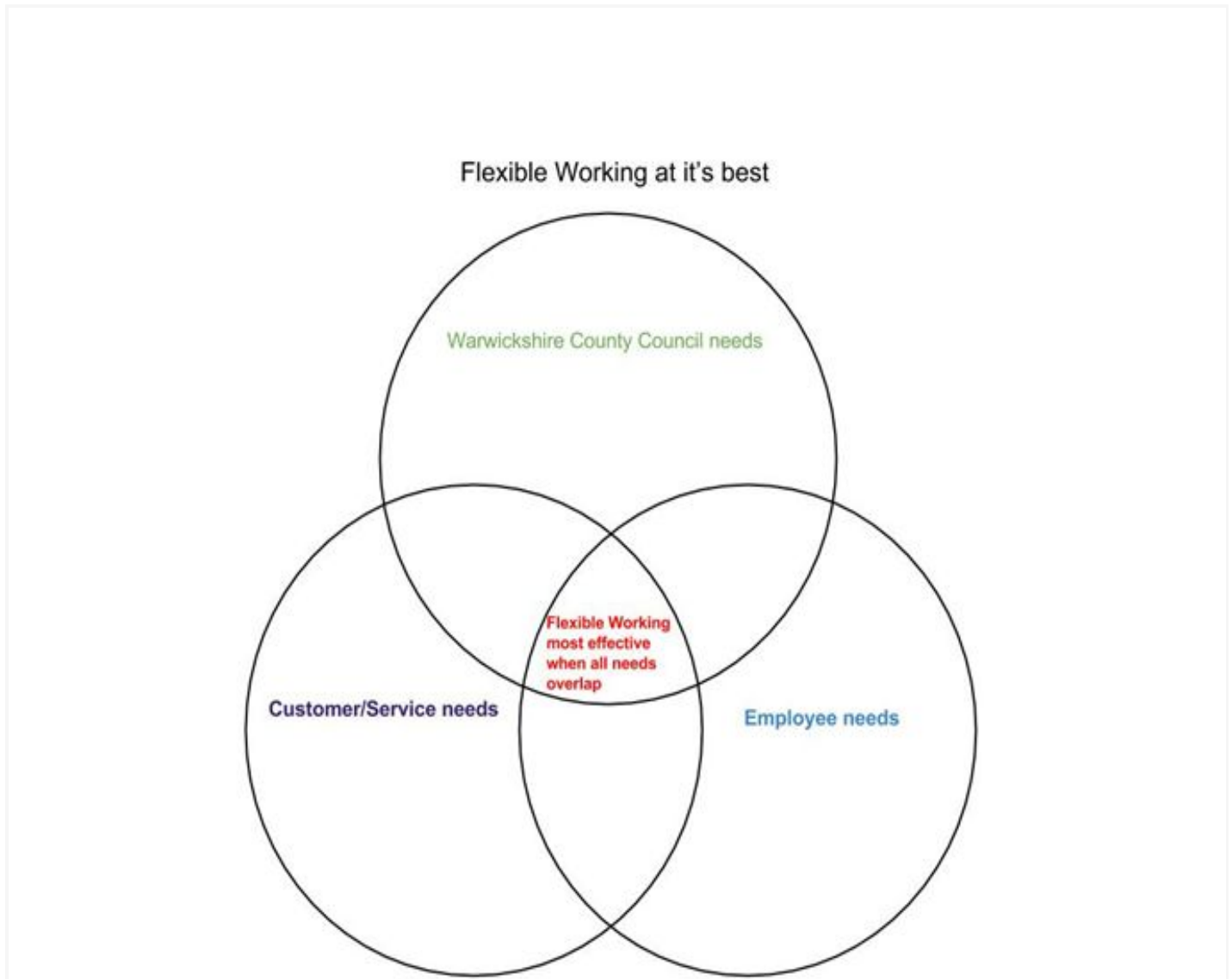
The key for any employee is to propose a flexible working arrangement that will meet the needs in 3 areas, as illustrated in the Venn diagram below:-

- Customer/Service needs
- WCC needs
- Employee needs

When all 3 needs overlap flexible working is most effective. Effectively meeting the Service needs can mean that you are meeting the Council needs in most cases, therefore combining with your needs, can make a suitable flexible working arrangement. But in many roles in the Council are concerned with providing a direct service to the public, in a fixed location, whether this is a person's home, library or office. The models within flexible working will not suit every type of role. You and your manager will need to make an objective assessment of the suitability of your role, your proposed flexible working arrangements giving due regard to service needs, potential benefits to you and the Council.

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Venn diagram:



Considerations

Below are some considerations for employees moving to flexible working or regular home working. Some of the flexible working considerations apply to flexible workers and regular home workers, but most of the regular home working considerations only apply to home working:-

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Flexible Working

Things to consider	How to make it work
Communication/Information compliance	
☛ Make best use of technology to ensure effective communication. You need to manage data privacy and security when working flexibly.	Setup your Google Calendar for universal access, use Instant Messaging, use email, have Landline or Mobile telephone availability. Completion of the Information Compliance e-learning module on WILMa
Culture change & embedding new behaviour	
☛ Make changes to the way you work	Focus on outcomes not process; build trust with your manager and colleagues to enable remote working. You need to change your thinking to place the emphasis on what results are needed. What behaviours and habits do I change to achieve the required outcomes?
Activity based working	
☛ Consider where the best place to be to work on the activity, to achieve your outcomes	Who do you need to collaborate with to complete your outcomes? Consider new forms of collaboration that reduce the need for physical meetings and travel.
Performance management	
☛ How will you achieve your SMARTER outcome based targets?	Working flexibly and effectively to achieve your targets. You and your manager will need to agree timelines for each outcome. You and your manager will need to agree how you will monitor progress with your outcomes.
Health Safety & Wellbeing	
☛ Have you considered what health safety & wellbeing issues you need to consider to ensure safe working practice?	Completion of flexible working risk assessment form for each different work location you regularly use. Complete DSE e-learning module on WILMa.

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Home Working

Things to consider	How to make it work
Environment & Health & Safety	
☛ Ensure that the home-working environment does not jeopardise the safety of yourself or others, even when you are not working.	Store away equipment supplied, do not leave wires trailing, ensure that all equipment has been PAT tested. Keep electrical equipment out of the reach of children.
☛ Have you completed the DSE modules on WILMa for you normal work base, home or other regular office bases?	You can complete the DSE module for multiple bases on WILMa
☛ Would there be competing demands for the space used for home-working from others in your household?	Decide early on where you will work, where you will store any work and discuss any conflicts early on.
☛ Manage the division between 'working' and 'not working', which can blur as a result of working at home or in a flexible way.	Decide early on how you will achieve your optimum working pattern. Review this regularly with your family in order that you maintain a work-life balance which works for you and allows you to achieve the required outputs/outcomes of the role.
☛ Have you got a work space that you would be happy to work in for several hours, with somewhere to put your work away at the end of the day?	Consider where you could create any area that you would like to spend time in and consider the things that will help you to focus on your activities for that day.
Social considerations	
☛ Flexible or home working can be lonely.	Consider how you feel about working with limited social contact. Plan your work so that you can focus on outputs & outcomes. Agree communication methods with the team prior to embarking on working flexibly. Decide on your contingency plan for those times when you need others' input
Personal Motivation	
☛ Are you self-motivated, self-disciplined and well organised? Would you need to be able to resist distractions and work in a quieter environment without the office 'buzz'?	Consider how you will organise and motivate yourself when away from your normal office environment – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on small goals • Set regular break times • Ensure that you have a good support network for help and guidance • Ensure that you understand what authority you have to make decisions

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Individuals' Checklist for flexible working

Questions	Yes/No	Comments/Actions to take
Policy/Guidance/Information		
Have you understood the Flexible Working Policy? Do you have any questions? Have you read the Flexible Working Guide for Employees? Have you completed the Flexible Working eLearning Module on WILMa? Do you understand how Flexible Working interacts with the 6 deliverable themes of the Workforce Strategy and also the links to the Council's core competencies?		
Role information		
Are there any tasks that you feel unable to do?		
What systems will need to be put in place to ensure that you are supported and feel connected to the team?		
How will you manage your workload and take decisions?		
Communication		
How will you maintain effective communications with your manager, colleagues, admin and customers?		
Have you given access to your Calendar to all that need it and is it kept up to date?		
Performance Management		
Have you set regular review times with your manager?		
Have you set up a system for informal support in addition to the formal review?		
Have you reviewed your SMARTER targets in light of the new way of working by outputs/outcomes?		
Have you discussed and agreed how your performance will be monitored?		
Practicalities		

Have you agreed to use timesheets to record working hours and TOIL?		
Have you considered the practicalities for home working e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurance arrangements • Working area • Equipment • Storage 		
Health & Safety		
Have you completed the DSE Self-Assessment on WILMa for your normal work base, home or other regular office bases?		
Have you completed a flexible working risk assessment & action plan with your manager?		
Have you read and completed your Flexible Working Agreement with your manager?		
Have you considered and assessed any alternative working locations?		
Support & Wellbeing		
Has the change in working identified any additional development needs? Have you discussed and agreed these with your manager?		
Has a system been set up for informal support?		