

# Agile Working Policy



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Agile working is a way of working that enables the Councils to empower their workforce to work more flexibly by embracing new ways of working, supported by technology.

Many employees already work in an agile way. The Councils are keen to encourage more employees to work in this way, recognising the benefits agile working can bring to employees and the Councils as service providers.

Whilst the Councils already have technology to support agile working for many employees, over the coming months and years, the Councils will be investing in additional/improved technology to enable services to be provided in new ways; and to enable a greater number of employees to work in an agile way.

The agile working approach has the opportunity to increase productivity, improve work/life balance for individuals and improve customer service.

The policy defines the procedure to support agile working in the workplace and the roles and responsibilities associated with the management of an agile workforce. The policy adheres to statutory UK legislation and ACAS best practice. The Councils ensure it is a fair, equitable and transparent policy with the needs of employees at heart. The Councils ensure compliance with equality and diversity, making sure consideration is given to the needs of its employees, balancing these with the needs of the business.

## **Governing Legislation**

- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR);
- Data Protection Act 2018;
- Working Time Directive;
- The Flexible working Regulations 2014.

## **Supporting Documents**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the HR policies and procedures listed below. These will be applied fairly; irrespective of the age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation and includes (but not limited to):

- Flexible Working Policy;
- Adverse Weather Procedure;
- Code of Conduct;
- Time Off related Policies;

## **Scope of the Policy**

The policy applies to employees of the council who have a role that allows them to work in an agile way regardless of whether they are fixed-term, permanent, full or part-time. It is recognised that due to the diverse nature of roles within the organisation that work patterns will vary and that this will need to be taken into account when applying this policy.

The Agile Working Policy provides a framework for consistent and fair practice on the issues to be taken into account when implementing and managing employees who are agile working.

The Agile Working Policy does not negate or supersede the 'Flexible Working Policy', which can be found on the ELDC intranet under the HR A-Z and BBC's Employment Manual respectively.

The ability to work in an agile way is dependent on a number of factors including but not limited to:

- the requirements of the role;
- the facilities in place to support the particular employee;
- the service being delivered by the employee's service area;
- the Organisation as a whole;
- the welfare of the employee.

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## Introduction

Boston Borough Council and East Lindsey District Council recognise and promote a number of modern and flexible working practices where there are benefits for both the Councils and workforce. We are keen to promote and support employees in achieving a positive work/life balance.

As employers operating across multiple sites and with the significant advancement in technology, we already provide services from multiple office locations, using technology to minimise travel and also the ability to work 'away from the office'.

We do, however, recognise that this level of flexibility is not possible for all our employees and that our multi-site environment requires employees and teams to be visible and available to our customers and colleagues.

The Councils also believe that it is important that employees are regularly connected with the organisation, supporting colleagues and customers at our primary work locations with visible and accessible leadership.

### What is Agile Working?

The Councils want 'Agile Working' to be considered as normal working practice by employees and something employees feel they are supported to do.

'Agile Working' is a flexible and more sustainable way of working for employees who do not need to be fixed to one location and desk and have the tools and technology to work anywhere at any time.

Over a period of time, more employees will be equipped with a laptop computer, with the ability to access their user account/systems and answer their telephone via a WIFI connection from any location.

This will enable colleagues to work from different office locations; work from home or undertake more duties whilst out on site; and also seize the benefits of products like Microsoft Teams that can reduce the need for travel and increase collaboration.

### **Key responsibilities**

#### ***Manager's responsibilities:***

- Line Managers should ensure that they comply with this procedure and apply it effectively, fairly and consistently within their area of responsibility;
- Line Managers should where appropriate, seek advice and/or guidance from HR;
- Line Managers should ensure that they agree appropriate arrangements for any employee who works in an agile way, which includes employees working from multiple Council office bases (ie frequency/days/supervision/work space etc.);
- Line Managers should have risk assessments in place where required for those who are 'Agile Working'.
- Line Managers should set out and monitor defined performances measures or work outcomes, in line with the Performance Appraisal process, and acting on these where appropriate for each employee who is 'Agile Working';
- Line Managers who are 'Agile Working' are also expected to be accessible and available to provide employees with the necessary visibility, support and guidance. This will ensure that the service delivery and performance of their service area is being delivered in line with Councils' objectives.

#### ***Employee's responsibilities:***

- Employees should comply with this policy in a reasonable, constructive and appropriate manner;
- Employees should be focused on the needs of the Councils' and their customers when implementing 'Agile Working' arrangements.
- Employees should abide by policies and procedures whilst 'Agile Working' and comply with the Health and Safety policy and procedures by participating in and undertaking risk assessments; carrying out any necessary actions to minimise risk, maintain a safe working environment and take reasonable care of their own safety;
- Employees are advised to consult with any necessary parties, such as landlords, insurance or mortgage companies, if the agile working includes working from home.
- Employees who work in an Agile way are expected to be available to amend 'Agile Working' arrangements in line with service need;
- Employees should ensure their contact details, calendar availability, colleagues and customers are able to easily make contact with them whilst 'Agile Working'.
- Employees need to be able to work in an environment that lends itself to levels of work concentration.

## **Agile Working Procedure**

The way an employee undertakes 'Agile Working' will depend upon their role and the demands and needs of the service area that they work in.

Line Managers are responsible for agreeing practical and operational arrangements in regard to 'Agile Working' with employees, such as arrangements for communication, support and general housekeeping rules.

It is expected that employees who work in an agile way will still interact regularly with their Line Manager, colleagues and engage with the wider organisation, as required, and may still be required to attend at the office.

The Councils will not normally support an employee 'Agile Working' if they are subject to under-performance, 'Managing Sickness Absence' or in their probationary period, however, the decision is at the discretion of the Line Manager.

Employee who are working in an agile way should ensure that working patterns, working hours and contact arrangements are shared with colleagues to ensure the employee has privacy when they are not working, enabling them to separate their working and home lives.

The traditional core hours of work are no longer in place, however, Line Managers and Employees need to work together to ensure there is adequate service cover during the Councils' business hours.

### **Criteria for Agreeing Agile Working**

Simply, the Line Manager has to be confident that working in an agile way is the right way of working for the service area.

### **Costs associated with Agile Working**

Employees who undertake 'Agile Working' will be provided with the necessary equipment to work in this way, such as a laptop computer, keyboard, mouse and laptop stand.

Employees will not be eligible to claim expenses for use of personal equipment such as home phone lines.

Employees are responsible for any home internet broadband costs and increased energy or heating costs whilst 'Agile Working' at home.

Agile Working should not incur additional costs, such as travel, to the Council (i.e. commutable mileage would still be deductible from journeys based on contracted work base).

### **Normal Contractual Base**

The employee's contractual designated base will remain unchanged whilst 'Agile Working'.

Employees who work in an agile way, will continue to have a contractual base of an appropriate Council Office location.

## **Review of Agile Working**

A review will be undertaken if 'Agile Working' arrangements are deemed to be unsuccessful and the employee may be requested to revert to working their previous working arrangements, if necessary.

## **Health & Safety Risk Assessment**

To comply with all relevant Health and Safety legislation the Line Manager must ensure appropriate risk assessments are undertaken for each member of staff who is 'Agile Working'.

Employees who undertake 'Agile Working' must complete a Lone Working risk assessment and a Health & Safety risk assessment. This should be done in partnership with their Line Manager.

Due consideration to lone working arrangements should be explored fully between the Line Manager and employee to ensure safe working arrangements are in place.

When 'Agile Working' from home, even if it is only on an ad-hoc basis, the employee has a responsibility to ensure they have an appropriate workspace with adequate security, storage and screening from activities and noise in the rest of the home.

There must also be adequate ventilation and lighting.

## **General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018**

The provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018 must be complied with in relation to the security of information at all times no matter what work location is used or working pattern is followed by an employee.

Appropriate security requirements must be met in relation to equipment and Council information in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018.

When dealing with personal information the same measures must be applied as if working in the office.

When working in an agile manner, the employee is responsible for the security of equipment, software, files and any other information in their possession, including the transportation of such items whenever outside of the office environment.

It is particularly important to ensure that non-authorised personnel (in the home environment or whilst working off site) cannot gain access to confidential or personal information as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018.

All Council paperwork should be securely locked away and only be accessible to the employee. Considerations should be made when working remotely on laptops to ensure that the screen cannot be overseen by others and precautions taken to avoid laptops being stolen or lost.

## **Conditions of Service, Policies and Procedures**

All terms and conditions of service, policies, processes and guidelines still apply to those who are 'Agile Working', including absence reporting, booking leave, and requesting 'Time off Work'.

## **Communication and Contact**

Arrangements should be made for effective communication to be maintained between the employee, Line Manager and colleagues / team.

It is essential for regular team meetings to be undertaken in order to develop and maintain relationships. Appropriate communication and support channels must also be made available.

Employees must ensure that they do not give out their personal telephone number or personal email for work purposes.

## **Property and Liability Insurance**

Computers and other items of equipment provided by the Council as part of the 'Agile Working' arrangement will be covered by the Council's insurance policy.

Employees who 'Agile Work' from home on an ad-hoc basis as part of 'Agile Working' may be required to contact their own insurance company to inform them that they will be working at home.

Although covered by the Council's Employer's Liability Policy, employees working at or from home on an ad-hoc basis are advised to ensure their home contents policy has public liability cover.

## **Agile Working at Home**

Employees who may occasionally work from home under the 'Agile Working Policy' should be free of disruption and have a suitable environment in which they are able to perform their work.

Employees working at home should not be distracted from their work, such as through having to look after or care for a child or relative.

Employees should ensure all work materials, documents, IT equipment are restricted and not accessible to a person not employed by the Councils.

If a Line Manager requests an employee to return to their work place due to a business/service need, the employee will be expected to return to the office.

There may be occasions when the provisions of this policy are superseded by other policies, such as during bad weather or emergencies, where alternative short-term arrangements may be necessary for the employee and employer.

The policy does not impact nor should be considered to deal with other short-term working from home arrangements which employees and Line Managers may agree to. Examples are during recuperation, medical/injury or disability related situations where an employee may be physically prevented from travelling to or working in the normal office environment.

## **Abuse of Right**

If the Council believes that an employee is abusing the provision made under this policy then the Council has the right to consider disciplinary proceedings in line with the policy.

## Glossary of Terms

<b>The Councils</b>	Boston Borough Council and East Lindsey District Council
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## Policy Authorisation

<b>Policy Author</b>	James Gilbert, Assistant Director – Organisation and Corporate Services
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<b>Policy Sign-off</b>	JCC (Unions & Management)
<b>Signed by:</b> (name/date)	