

1. Introduction to Flexible Working

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Flexible Working framework is intended to assist both managers, employees make a case for flexible working and improve service delivery. Through various articles and case studies, it provides advice and guidance about the possibilities of working differently. Using practical examples and tools, it provides support for teams wishing to embark in new ways of working, and highlights areas for consideration to achieve successful implementation.

The guidance is not intended to be prescriptive as ultimately, effective flexible working will be dependent on individual factors such as the job, the employee and environment. It is recognised that flexible working will not suit every type of job or individual. Managers will be responsible for making an objective assessment of suitability for their service.

Flexible working is about the whole team deciding to embrace a new way of working. This may require investment in order to release some of the benefits. The creation of a business case is at the heart of each flexible working proposal and this will show whether a benefits realisation can be achieved.

The purpose of this particular document is to provide an introduction to flexible working, highlighting some of the benefits and introducing the concepts of time and location independent working.

2. Benefits

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

- Delivering services in the most effective way possible;
- High quality needs based public services to customers within resources and services are targeted effectively whether delivered by the local authority, commissioned or in partnership
- 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;

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- Reducing travelling time, unnecessary journeys, consequently making a cost saving for the employee and WCC;
- Enabling people to enter/remain in employment when personal circumstances might otherwise prevent this.

3. What is Flexible Working?

Flexible working comprises many different aspects:-



Time flexibility looks at whether the times that workers are expected to work are appropriate for the service.

Mobile working, hot-desking and home-working all focus on the location of where work takes place.

3.1 What is time independent flexibility?

This involves allowing staff to work at times which meet staff and service needs. It may involve reviewing flexi time, changing the concept of core time

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or measuring the effort of staff based on the outputs/outcomes rather than time spent on site. Further details of policies, advice and guidance can be found on the Internet on the HR A to Z section on the Staff, Partners & Practitioners site under Flexible Working. There are links within the documents to Health & Safety and IA advice/guidance.

3.2 What is mobile-working?

Mobile-working provides workers with the ability to do their work while they are outside the office and on the move. The prime example are field workers who record information electronically while they are at a site and then upload it to the office system. Mobile workers may find corporate hot-desk facilities advantageous.

3.3 What is home-working?

Home working as it suggests, is the ability to undertake work at your home. There are two types of home worker to consider - this is an important distinction to make, particularly when looking at health and safety, equipment and financial issues.

A contracted home worker is someone who has a formal arrangement in place to work all of their working hours at home, as stated in their contract. Home is their normal place of work.

Staff who work at home on an occasional or informal basis are classified as flexible workers. A WCC office is their normal place of work – as specified in their contract.

3.4 What is hot-desking?

Hot desking frees staff from working at a dedicated desk. This helps the business to utilise its space more efficiently, and encourages enhanced networking within and across teams.

Hot desking allows the team to review its office space and utilise it in a more efficient manner. When considering hot desking, the team would review their current desk allocation ratio, and look to see how many desks are required to best deliver the day-to-day service. This is normally achieved by a study of desk utilisation over a period of time, results are often surprising as capacity is rarely 100%. Factors such as a team's work patterns, annual leave and ability to undertake work from outside the office environment need to be taken into account.

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Hot desking areas may be set up for use by the team, where any flexible or mobile worker could drop in and use the facility. Equipment available on a hot desk could vary – according to the team needs. Provision for ‘follow me’ phones and storage space for personal belongings need to be thought about.

Corporate hot desking is where an area is setup for staff who are visiting a different site can drop in and use a desk top Pc or connect their Laptop/Tablet to the corporate network or make a WiFi link. Staff will have access to hot phones and flow me printers.

3.5 Team Zones & Sharing Space

In the new accommodation standard different teams work in an open plan area and are split in to team zones. Each team in their zones will share that space and staff sit at any desk that is available. Teams in their zone area will operate a clear desk policy, where all paper and Laptops/Tablets are packed away into plastic boxes and placed in a locked locker. It is possible to hot desk in other team zones, but consideration needs to take place if it would be inappropriate to hot desk in an area where client contact takes place and confidentiality is important.

3.6 Are the models mutually exclusive?

No. The models can, and in most cases probably should, be used in combination with each other in order to derive the maximum benefit and to provide the best solution for the service.

The framework will help you assess whether any, all, or a combination of the models is right for the environment you work in.

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