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WORK HOW IT WORKS BEST – AGILE WORKING POLICY

Policy Statement

We are committed to fostering an agile work environment that not only enables delivery of our long-term strategic plan, but also prioritises the well-being and professional growth of our employees.

We want to enable our colleagues to achieve their best work by providing them with a framework to discuss and agree how, when, and where they work, while maintaining a focus on collaboration, accountability, and delivering exceptional results.

Following a successful year-long trial of agile working arrangements, this policy establishes our agreed organisational approach to agile working, which we refer to as Work How it Works Best.

This policy provides a framework for consistent and fair practice when considering agile working arrangements. The associated Work How it Works Best toolkit provides more detailed guidance and links to supporting information.

Policy Commitment

This policy applies to all employees, and staff on secondment within Public Health Wales, enabling them to work how it works best. This policy will apply to agency workers by agreement between the organisation and the employment agency.

Our individual needs, and the requirements of our roles and teams will vary, so we will see colleagues with different working arrangements and patterns. In seeking to meet the needs of individuals, we will seek to ensure that no one will be treated more or less favourably based on their 'how it works best' arrangements.

We will use technology to maximise connection and inclusion and to ensure that the agreed location from which an individual works does not place them at a disadvantage.

Our working arrangements take into account three core pillars of where the work is best done, the needs of others and your needs or preferences:

- **Where the work needs to be or where it is best done** – taking into account the setting, equipment needs, team/ group work and ability to focus;
- **The needs of the team** – both our immediate team members/ colleagues, those with whom we're working with on a project/ piece of work or in the broader sense;
- **Where would I prefer to/ need to be** – should I attend a workplace/ home/ other to support my wellbeing, might I need to work somewhere different in order to harmonise work/ life responsibilities?

Arrangements will be fluid and change in line with changes to needs. How it works best one week may change the next, for example absence in the team may mean we're needed in a workplace, we may ask trained colleagues to attend a workplace if their skills are needed. We understand life will also happen, so we support each other as much as possible to help colleagues manage challenging personal circumstances.

We will ask 'how are you doing?' regularly and with compassion. If we're working less frequently in a workplace, we make sure we check in with each other. Teams collectively decide how and when they connect (virtually and in-person) and agree what works for all.

There are some meetings/ conversations which best happen in person – and we all agree to do so. For example, My Contribution (or other personal/ professional appraisals), team welcome inductions/orientation meetings, attendance reviews and any meetings relating to disciplinary/ grievance/ capability should be held in person when safe and practicable to do so at an appropriate, mutually agreed venue/ location. Return to work check-ins following a period of absence may be held in person or virtually depending on the individual circumstances.

We work together, with trust and respect, to make a difference. If there are disagreements, we manage the conversation respectfully and we will use support available through Healthy Working Relationships to resolve the matter.

Supporting Procedures and Written Control Documents

[All corporate policies and procedures are available on the Public Health Wales website](#)

Other related documents are:

- Flexible Working Policy
- Work How it Works Best toolkit and supporting intranet content
- All Wales Information Governance Policy and associated procedures
- Health and Safety Policy
- Lone Working Policy
- Managing Attendance at Work
- Respect and Resolution Policy

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, and staff on secondment within Public Health Wales, enabling them to work how it works best. This policy will apply to agency workers by agreement between the organisation and the employment agency.

Agile working is available to all employees, in addition to (and does not prevent) requests for Flexible Working under the Flexible Working Regulations 2014. See our [Flexible Working Policy](#) for more information on other Flexible Working options.

Important Terminology

- Agile or hybrid working: Working in different places, including our workplaces, hubs/ local spaces and home. This way of working may be regular/ frequent or occasional.
- Agile or hybrid workers: Colleagues whose work, or significant parts of it, can be completed in a workplace(s), hub/ local space or from home.
- Workplace-based workers: Colleagues whose work, with the exception of occasional training/ administration, can only be completed in a specific workplace(s), e.g. because specialist equipment is required.

Equality and Health Impact Assessment	An Equality, Welsh Language and Health Impact Assessment has been completed and can be viewed on the policy webpages.
Approved by	People and Organisational Development Committee
Approval Date	08/11/2023

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Group with authority to approve supporting procedures	People and Organisational Development Committee
Accountable Executive Director/Director	Neil Lewis Director of People and Organisational Development
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Disclaimer

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Summary of reviews/amendments				
Version number	Date of Review	Date of Approval	Date published	Summary of Amendments
V1	July 2023	08/11/23	10/01/26	New policy following one-year trial of Work How it Works Best

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1. Policy Statement

We are committed to fostering an agile work environment that not only enables delivery of our long-term strategic plan, but also prioritises the well-being and professional growth of our employees.

We want to enable our colleagues to achieve their best work by providing them with a framework to discuss and agree how, when, and where they work, while maintaining a focus on collaboration, accountability, and delivering exceptional results.

Following a successful year-long trial of agile working arrangements, this policy establishes our agreed approach to agile working, which we refer to as Work How it Works Best.

This policy provides a framework for consistent and fair practice when considering agile working arrangements. The associated Work How it Works Best toolkit provides more detailed guidance and links to supporting information.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, and staff on secondment within Public Health Wales, enabling them to work how it works best. This policy will apply to agency workers by agreement between the organisation and the employment agency.

Agile working should promote the all-Wales reach of Public Health Wales, and the nature of the work and support given to the colleagues, the public, and our service users.

Our agile working arrangements take into account three core pillars of where the work is best done, the needs of others, and your needs or preferences:

- **Where the work needs to be or where it is best done** – taking into account the setting, equipment needs, team/ group work and ability to focus;
- **The needs of the team** – both our immediate colleagues, those with whom we're working with on a project/ piece of work or in the broader sense;
- **Where would I prefer to/ need to be** – should I attend a workplace/ home/ other to support my wellbeing, might I need to work somewhere different in order to harmonise work/ life responsibilities?

Therefore, agile working may look different for each of us and the types of arrangements may include:

- **Agile or hybrid working arrangements**
 - e.g. working in different places, including our workplaces, hubs/ local spaces and home.
- **Off-site working days**
 - Colleagues whose work can only be done or is best done in a workplace may agree a number of days (per month, per quarter or over a year) when they work elsewhere;
 - e.g. for CPD, appraisal preparation, statutory and mandatory training completion, reflective practice and attending virtual meetings/ training.
- **Other flexibility**
 - e.g. starting/ finishing earlier/ later, or taking a longer break and working 'split' days to cover core hours.
 - e.g. compressed hours - spreading your contractual hours out over fewer days.

Agile working is available to all employees, in addition to (and does not prevent) requests for Flexible Working under the Flexible Working Regulations 2014. See our [Flexible Working Policy](#) for more information on other Flexible Working options.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Colleagues

All colleagues who work in an agile manner are responsible for:

- Working together with their manager in agreeing how they can work in an agile manner (this is a shared responsibility) in line with the needs of the team, the work and the individual;
- All measures set out in this and related policies and procedures are complied with e.g. Health and Safety, Lone Working and Managing Attendance at Work;
- Ensuring completion of the IHASCO 'Working Safely at Home' eLearning course (on joining the organisation and at regular intervals thereafter);
- Keeping up to date with issues/ working practices within their working area by maintaining appropriate and regular communication with their manager and other colleagues within the organisation and across NHS Wales;
- Attending meetings, training and supervision as necessary and appropriate;
- Taking care of [equipment](#) and [information](#) which they use and familiarise themselves with the relevant policies, e.g. Information Governance Policy;
- Identifying and reporting any issues to their manager related to agile working arrangements;

- Maintaining a good work/ life balance.

3.2 People Managers

All people managers will ensure:

- Working together with their colleagues and teams in agreeing how they can work in an agile manner (this is a shared responsibility) in line with the needs of the team, the work and the individual;
- Agile working is promoted and supported wherever possible;
- Colleagues are supported in accessing, through the Facilities Team, the appropriate equipment (including IT equipment) necessary to undertake their role;
- Colleagues are able to access and complete training;
- Issues related to improving or maintaining productivity, quality, health, safety and security are considered and action taken to support employees in managing them;
- Communication is maintained with all employees and that colleagues are briefed and encouraged to be part of a team and that employees who work in an agile manner continue to receive regular supervision;
- Agile working is monitored through regular review such as My Contribution and regular one-to-one discussions;
- Advice and assistance is sought, where necessary, in relation to the health and safety of employees, including adjustments which may be required, e.g. through [Occupational Health](#) and/ or [People and OD](#).
- Health and safety issues are raised with the respective Health and Safety manager and Estates and Health and Safety Division.

3.3 People and OD

The People and OD Team will:

- Ensure that people managers are provided with advice and support in managing and supporting agile workers;
- Support people managers and colleagues to continue to develop and promote agile working and, where barriers to agile working are identified, work to reduce them;
- Undertake evaluation of agile working, publish the results and act on the findings;
- Work in partnership with Trade Unions, people managers and colleagues to promote agile working.

4. Process

Colleagues should discuss and agree agile working arrangements with their manager. To inform those discussions, it is helpful for all parties to spend some time reflecting on their present working arrangements, and previous working

arrangements if applicable. [Several supporting templates have been developed for this purpose.](#) These are recommended for use upon commencement in a new role and periodically thereafter, e.g. quarterly or every 6 months, to enable colleagues and their manager to consider and discuss what has worked well, what has changed, and what could be improved.

Keep a record of agile working arrangements agreed to enable future discussion and reflection.

There may be occasions where individuals, teams and managers are unable to agree, or easily find a compromise even after robust reflection and discussions.

If this happens, colleagues are encouraged to review the information available on our intranet pages on [Respect and Resolution Toolkit \(sharepoint.com\)](#) to support them in handling any disagreement. You may wish to contact PeopleSupport.PHW@wales.nhs.uk for advice or speak to your Trade Union representative.

5. Communication

Colleagues will keep up to date with issues/ working practices within their working area by maintaining appropriate and regular communication with their manager and other colleagues within the organisation and across NHS Wales.

People managers will ensure that communication is maintained with all employees and that colleagues are briefed and encouraged to be part of a team and that employees who work in an agile manner continue to receive regular supervision.

In line with the principles of Work How it Works Best, we will communicate and work with others to encourage individuals within and across teams to connect to deliver work collaboratively. We will keep calendars open and up to date (using 'private' meetings for matters which are confidential) and use Microsoft Teams statuses to inform others of our availability.

Please see [Enabling and supporting staff to work from home | NHS Employers](#) for additional information to support the wellbeing of remote/ agile workers, including staff suffering domestic abuse and colleagues at risk of loneliness.

6. Equipment

All colleagues of Public Health Wales should be provided with appropriate equipment required to undertake their role. This may include specialist equipment provided through an adjustment agreed through the Managing Attendance at Work Policy and/ or following Occupational Health advice.

Colleagues with agile working arrangements who are able to work best at home are responsible for ensuring they have an appropriate workstation, stable, secure and a sufficient internet connection. Managers must be assured of this prior to agreeing any agile working arrangement. In the event of sustained connectivity concerns, colleagues will be asked to work at a workplace/ agreed alternative location until such time as the issue is resolved.

IT equipment - a keyboard, a monitor and a mouse - can be requested by contacting phw.facilities@wales.nhs.uk The equipment remains the property of Public Health Wales and must be returned to the organisation in good working order as part of the normal leavers process.

The equipment used by agile workers (whether owned by the organisation or provided by individuals) must be safe to use, fit for purpose and not give rise to any health and safety risks. The equipment should be maintained in efficient working order and in good repair.

All colleagues must ensure that all equipment owned by the organisation is kept securely including whilst in transit. Any personal use of this equipment will need to be agreed and may have tax implications to the individual under HMRC taxable benefits home working rules.

Any concerns regarding equipment should be raised with the manager at the first available opportunity.

7. Expenses

Agile workers' contractual bases will remain the appropriate Public Health Wales premises and travel expenses from home to base are not payable.

Any expenses should be claimed as normal through the e-expenses system, <https://www.sel-expenses.com/>

8. Health and safety

Colleagues and people managers have a shared responsibility for promoting and supporting health and wellbeing. Agile working should not adversely affect the health and wellbeing of colleagues, including their mental health and wellbeing.

The health, safety and wellbeing of our colleagues is paramount and we need to ensure our ways of working are safe and do not have a negative impact on wellbeing and welfare.

All colleagues should ensure compliance with statutory and mandatory training and agile workers should complete the IHASCO 'Working Safely at Home'

eLearning course on joining the organisation and at regular intervals thereafter. Please contact phw.facilities@wales.nhs.uk for more information.

[For colleagues who require any workplace adjustments, please see attached for more information.](#)

It is the responsibility of agile workers, e.g. colleagues working from home, to provide adequate home buildings and contents insurance. Public Health Wales does not accept liability for damage caused to an individual's home or its contents.

9. Information Governance

All colleagues should abide by the all Wales Information Governance Policy and associated procedures, regardless of the location from which they work.

All colleagues should ensure that they are up to date with their Information Governance Training.

Any breach of confidentiality should be reported via DATIX, including loss or theft of IT equipment containing confidential and/ or personal identifiable data.

It is expected that colleagues take all reasonable precautions to safeguard data and failures to safeguard data may be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy.

10. Implementation

All colleagues need to be made aware of the existence of this policy which can be obtained on the Public Health Wales Policies Intranet page, and will be publicised via the staff intranet.

People managers should bring the guidance to the attention of their teams.

Whilst training is not offered on this procedure, we encourage colleagues to seek guidance on this procedure from the People and OD team by contacting PeopleSupport.PHW@wales.nhs.uk

11. Equality and Welsh Language

An Equality, Welsh Language and Health Impact Assessment has been completed and has not identified any potential negative impacts (unintended consequences) or gaps.

This policy will be made available in Welsh on our Policy webpages.

12. Review

This policy will be reviewed in 3 years' time or sooner if required.

The named lead will monitor this policy to ensure it is compliant with current legislation, to ensure it is effectively implemented, and ensure that it is reviewed in accordance with the timetable for review.

We are continually looking to improve our employment practices and welcome any feedback you may have in relation to this policy. Feedback can be provided by emailing PeopleSupport.PHW@wales.nhs.uk or you may wish to feedback via your Trade Union representative.