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To: Councillor Copland, Convener; Councillor Al-Samarai, Vice-Convener; Councillor David Cameron, the Lord Provost; Councillor Steve Delaney, the Depute Provost; and Councillors Boulton, Clark, Macdonald, McLeod and Thomson.

Trade Union Advisers: Doug Haywood and 1 vacancy (EIS); Kevin Masson and David Willis (GMB); Jason Currie and 1 vacancy (SSTA); Mark Musk and Alison Robertson (UNISON); Joe Craig and Mishelle Gray (UNITE); and Fiona Sales (UCATT) and 2 vacancies (VOICE).

Town House,
ABERDEEN, 17 January 2025

STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Members of the **STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE** are requested to meet in **Committee Room 2 - Town House on MONDAY, 27 JANUARY 2025 at 10.00am**. This is a hybrid meeting and Members may also attend remotely.

The meeting will be webcast and a live stream can be viewed on the Council's website. <https://aberdeen.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

ALAN THOMSON
INTERIM CHIEF OFFICER – GOVERNANCE

B U S I N E S S

NOTIFICATION OF URGENT BUSINESS

- 1.1. There are no items at this time

DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT BUSINESS

- 2.1. Members are requested to determine that any exempt business be considered with the press and public excluded

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

- 3.1. Members are requested to declare any interests

DEPUTATIONS

- 4.1. None at this time

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- 5.1. Minute of Previous Meeting of 18 November 2024 - for approval (Pages 3 - 6)

COMMITTEE PLANNER

- 6.1. Committee Business Planner (Pages 7 - 10)

NOTICES OF MOTION

- 7.1. None at this time

REFERRALS FROM COUNCIL, COMMITTEES AND SUB COMMITTEES

- 8.1. None at this time

GENERAL BUSINESS

- 9.1. Flexible Working Policy and Guidance Update - CORS/25/010 (Pages 11 - 98)
- 9.2. Volunteers Policy - CORS/24/294 (Pages 99 - 118)

Integrated Impact Assessments related to reports on this agenda can be viewed [here](#)

To access the Service Updates for this Committee please click [here](#)

Website Address: aberdeencity.gov.uk

Should you require any further information about this agenda, please contact Stephanie Dunsmuir, email sdunsmuir@aberdeencity.gov.uk

STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 18 November 2024. Minute of Meeting of the STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Copland, Convener; Councillor Al-Samarai, Vice-Convener; Councillor David Cameron, the Lord Provost; and Councillors Boulton, Clark, Macdonald, MacGregor (as substitute for Councillor Delaney), McLeod and Thomson.

Trade Union Advisers:- Zemeta Chefeke and Doug Haywood (EIS); Kevin Masson and David Willis (GMB); Brenda Massie and Alison Robertson (UNISON); and Fiona Sales (UCATT).

The agenda and reports associated with this minute can be viewed [here](#).

Please note that if any changes are made to this minute at the point of approval, these will be outlined in the subsequent minute and this document will not be retrospectively altered.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 9 SEPTEMBER 2024

1. The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 9 September 2024 for approval.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the minute as a correct record.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

2. The Convener advised Members that while an Integrated Impact Assessment had been completed for item 11.1 (Volunteers Policy), officers had advised that it had not been uploaded to the website prior to the meeting and therefore it was recommended that the item be withdrawn from today's meeting and considered at the next Committee in January 2025.

The Committee resolved:-

to agree that the report be withdrawn and reconsidered at the January 2025 Staff Governance Committee.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER

3. The Committee had before it the business planner as prepared by the Interim Chief Officer – Governance.

STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

18 November 2024

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the reason outlined in the planner for the delay to item 8 (Flexible and Smarter Working Policy and Guidance); and
- (ii) to otherwise note the planner.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT UPDATE - CORS/24/314

4. The Committee had before it the annual report by the Executive Director Corporate Services which provided an update on progress and activity in relation to the Council's approach to leadership and management development, previously approved by the Committee in October 2022.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the continuing progress made on developing leaders and managers and the assurance provided within the report that this programme equipped managers to deal with the challenges ahead; and
- (b) note the introduction of the Accelerator Scheme as part of the Aspiring Leaders programme 2024-25 and how this would contribute to supporting people with Protected Characteristics to progress their people management ambitions with Aberdeen City Council, increasing the pool of diverse candidates at leadership level who were suitably qualified and ready to undertake senior posts.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers would provide detail to Members outwith the meeting in respect of the number of returned evaluations for courses where this information was available;
- (ii) to note the suggestion from Members that there could be Elected Member involvement in future in the leadership and development programme, through introductory meetings between officers and various Members which would allow Members to engage with new leaders;
- (iii) to note that officers would ascertain whether working with Trade Unions was specifically included within the People Manager development programme, and that if not, to note that officers had undertaken to work with Trade Union colleagues on introducing this; and
- (iv) to approve the recommendations.

STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL EFFECTIVENESS REPORT - CORS/24/305

5. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Corporate Services which presented the annual report of the Staff Governance Committee to enable Members to provide comment on the data contained within.

STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
18 November 2024

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) provide comments and observations on the data contained within the annual report; and
- (b) note the annual report of the Staff Governance Committee.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the report.

CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY QUARTERLY UPDATE - CORS/24/317

6. The Committee had before it a report by the Executive Director Corporate Services which presented a summary of statistical health and safety performance information for the three month reporting period July to September 2024 to provide the Committee with the opportunity to monitor compliance with health and safety legislation.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the report and provide comment on the health, safety policy, performance, trends, and improvements.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) in relation to page 96 of the report and the graph which displayed the data for the total number of near misses from 2022/23 and 2024/25, to note that officers would liaise with colleagues in Data Insights to ascertain whether future reports could separate out the data for the Education cluster to determine whether the dip in figures was as a result of the school holidays; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the report.

- **COUNCILLOR NEIL COPLAND, Convener**

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	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER The Business Planner details the reports which have been instructed by the Committee as well as reports which the Functions expect to be submitting for the calendar year.								
2	Report Title	Minute Reference/Committee Decision or Purpose of Report	Update	Report Author	Chief Officer	Directorate	Terms of Reference	Delayed or Recommended for removal or transfer, enter either D, R, or T	Explanation if delayed, removed or transferred
3	27 January 2025								
4	Flexible Working Policy and Guidance Update	To present the policy for approval		Sheila Baird / Alison Paterson	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5		
5	Volunteering Policy	To update Committee on the progress in relation to the Volunteer project and seek approval for a new Volunteers policy	Deferred from November 2024 meeting	Luci Camilli / Alison Paterson	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5		
6	21 April 2025								
7	Equality and Diversity Staffing Outcomes / 2025 Update on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan	<p>SGC 13/03/23 - to instruct the Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development to provide an update to Staff Governance Committee at a future meeting of the Committee on any impact this report has on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan as well as any changes, updates or new areas of focus based on the data and analysis</p> <p>SGC 26/06/23 - to instruct the Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development to report to Staff Governance Committee on progress to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan on an annual basis which will either be as part of Mainstreaming or Progress Report updates or as an independent report in years where there is not a Mainstreaming or Progress Report</p> <p>SGC 26/06/23 - to instruct the Chief Officer - People and Organisational Development to report to Staff Governance Committee in advance of the next Mainstreaming Report being presented to Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee in March 2025 (dates to be confirmed) with an update on proposed staffing-related content and Outcomes. This will include the annual update on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan</p>	<p>The scheduling of the Committee does not enable officers to come to SGC with an update in advance, and as per the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee Terms of Reference, the outcomes mainstreaming report must be presented there for approval.</p> <p>Therefore at the first earliest opportunity, the outcomes report will be shared with SGC, and include the revised Employer Outcomes for information and the updated EDI Action Plan for approval.</p>	Sandie Scott	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.6		

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
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2									
8	Equality and Diversity Policy	If required, to present an updated policy for approval - review date of approved policy is April 2025	April 2025	Sandie Scott	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.6	R	The report is only required to be presented if significant changes have been made to the policy. There are no changes made since the policy was last reported to SGC for approval and therefore there will be no requirement for a report to SGC
9	Employee Experience Survey 2025	To present the results and findings from the survey		Isla Newcombe	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.7		
10	Corporate Health & Safety Quarterly Update	For period to 31 December 2024		Colin Leaver	Governance	Corporate Services	3.2		
11	EAS Annual Progress Update Occupational Health and Absence Annual Update	To present an annual report for the EAS/OH & Sickness Absence figures		Sharon Robb	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.7		
12	16 June 2025								
13	Family Friendly Policies	SGC 24/06/24 - to instruct the Chief Officer – People and Citizen Services to report back to Staff Governance Committee in one year's time with updated policies and documentation for approval		Sharon Robb	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5		
14	Cluster Risk Register	To present the risk register and assurance maps		Isla Newcombe	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	GD 8.4		
15	Employee Mental Health Action Plan Annual Progress Update	To provide an update in relation to the employee mental health action plan	June 2025	Sandie Scott	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	3.2 iii		

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	Report Title	Minute Reference/Committee Decision or Purpose of Report	Update	Report Author	Chief Officer	Directorate	Terms of Reference	Delayed or Recommended for removal or transfer, enter either D, R, or T	Explanation if delayed, removed or transferred
2	Staff Travel Plan & Policy	NZET 27/03/24 - The Committee resolved:- (i)to replace recommendation 2.1 with "instruct the Chief Officers – Strategic Place Planning and People and Citizen Services, in consultation with the Chief Officer-Finance, to set up an internal officer working group to review and refresh the Council's Staff Travel Policy with the emphasis on walking and cycling"; (ii) to instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to update the Council's Travel Plan to align with any proposed changes to the Staff Travel Policy resulting from (i); (iii) to instruct the Chief Officers – Strategic Place Planning and People and Citizen Services to thereafter undertake consultation with Council staff and trade unions on any proposed changes to the Staff Travel Policy and/or the Council Travel Plan; and (iv) to instruct the Chief Officers – Strategic Place Planning and People and Citizen Services, following analysis of the consultation and finalisation of the documents, to report both the updated Staff Travel Policy and Council Travel Plan back to this Committee and / or other relevant committees by Summer 2025 for approval.	Summer 2025	Sandie Scott	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5		
16									
17	25 August 2025								
18	Mortuary Staff Move	To present an update to Committee	Summer 2025	Lesley Strachan	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.2		
19	Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing Policy	To seek approval of the policy		Isla Newcombe	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5		
20	Corporate Health & Safety Quarterly Update	To present the quarterly update		Colin Leaver	Governance	Corporate Services	3.2		
21	3 November 2025								
22	Bairns Hoose	To present an update to Committee		Lesley Strachan	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.2		
23	Staff Governance Committee Effectiveness Report	To present the annual effectiveness report		Isla Newcombe	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	GD 8.5		
24	Corporate Health & Safety Quarterly Update	To present the quarterly update		Colin Leaver	Governance	Corporate Services	3.2		

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2									
25	People Policy Data	SGC 26/06/23 - to instruct the Chief Officer - People and Organisational Development to report disciplinary, grievance and dignity and respect at work data to the Staff Governance Committee on an annual basis		Lesley Strachan	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5, 2.7		
26	Leadership and Management Development Update	SGC 03/10/22 - to agree that an annual update on the refreshed approach to leadership and management development be presented to Committee		Sandie Scott	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.4		
27	Managing Substance Misuse Policy	The revised policy was approved at Committee in November 2023 - to be reviewed annually	Report will not be required if there are no changes to be made	Isla Newcombe	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5		
28	Corporate Health & Safety Policy	To present the revised Health & Safety Policy	Report will not be required if there are no changes to be made	Colin Leaver	Governance	Corporate Services	2.5		
29	Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure	The revised policy was approved at Committee in November 2023 - due for review November 2025	Report will not be required if there are no changes to be made	Isla Newcombe	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5		
30	2026								
31	Managing Performance Policy and Procedure	The revised policy was approved at Committee in January 2024 - due for review January 2026	Report will not be required if there are no changes to be made	Isla Newcombe	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5		
32	REPORTING DATE TO BE CONFIRMED								
33	Zero Tolerance Policy	SGC 22/04/24 - to instruct the Interim Chief Officer – People and Citizen Services to combine the three closely linked policies, procedures and approaches relating to Zero Tolerance, Violence and Aggression, and Unacceptable Actions into a single policy; with the exception of pupil behaviour in schools as this was governed by national policy and guidance; and report back to Committee for approval of the final policy		Isla Newcombe	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5		
34	Employee Code of Conduct	To present an update on the Employee Code of Conduct		Isla Newcombe	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5		
35	People development policy / guidance	To seek approval of the policy		Isla Newcombe	People & Citizen Services	Corporate Services	2.5		

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Staff Governance Committee
DATE	27 January 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Flexible Working Policy and Guidance Update
REPORT NUMBER	CORS/25/010
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Andy MacDonald
CHIEF OFFICER	Isla Newcombe
REPORT AUTHOR	Alison Paterson and Sheila Baird
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.5

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To introduce the new Flexible Working Policy and an updated guidance which was formerly the Smarter Working – Flexible Working in Aberdeen City Council Guidance (Version 4, January 2015).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Notes the extensive engagement which has taken place across a range of stakeholder groups as part of the development of this policy and the refresh to the guidance;
- 2.2 Approves the introduction of the Flexible Working Policy attached as Appendix 1 to this report; and
- 2.3 Notes the accompanying guidance document (Appendix 2) which supports the application of the policy and will supersede the existing Smarter Working – Flexible Working in Aberdeen City Council Guidance (Version 4, January 2015).

3. CURRENT SITUATION

Background and Context

- 3.1 The Council has, for a number of years, been supportive of embedding the principles of 'Flexible Working' throughout the organisation, recognising the potential benefits of such Flexible Working arrangements including: improved work-life balance, employee motivation and productivity.
- 3.2 In January 2015, the Council's flexible working provisions, accounting for employment legislation, were formalised into Smarter Working – Flexible Working in Aberdeen City Council Guidance. This was in line with the move to Marischal College, where hot-desking was introduced, and the Guidance set

out the different ways of working that were available to employees across the organisation.

- 3.3 Whilst COVID-19 undoubtedly changed the world of work, the council's journey to make these ways of working possible began prior to this. With our organisational transformation to bring us towards a new ambitious target operating model in 2017 and 2022, the aims of the transformation programme included a shift in the way we work. This was both digitally - in the tools and technology we use to do our jobs - and culturally - in the way we treat one another and our citizens; which also led to the introduction of the Guiding Principles.
- 3.4 From 2017 into the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, modernising and delivering services in a more flexible and adaptable way for our citizens was progressed.
- 3.5 COVID-19 nonetheless had a dramatic impact on how we worked, with employees and services having to very quickly change their workstyle and adapt to new ways of working which was enforced upon us, including working from home which meant we had to review our business model in line with Government instruction. This policy is now looking to sustain a permanent model of hybrid working in light of preferences of our staff; our digital adoption which is now a primary interface for our customers, which also assists our recruitment challenges by offering more flexibility to employees.
- 3.6 The recent Best Value Report (Workforce Innovation – How council's are responding to workforce challenges) highlights that the Council now has an ethos of 'work as an activity we do' rather than 'a place we go'. There is a need for flexibility and efficiency in our reducing workforce, and hybrid working is regarded as a way of improving employee work-life balance.

Review of Flexible Working Guidance

- 3.7 Many employees have continued to work in different ways following the pandemic and, like most organisations, the post COVID-19 period provided an opportunity to reflect and adapt to provide our services in the most innovative, efficient and effective ways possible, making the most of our existing and emerging technologies and with the potential for increased work life balance for employees.
- 3.8 The most significant change to ways of working was a shift, subject to the individual employee's role and service needs, to work both from home and the workplace. This combination of working from home and from the workplace is known as 'hybrid working' and has become commonplace across public sector organisations and businesses.
- 3.9 These changes identified a need to review and refresh the Smarter Working – Flexible Working in Aberdeen City Council guidance (Version 4, Jan 2015) and the development of a Flexible Working policy to sit alongside the guidance and consolidate the Council's commitment to flexible working.

- 3.10 Changes in legislation that came into effect in April 2024 have been included in the review, and the policy and guidance. The policy continues to ensure that the council remains compliant with all legislation relating to flexible working, including the Employment Rights Act 1996 as amended by the Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023 and Flexible Working Regulations 2014 as amended.
- 3.11 The Flexible Working Steering Group was established in summer 2021 to oversee the development of the policy and guidance and in recognition the work spanned across different Clusters: People & Citizen Services, Corporate Landlord and Governance - including Health & Safety, Legal, and Digital & Technology.
- 3.12 In addition, the Flexible Working, Working Group was set up in 2021 to undertake a review of the current Smarter Working – Flexible Working in Aberdeen City Council Guidance and to develop a policy to set out our overall organisational framework for flexible working.

Research and Engagement

- 3.13 In late 2020, the Council undertook a Future of Work Survey. Over 1800 employees took part from across the organisation and provided an insight into the shared experience of working through the pandemic as well as contributing ideas about what the workplace and workspaces could look like in the future. The Future of Work Survey results highlighted that many employees would prefer to work differently, with a mix of home and office working where this aligned with the outcomes and client group for their service.
- 3.14 In spring 2022, a test and trial was launched across the organisation. The aim was to give services, teams and individuals the opportunity to try out different work patterns and workstyles without the need for a formal request, and to explore what could be possible for them individually, and as a team whilst continuing to deliver high quality services to citizens. As part of this, FAQs and informal guidance was provided along with eLearning for managers to help develop skills to effectively manage hybrid teams. This allowed us to gather data and information in order to develop the Flexible Working policy and guidance.
- 3.15 The Working Group undertook a series of engagement sessions with an initial focus group, Managers, SMTs, Trade Unions, Equality, Disability & Inclusion Groups (internal and external) and the Leadership Forum. The purpose of these sessions was to understand where services/teams were, post Covid-19, what was different for them, how they wanted to work in the future, what challenges they were facing and what support they would need going forward.
- 3.16 The Working Group also undertook benchmarking with other Local Authorities in Scotland. The benchmarking areas included hybrid working, contractual changes, working from abroad and flexible working arrangements.
- 3.17 Over the course of the review, the Working Group have accessed reports, best practice and webinars from a range of sources including CIPD, RGU and Audit

Scotland, in order to establish trends across both the public and private sector. Scottish Government reported in their Business Conditions and Insights Survey (June 2024) that businesses in the Information and Communication sector and Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities sectors are most likely to report an intention to use increased homeworking as part of their business model.

3.18 The results of the benchmarking, research and engagement were reviewed and themes/issues were identified. Each of these was then considered and changes and/or additions made to the policy and guidance. The following themes/issues were identified:-

- Legislative Changes
- Hybrid Working including managing hybrid teams
- Types of flexibility (temporary changes to working patterns, more flexibility in flexi time and core hours)
- How and when to make contractual changes
- Clear guidance on working from home for those who have caring responsibilities to ensure appropriate measures are in place during working time
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Office Space and Configuration
- DSE, First Aid and Fire Safety
- Recruitment and Onboarding
- Digital & Technology needs

A full summary of the engagement and research and the resulting changes can be found in the Summary of Engagement and Evidence document at Appendix 3.

3.19 Currently an Employee Experience Survey has been launched which includes a section on flexible working. This mirrors some of the questions asked of the workforce in the Future of Work Survey in 2020 about. The survey closes mid-January 2025 and therefore, the results have not been fully analysed, however initial responses indicate similar outcomes to the 2020 survey. At the time of writing this report, of those who responded, 65% reported themselves as hybrid workers and responses came from across all job families. The majority of employees said they strongly agreed that hybrid working helps their work-life balance, helps make more productive use of their time and makes Aberdeen City Council a more attractive employer for prospective and existing employees. More than half of respondents agreed that greater flexibility benefits equality, diversity and inclusion across the organisation.

Workforce Data

3.20 The workforce is made up of the following job families (not including teachers for which this policy does not apply) spread across various locations including parks, depots, community centres, office buildings, museums and galleries etc.

Frontline Customer Services:	5.3%
Frontline Operational Services:	28.1%
Information Services:	19.7%
People Managers:	9.2%

Social & Community Services: 37.7%

- 3.21 The Core Capabilities within each Job Family can assist identifying the appropriate work style (hybrid or fixed location) in order to aid Flexible Working discussions and decisions. For example, roles within the Information Services job family generally rely on digital resources to carry out their work and this means there may be flexibility within these roles to work from alternative locations. Roles within the Frontline Operational job family generally provide frontline operational services for our citizens, which may require to be undertaken from a fixed location.
- 3.22 The majority of the Council's workforce are female (70.2%) and the table below details the male/female split for employees who work part time and full time.

Current Part time split – Male / Female

	Part Time	Full Time
Male	431 (12.2%)	2028 (43.1%)
Female	3110 (87.8%)	2679 (56.9%)

The data shows us that it is predominantly female employees who currently work part time across the Council, which shows the flexibility already in place, and indicates part time working is more likely due to caring responsibilities. This mirrors the national data from the Carers Census, Scotland 2022-23 - ONS data (office for national statistics) [Information on Unpaid Carers - Carers Census, Scotland, 2022-23 - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/publications/information-on-unpaid-carers-2022-23/pages/1-2.aspx) which shows that around three-quarters of carers in the 2022-23 Carers Census (74%) were female. Females of working age are more likely to provide unpaid care than working age males.

- 3.23 The table below details the current age profile of the organisation.

Current age profile

Age 16-29	13.5%
Age 30-49	48.1%
Age 50-59	26.4%
60+	12.0%

The Carers Census in 2022-23 detailed three in five carers (60%) were working age (18 - 64 year old) adults. Adults aged 65 and over accounted for a quarter of carers identified (25%), whilst young carers (carers aged under 18) made up 15% of carers. This data indicates that a number of employees are likely to have caring responsibilities across the different age groups.

- 3.24 The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) reported that *'workers over the age of 50 generally find it harder than other age groups to find new employment, often because of discrimination or bias on the part of employers and recruiters. A lack of flexible working can also make it harder to remain in employment, particularly if workers have caring responsibilities, a disability or a long-term health condition.'*

- 3.25 From a young employee perspective, feedback from our Young Employee Network further re-enforces this data. When asked ‘what does flexible working mean to you’, the following points were highlighted:
- The main benefit of working for the council is having the flexibility of where and when they work – a mixture of at a work location and working from home. They added that this means less commuting time and can save money too.
 - Greater productivity when working from home, especially for particular tasks as there are less distractions. However, they also see the benefit of being at work, in person, to see colleagues and collaborate.
 - Having flexibility to support work life balance plays a big part in maintaining general health and fitness, social activities, family commitments and attending appointments.
 - They highlighted that they would not work for an organisation that does not offer flexibility, and this is a very important factor when choosing and remaining with an employer.
 - Overall, flexible working arrangements is viewed as a massive benefit and plays a big part in job satisfaction.
- 3.26 Having considered our workforce data on age and gender, it clearly shows the importance of providing flexible working arrangements for a workforce who will, at different stages of their work and personal lives, have different responsibilities and may be able to benefit from more flexibility to support their caring responsibilities and meet their changing needs.
- 3.27 The Flexible Working Policy provides for greater flexibility in the changing workforce and supports some of our workforce challenges around attraction and retention and being seen as an employer of choice. This was highlighted in the recent Best Value Report (Workforce Innovation – How Councils are responding to workforce challenges) which highlighted there was a need for flexibility and efficiency in our reducing workforce, and hybrid working is regarded as a way of improving employee work-life balance.

Flexible Working – Wider Considerations

- 3.28 Whilst there are many benefits to flexible working, such as improved work-life balance, increased morale, being seen as an attractive employer and in turn aid attraction and retention of employees, there are also challenges that need to be addressed, some of which have been identified through research and feedback from employees and managers include:

Maintaining team morale and cohesion when working remotely. It can be harder to foster a sense of belonging among team members who do not see each other physically or communicate face-to-face. This can affect collaboration, innovation, and problem-solving. This has been recognised in the policy and guidance, to emphasise responsibilities as well as through regular check-ins with team members, including “anchor days” to assist with this challenge and encourage managers to adopt a continuous learning and improvement approach to flexible working, and to share best practices and feedback with each other.

Clarity around managing performance and expectations is even more important when working flexibly. Managers need to utilise a more outcome-based approach to managing employees, rather than focusing on time spent / or presence in the office. They also need to provide clear and frequent feedback, set realistic and measurable goals, and monitor progress and results. Employees also have a role to play and need to be proactive in communicating their availability, workload, and achievements, and seek feedback and support when needed through regular 121s and team meetings.

Balancing the needs of different employee groups and individuals.

Flexible working is not a one-size-fits-all solution, and each employee may have different motivations, preferences, and challenges when it comes to working flexibly. Some employees may have caring responsibilities or health issues which benefit from greater flexibility, whilst others may face barriers to working remotely, such as lack of space, equipment, connectivity, or feelings of isolation. Managers should be aware of potential differences and try to accommodate them where possible, while ensuring consistency across the team and the service and ensuring high levels of service delivery.

Supporting the health and wellbeing of employees who work flexibly.

Flexible working can have positive impacts on employee wellbeing, such as reducing stress, increasing satisfaction and morale, and enhancing productivity. However, for some it can lead to feelings of isolation or potential blurred boundaries between work and personal life. Managers need to ensure that employees who work flexibly have access to the same support and resources as those who work in the office, such as training, development, recognition, and inclusion in social activities. They also need to promote a healthy work culture that encourages employees to take breaks, and to switch off. Managers must ensure that employees feel supported and promote the health and wellbeing resources available within the Council. The guidance also provides information to ensure compliance on the Working Time regulations and health and safety considerations.

Recruitment and Retention. Having a Flexible Working policy and guidance can help to attract new employees, and may assist with filling some harder to fill roles. It can also support retention by providing greater flexibility for existing employees and a better work-life balance.

Environmental considerations. There may be a reduction in environmental impact, including pollution and carbon emissions from staff commuting, depending on mode of travel. However, there are additional emissions from staff homeworking, calculated as part of the Council carbon footprint.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. The flexible working policy and guidance aims to ensure that employees with protected characteristics feel included and can make use of flexible working options to help ensure they can remain in employment. For example employees:

- with a disability may be able to manage their condition with flexibility in their work.
- can be supported to attend religious engagements with flexibility in their work time.

- with caring responsibilities can better manage their commitments at home and have a better work life balance.
- 3.29 To address these challenges and maximise the benefits of working in a more flexible way, the policy and guidance aim to provide a clear and consistent framework for flexible working that respects individual employee preferences and needs, supports effective teamwork and communication, ensures high standards of performance and quality, and promotes a positive and inclusive work culture that values diversity, wellbeing, and innovation, whilst meeting the needs of the business and service delivery requirements.
- 3.30 The policy and guidance outlines the different types of flexible working arrangements that are available, such as part-time, compressed hours, flexi-time, flexible core hours, or term-time working. It also sets out the roles and responsibilities of employees and managers in relation to working flexibly, such as how to make and approve requests, reviewing and evaluating arrangements, and resolving any issues or conflicts. In addition the flexible working guidance provides practical tips and tools for employees and managers to work effectively and efficiently in different settings and situations, such as managing time, tasks, and communication, using technology and equipment, and ensuring health and safety. The policy and guidance are supported by a range of resources, such as eLearning modules, FAQs, checklists, templates, dedicated SharePoint page, and case studies.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no immediate financial implications associated with the adoption of the Flexible Working policy and guidance.
- 4.2 The cost of any equipment required for an employee to work from home should be covered by the employee, e.g. employees must ensure a suitable workspace and have appropriate WIFI etc. in order to meet DSE requirements to be able to work from home.
- 4.3 Where additional equipment is part of a reasonable adjustment this will continue to be managed by the service, and costs incurred may be covered by the service or through the DWP's Access to Work scheme.
- 4.4 There may be potential income generation opportunities through alternative use of office space.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This policy ensures that the council remains compliant with all legislation relating to Flexible Working including the Employment Rights Act 1996 as amended by the Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023 and Flexible Working Regulations 2014 as amended.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There may be positive and negative environment impacts arising from Flexible Working. Employees continuing to work in a hybrid way supports a reduction in car journeys and resultant emissions from employees commuting to work.
- 6.2 However, higher levels of homeworking can lead to higher energy consumption due to increased energy usage at home (through heating in particular) whilst continuing to consume energy in offices/ fixed working locations.

7. RISK

- 7.1 Reputational - if the Council did not have a Flexible Working policy, this could have a negative impact on the reputation of the Council being seen as an Employer of Choice. Flexible working can be seen as an attractive benefit for potential candidates and can widen recruitment pools, which in turn aids recruitment and retention and workforce capacity. This will also reduce impact on service delivery.
- 7.2 Health and Wellbeing – the policy recognises that flexible working can have both a potential positive and negative impact on employees’ mental health and wellbeing. More emphasis and awareness is required to ensure employees are supported if they are struggling mentally with isolation and working long hours if they request to work remotely. This recognises and puts measures in place to ensure communication and support channels are in place. This also includes compliance with Working Time Regulations in terms of rest breaks, for example.
- 7.3 Health and Safety – inherent to the nature of some roles within the council is an element of lone working. However, there is a potential for more employees to be lone working if their requested flexible working pattern results in them working outwith standard building opening times. In these circumstances reference should be made to the Lone Working policy to ensure employees’ health and safety at all times.
- 7.4 Operational - by offering flexible working options to new employees, this in turn may have a positive effect on current employees with vacancies being filled more easily as we are seen as an attractive employer, this in turn reduces pressure through reducing workload for team members who may be covering vacant roles. This will overall have a positive effect on employees’ mental health and wellbeing, and potentially reduce absence rates.
- 7.5 Financial wellbeing (employees) – the policy recognises that some flexible working options may impact positively or negatively to employees in terms of potential additional costs. This may be in relation to additional household costs however, this may be balanced by reduced travel cost and time. The Guidance provides relevant support for employees who may be experiencing in-work poverty.
- 7.6 Financial wellbeing (employer) the Policy aims to have a positive impact by offering more flexibility for existing employees which in turn will support retention therefore saving on recruitment costs and management time. Also

when recruiting externally, offering flexibility may create a wider pool of candidates ensuring vacant posts are filled which reduces impact on service delivery and costs to cover vacant posts.

- 7.7 Compliance – it aims to ensure a fair and legal process is followed in regards to Statutory Flexible Working requests to comply with employment law.
- 7.8 The Flexible Working policy and supporting documentation allows managers to identify and manage risks through effective mitigation controls, including monitoring of data through the People Performance Dashboard and where appropriate, inclusion in operational risk registers.
- 7.9 There have been no unintended effects, consequences and risks identified resulting from the introduction of the policy framework. This will continue to be monitored as the policy is applied.

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	Risk that delivery of strategic objectives is affected by recruitment and retention challenges.	The availability of flexible working options for existing and prospective employees can support mitigation of recruitment and retention challenges.	M	Yes
Compliance	Risk of non-compliance with Flexible Working legislation.	Implementation of the policy supports compliance with current legislation.	L	Yes
Operational	Risk that delivery of Council services is affected by staff recruitment and retention challenges.	The availability of flexible working options for existing and prospective employees can support mitigation of recruitment and retention challenges and create opportunities for flexible operating hours that can support service improvement.	M	Yes
Financial	Risk that non-	The approval and implementation of the	L	Yes

	compliance with legislation leads to legal challenge.	policy and accompanying guidance will support mitigation of this risk.		
Reputational	<p>Risk that the Council is not viewed as an attractive employer.</p> <p>Perception that all ACC employees are working exclusively from home</p>	Providing flexible working options and flexibility for current and future employees ensures we are seen as an attractive employer.	M	Yes
Environment / Climate	<p>There may be positive and negative environment impacts arising from this policy. Employees working on a hybrid basis reduces emissions from employees commuting to work. Alongside this homeworking may result in increased emissions from energy usage at home (e.g. heating) whilst continuing to consume energy in offices/ fixed work locations.</p>	The Flexible Working guidance ensures that managers are aware of these factors when taking decisions on flexible working requests. They can also be flexible and support employees to work from the office if they are worried about increased utility costs as a result of working from home, ensuring a balance to meet all needs where possible.	L	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement <u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u>	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of the following aspects of the policy statement:-</p> <p>Valuing Our Staff –</p> <p>Recognise that the Council depends upon its staff to deliver the services it provides and believe the Council must properly reward, train and support its staff.</p>
Workforce Priorities	<p>5 Build on our approaches to hybrid and flexible working through effective use of digital, guidance and workspaces.</p> <p>9 Mental health and wellbeing support for staff including family friendly support.</p> <p>10 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action plan to meet our employer equality outcomes.</p>
Estates and Assets	<p>5 Reduce and rationalize property assets.</p> <p>8 Deliver Workplace of the future outputs.</p>
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26</u>	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 1 No one will suffer due to poverty by 2026.</p> <p>1.4 Poverty affecting those with protected characteristics and in specific communities. Increase support for those who have been most disadvantaged through the pandemic by 2023.</p> <p>The introduction of this policy will attract prospective employees to see the Council as an employer of choice through increased flexibility in how and where they can work which will ensure those with protected characteristics have flexibility around this area. For example flexibility can help those with a disability to manage their condition and also to continue to work.</p>
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of Children & Young People Stretch Outcomes 6 and 7 in the LOIP.</p>

	<p>6. By meeting the health and emotional wellbeing needs of our care experienced children and young people they will have the same levels of attainment in education and positive destinations as their peers by 2026.</p> <p>7. 95% of children living in our priority neighbourhoods (Quintiles 1 & 2) will sustain a positive destination upon leaving school by 2026.</p> <p>The Prosperous People theme in the LOIP indicates that all people in the City are entitled to feel safe, protected from harm and supported where necessary, which would include employees and prospective employees of the Council. Having this policy in place should show the Council as an employer of choice, making it attractive for candidates to apply to come and work for us, through provision of greater flexibility within work to allow young people to be supported and balance home and work life. This should assist with employee mental health and wellbeing allowing employees to thrive both in employment and at home.</p>
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	<p>The proposals within this report impact on the Prosperous Place section of the LOIP under the following Stretch outcomes.</p> <p>13. Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our changing climate. 14. Increase sustainable travel: 38% of people walking and 5% of people cycling as main mode of travel by 2026.</p> <p>The provisions in this policy allow greater flexibility for employees in where and when they work, through the introduction of hybrid working which will contribute to reducing emissions across the City through less people commuting to work, thereby assisting to reduce carbon emissions.</p>
Regional and City Strategies	Not applicable.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

A new Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been completed as part of this report.

The IIA showed either neutral or positive impacts on protected characteristics. For example a positive impact on Age, Disability, Pregnancy and Maternity, Religion or Belief and Sex. This is through provision of greater flexibility in how and where employees can work, this can help to manage certain medical conditions and pregnancy, allow flexibility in caring responsibilities and to manage working time around religious requirements.

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	New IIA has been completed.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	New DPIA Assessment completed for Working From Abroad under Exceptional Circumstances as a new process has been developed for this.
Other	N/A

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Future of Work – Report and Survey

<https://aberdeencitycouncil365.sharepoint.com/SitePages/The-Future-of-Work-Results.aspx>

11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Policy

Appendix 2 Guidance

Appendix 3 Summary of Evidence

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Flexible Working Policy



Document Control

Approval	
Implementation Date	
Policy Number	POL-C-0018
Policy Author(s) and Owner	Alison Paterson / Sheila Baird – People and Organisational Development Advisors (Policy Authors) Isla Newcombe – Chief Officer People and Citizen Services (Policy Owner)
Approval Authority	Staff Governance Committee
Scheduled Review	February 2027
Changes	This is a new Policy to accompany updated Flexible Working Guidance (Version 4, January 2015).

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1. Why does the Council need this Policy?

- 1.1. Aberdeen City Council is committed to supporting Flexible Working arrangements provided the needs and objectives of both the Council and the employee themselves can be met. The Council has, for a number of years, been supportive to embedding the principles of 'Flexible Working' throughout the organisation, recognising the benefits of such Flexible Working arrangements including improved work-life balance, employee empowerment, motivation and productivity. It places an emphasis on the culture of our organisation, our Guiding Principles and how we can all make the best use of the technology and workspaces available to us to deliver better services.
- 1.2. The COVID 19 pandemic resulted in employees having to very quickly adapt to new ways of working, by embracing new technology, communicating with teams and colleagues in a different way and having to be more creative in how we deliver our services. This led to a review of the Smarter Working – Flexible Working in Aberdeen guidance resulting in the establishment of this Flexible Working policy to sit alongside the guidance and consolidate the Council's commitment to Flexible Working.
- 1.3. The purpose of the policy is to set out the responsibilities and arrangements which will allow the Council to meet its statutory requirements, but also meeting the established wider principles around Flexible Working, which goes beyond the statutory requirement allowing occasional flexible working arrangements to be considered. This allows for greater flexibility within the workforce whilst prioritising service delivery and citizen requirements, details of which are contained within the accompanying Flexible Working guidance. This progressive approach to Flexible Working can empower employees and improve an employee's motivation, performance and productivity, enabled through a focus on outcomes.
- 1.4. This policy acts as a key control by ensuring compliance with all legislation around Flexible Working including the Employment Rights Act 1996 as amended by the Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023 and Flexible Working Regulations 2014 as amended. It also evidences that the Council is meeting the requirements of Best Value **by using hybrid and remote working to achieve service and staff benefits.**
- 1.5. Many employees have continued to work in the way they adapted during the pandemic and this Policy will not require these employees to make a new request in relation to their current arrangement, wherever these are considered by both manager and employee to be working effectively.

- 1.6. The policy will support the Council's aim to be an employer of choice by providing and promoting flexibility in working arrangements. This will help to ensure a wider and more diverse pool of candidates to apply for vacancies and may help to fill some hard to fill roles. The various Flexible Working options will also support workforce retention offering flexibility and work life balance, and a more inclusive workplace, for existing employees.
- 1.7. Flexible Working options aim to support employees going through various life events during their employment, making it possible to manage work around these events e.g. maternity, paternity, caring responsibilities, disability and/or illness diagnoses. Without such Flexible Working options, there is the risk of impact on people with protected characteristics as well as on retention and employee morale and wellbeing. The accompanying guidance provides information on how to support, health, safety and wellbeing.
- 1.8. It is recognised however, that Flexible Working covers a wide range of scenarios, and some options, such as hybrid working, do not suit every person or role and may have potential detrimental impact on service delivery, or on mental/health and wellbeing for those with certain conditions or living arrangements.
- 1.9. The policy and supporting guidance sets out both manager and employee responsibilities to ensure workplace and team cohesion and provides guidance on how best to manage teams who may not be working on location together every day. Therefore, additional support and guidance may be required to ensure hybrid teams are managed effectively in order to bring them together for specific meetings, training, collaboration and social interactions. This will ensure a sense of team belonging is maintained. The accompanying guidance sets out how to support hybrid working teams including the use of Anchor Days which are days where whole teams come together and aid team connection, support and employee wellbeing.

2. Application and Scope Statement

- 2.1 This policy applies to all employees of the Council except Teachers. For Teachers, Flexible Working arrangements will be applied in line with [SNCT guidance](#).
- 2.2 The Council recognises employees have a statutory right to request Flexible Working, regardless of length of service.
- 2.3 An employee is permitted to make two statutory Flexible Working requests within a 12 month period whether successful or not, before applying again in line with the Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023.
- 2.4 A manager must consult with the employee before making a decision on a Flexible Working application. The Manager must be able to show they have given full consideration to the request and evidence their decision.

- 2.5 There are circumstances where a Manager can refuse a statutory request which must meet one of the statutory grounds for refusal:
- The burden of additional costs
 - A detrimental effect on the ability to meet citizen demand
 - The inability to re-organise work among existing employees
 - The inability to recruit additional employees
 - A detrimental impact on quality
 - A detrimental impact on performance
 - Insufficient work being available during the period the employee proposes to work
 - Planned organisational changes
- 2.6 In addition to the statutory right to request Flexible Working, employees can discuss occasional flexible working arrangements with their manager, see accompanying guidance for further details. This is in line with the existing Flexible Working principles as described in 1.1 above.

3 Responsibilities

- 3.1 The Council will adhere to all its statutory responsibilities in relation to the provisions of this policy.
- 3.2 Chief Officers are responsible for the application of this policy and accompanying guidance within their service delivery remit.
- 3.3 Line Managers have responsibility for applying this policy, its provisions and those of the accompanying Guidance. Line Managers are required to:
- Ensure employees are aware of this policy and accompanying guidance.
 - Create an environment where employees feel they can discuss and request any Flexible Working arrangement.
 - Fully consider impacts of Flexible Working on inclusion and employee wellbeing as well as impacts on team cohesion, performance and morale. This includes ensuring regular in-person touchpoints with team members, including via 1 to 1 and team meetings.
 - Consider the best-use of their available Council workspaces and technology to meet service, team and individual needs.
 - Apply this policy consistently.
 - Consider any Statutory Flexible Working requests in line with statutory responsibilities, with consideration to service delivery and citizen requirements, ensuring an outcome is given to the employee as soon as reasonably possible and within 2 months of the request being received. Ensuring to consult with the employee before making a decision on an application.
 - Maintain the employee's confidentiality as appropriate.

- 3.4 Employees have a responsibility to:
- Familiarise themselves with the contents of the policy and accompanying guidance
 - Co-operate with managers and attend any meetings in relation to their request
 - Notify their manager of any changes in their circumstances
- 3.5 Chief Officers must deal with Statutory Flexible Working appeals within 14 days of receiving an appeal.
- 3.6 People and Citizen Services are responsible for providing advice to managers and employees on the application of this policy.
- 3.7 A breach or misuse of this policy may result in the potential application of another corporate policy e.g. Managing Discipline policy.
- 3.8 Non-compliance with this policy should be reported to the employee's line manager, a more senior manager or People and Citizen Services.
- 3.9 Any feedback on the policy or suggestions for improvement can be communicated to the Chief Officer – People and Citizen Services and this will be taken into account as part of the regular review of this policy.

4. Supporting Procedures & Documentation

- 4.1 Accompanying guidance on Flexible Working has been put in place to support application of this policy. This includes the procedure for dealing with Statutory Flexible Working requests, as well as wider Flexible Working options available in line with the council's Flexible Working ethos which goes beyond the statutory requirement.
- 4.2 This policy also links to other documents including information on the following links:
- Flexible Working SharePoint Page
 - Working Time Directive
 - Health and Safety
 - Mental Health and Wellbeing
 - Lone Working policy
 - ICT Acceptable Use Policy
 - Council's Guiding Principles
 - Digital Workplace
 - Social Media Guidance
 - Special Leave Policy
 - Family Friendly provisions
 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
 - Financial Wellbeing / Cost of Living Support
 - Data Protection – Corporate and local procedures

5. About this Policy

Policy Statement and Core Principles

- 5.1 The policy is not creating any specific regulations or requirements other than what is stated under section 3 above.
- 5.2 Whilst we want to continue to provide flexibility to our workforce, the primary focus will always be on service delivery, the needs of our citizens and the team.
- 5.3 Employees have a statutory right to request Flexible Working. Approved Statutory Flexible Working requests will result in a permanent contractual change.
- 5.4 Employees have the right to appeal against the decision of a Statutory Flexible Working request.
 - An appeal will not be heard by the same person who issued the decision on the formal Flexible Working request.
 - Statutory Flexible Working Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Cluster Chief Officer within 14 days of receiving the outcome letter.
 - Appeals against a Statutory Flexible Working requests are heard by a Chief Officer supported by a People & Organisational Development Adviser and considered within a further 14 days.
 - In using this policy, reasonable allowance should be made for employees whose first language is not English or who have difficulty expressing themselves. Reasonable adjustments should be made for those with a disability.
 - All matters will be dealt with promptly and in confidence. Confidential records should be kept in the employee personal file of the outcome of any Statutory Flexible Working request.
- 5.5 Flexible Working requests outwith the Statutory right, will be managed within the service in line with the Flexible Working guidance and would not result in a permanent contractual change.
- 5.6 The Flexible Working policy introduces 2 different workstyles – Hybrid or Fixed Location Worker. Managers will identify which workstyles are appropriate for roles within their team, to aid Flexible Working decisions. See appendix A for more information.
- 5.7 Options available through Flexible Working are detailed in Appendix B.
- 5.8 Available workspaces and technology will be used effectively to increase performance, productivity and efficiency, as well as support collaboration and innovation across teams and services.

- 5.9 Permanent requests to work from abroad are not permitted. Employees may be able to work from abroad for short periods of time, in exceptional circumstances, details of this, including compliance with other policies such as ICT, Data Protection and Health and Safety requirements etc. are within the Flexible Working guidance.
- 5.10 A Flexible Working arrangement has to be based on trust. The Council has a right to review a Flexible Working arrangement where that trust has been placed in question and, as such, will be managed in line with the relevant Council Policy e.g. Managing Discipline, Managing Performance etc.
- 5.11 Any complaints raised will be addressed by applying the principles of this policy and the guidance document associated with it. This is to ensure that the appropriate steps are taken to consider whether there are sufficient and reasonable grounds to uphold a complaint and any appropriate action to resolve taken.

6. Risk

- 6.1 This policy and its supporting documentation will manage the following risks:
- Health and Wellbeing – the policy recognises that Flexible Working can have both a potential positive and negative impact on employees mental health and wellbeing. More emphasis and awareness is required to ensure employees are supported if they are struggling mentally with isolation and working long hours if they request to work remotely. The policy and guidance recognises and puts measures in place to ensure communication and support channels are in place. This also includes compliance with Working Time Regulations in terms of breaks etc.
 - Health and Safety Compliance – There are employees who will, on occasion, carry out lone work in Council buildings due to the nature of their work. However, there is a potential for more employees to be lone working if their requested Flexible Working pattern results in them working outwith standard building usage times. In these circumstances reference should be made to the Lone Working policy to ensure the employee's health and safety at all times.
 - Operational - by offering flexible working options to new employees, this in turn can have a positive effect on existing employees with vacancies being filled more easily as we are seen as an attractive employer, this in turn reduces pressure through reducing workload for team members who may be covering vacant roles. This will overall have a positive effect on employees mental health and wellbeing, and potentially reduce absence rates.

- Workforce capacity and organisational resilience - the absence of this policy would create negative reputation and therefore compromise our corporate risk. Flexible working can be seen as an attractive benefit for potential candidates and can widen recruitment pools, which in turn aids recruitment and retention and workforce capacity. This will also reduce impact on service delivery.
- Compliance – in line with the Council’s risk appetite statement which sets out how the Council balances the risks and opportunities the policy aims to ensure a fair and legal process is followed in regards to Statutory Flexible Working requests to comply with employment law.

6.2 The Flexible Working policy and supporting documentation enables managers to identify and manage risks through effective mitigation controls, including monitoring of data through the People Performance Dashboard and where appropriate inclusion in operational risk registers.

6.3 There have been no unintended effects, consequences and risks identified resulting from the introduction of the policy. This will continue to be monitored as the policy is applied.

7. Environmental Considerations

7.1 There may be positive and negative environmental impacts arising from this policy. Due to employees working in a hybrid way there may be a decrease in employees commuting to work, including less car journeys, this could lead to avoided carbon emissions from travel. However, higher levels of homeworking can lead to higher energy consumption due to increased domestic energy usage (through heating in particular) whilst continuing to consume energy in offices/ fixed working locations

8. Policy Performance

8.1 The main factors determining the effectiveness of the policy and whether it adds the value intended is the usage of the policy.

8.2 The effectiveness of the policy will be measured through collecting feedback from users of the policy.

8.3 The Chief Officer – People and Citizen Services will report on the effectiveness of the policy to Staff Governance Committee ensuring that confidentiality is maintained.

9. Design and Delivery

9.1 The policy links to the ‘Workforce Design’ principle of the Operating Model of the Council in that it is concerned with organisational culture and promotion of equality in the workplace. The application of the policy and procedure should help ensure alignment with this principle. It also links to the Council’s Guiding Principles of valuing and supporting

staff. The policy supports compliance with statutory obligations, employment legislation and best practice.

- 9.2 The policy also links to the 'Prosperous People' theme in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) which indicates that all people in the City are entitled to live in a manner in which they feel safe and protected from harm and supported where necessary. All citizens are equally entitled to enjoy these aspirations, including employees of the Council.

10. Housekeeping and Maintenance

- 10.1 This new policy is accompanied by the new guidance which is an update to the previous Smarter Working – Flexible Working in Aberdeen City Guidance (Version 4, January 2015). The policy will be reviewed every 2 years by People & Citizen Services, and any necessary updates to it and the accompanying guidance document will be proposed to the Staff Governance Committee, where required, following agreed consultation arrangements.

11. Communication and Distribution

- 11.1 This policy and supporting documentation will be shared directly with the Extended Corporate Management Team to enable communication and distribution in accordance with the responsibilities set out in section 3.
- 11.2 The policy and documentation will be available for review on the organisation's shared areas on the intranet.
- 11.3 A communication plan is developed to assist with embedding the policy into the organisation, which includes ongoing advice from People and Organisational Development Advisors.

12. Information Management

- 12.1 Information generated by the application of this policy will be managed in accordance with the Council's Corporate Information Policy and Supporting Procedures.

13. Definitions and Understanding this Policy

- 13.1 **Flexible Working** - describes the Council's ethos towards greater flexibility across the council, through different ways of working being available to employees across the organisation in order to improve an employee's motivation, performance and productivity, and help reduce stress and support a better work-life balance, in line with service delivery. The Council's Flexible Working principles go beyond the Statutory requirement to allow greater flexibility within the workforce placing emphasis on the culture of our organisation and our Guiding Principles.

- 13.2 **Statutory Flexible Working Requests** - Employees have a statutory right to request flexible working under the Employment Rights Act 1996 and Flexible Working Regulations 2014 as amended by the Flexible Working (Amendment) Regulations 2023. Statutory Flexible working requests must be submitted in writing and, if approved, will result in a permanent contractual change. Changes to how or where an employee works, are welcomed from any council employee regardless of workstyle, role or, length of service and will be given careful consideration and implemented where operationally practicable.
- 13.3 **Flexible Working Arrangement** - These are arrangements made in line with the Council's Flexible Working Ethos which go beyond the statutory entitlement. These are occasional changes to how or where an employee works; are welcomed from any council employee and will be considered in line with service requirements. Examples could include changing a working pattern for one to two weeks, or working compressed hours for a month. This would not result in a permanent contractual change and would be managed locally within the service with management agreement.
- 13.4 **Workstyles** – defines where an employee will work. There are 2 defined workstyles, Hybrid and Fixed Location Worker (see Appendix A for more details). Depending on the employee's workstyle, this may help them to identify which Flexible Working options may be available (depending on service requirements).
- 13.5 **Flexible Working Options** - The organisation recognises that there may be alternative ways of working or a combination of options which are suitable to both the organisation and the employee. These can be found in Appendix B.
- 13.6 Flexible Working provides an opportunity to create a more inclusive workplace in line with **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Protected Characteristics**. The protected characteristics (defined under the Equality Act 2010) are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Appendix A - Workstyles

Hybrid Worker	<p>Hybrid Workers split working days between employer location and remote locations including their home, in line with service needs, the Council's purpose and ensuring team cohesion.</p> <p>Hybrid workers will need to regularly attend the office/a fixed Council location in line with service requirements and management requests. This ensures maintenance of contact and relationships with team members and line managers including anchor days, training or specific meetings, and to best support our citizens and service users.</p> <p>Hybrid working could be an agreement to work fixed days between a council work location and home/alternative location. This could be for example, a set pattern of 3 days at home and 2 days at a council work location. Or it could be a more flexible arrangement where the work location is determined in line with service requirements and the work that is needed to be completed. This could change weekly. Thereby using the most efficient and effective location to ensure the needs of the service are being delivered.</p> <p>The hybrid working model is also suitable for employees who have to make several site or client visits, enabling the completion of administrative tasks without the need to return to a main work location.</p>
Fixed Location Worker	<p>All working time is spent in the office or site location.</p> <p>Fixed Location Workers are based fully in one or more employer locations, this is due to the requirement for work activities to be completed on site, or due to the employee being unable to complete/undertake work activities elsewhere e.g. at home.</p>

Appendix B - Flexible Working Options

Option	Description
Part-time working	Part-time covers any arrangement where an employee is contracted to work anything less than full time hours for the type of work in question.
Compressed working	<p>Compressed working is an arrangement where an employee works their contracted hours over a shorter agreed working period, e.g. on a 37 hour per week contract this could be 74 hours over 9 days in a 2 week period. (In this example, a working day would be 8.22 hours or 8 hours 14 minutes).</p> <p>Or 35 hours over 4 days (in this example a working day would be 8.75 hours or 8 hours 45 minutes)</p> <p>In practice compressed working leads to an employee working for more hours per day, but for fewer days per week or month..</p>
Annualised hours	The annualised hours scheme allows flexibility for an employee to work more or fewer hours at different times in the year to match demand. It is often associated with services that experience seasonal peaks and troughs.
Term time working	With term time working contracts, the employee will remain an employee of the Council during the school holidays although they will not be required to work during this time. Term time working may be more suited to services that provide and operate primarily during the school term, but is not restricted solely to these services.

Flexible Working

Guidance for Managers and Employees



Document Control

Approval Date	
Implementation Date	
Guidance Version	December 2024
Author(s) and Owner	Alison Paterson / Sheila Baird– People and Organisational Development Advisor (Policy Authors) Isla Newcombe Chief Officer – People and Citizen Services (Policy Owner)
Approval Authority	Staff Governance Committee
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Changes	This guidance replaces the Smarter Working – Flexible Working in Aberdeen Guidance (Version 4, January 2015 and accompanies the introduction of a Flexible Working Policy

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1. Introduction

This Guidance accompanies the Flexible Working Policy.

Depending on an employee's role, having and using the right technology and connectivity can enable some to work from alternative locations. The concept of Flexible Working, however, is wider than just location and also offers flexibility in working hours and patterns.

Aberdeen City Council recognises that having a progressive approach to Flexible Working can provide employees with a better work-life balance and can improve an employee's motivation, performance and productivity, enabled through a focus on outcomes. It can also improve mental health and wellbeing, reduce absence and remove barriers to employment. Therefore, the organisation seeks to support employees wherever possible to achieve a better balance between work and other life priorities and commitments such as caring responsibilities, further learning and other interests.

Aberdeen City Council's vision for Flexible Working is based on the following key principles:

- Focus on the **needs of our citizens** and **employees** and **improving service delivery**
- Delivering the **purpose** of the organisation
- Maintaining **Mental Health and Wellbeing**
- Supporting **work-life balance** for employees
- Focus on **outcomes** in line with our Job Families
- Embedding our **Guiding Principles**
- Positive reputation as an **employer of choice**

Flexible Working is a concept which focusses on **work as an activity we do rather than necessarily a place we go**. It aims to provide greater flexibility in relation to the time and location employees can work, based on the requirements of the service and individual jobs. It places an emphasis on the culture of the organisation and our Guiding Principles and how we can make best use of the technology and workspace available to undertake our work, to deliver better services to our citizens.

This flexibility must also meet our shared, primary focus - of the needs of our citizens. In addition, it is important that team dynamics and team learning and development are taken into consideration and that the most productive and high-performing working environments and arrangements are created.

The Flexible Working Policy and Guidance will aid the Council to be an employer of choice by **not only meeting our statutory requirement but going beyond this by** providing and promoting flexibility in working arrangements **throughout the employee life cycle**. During recruitment, this will help to ensure a wider and more diverse pool of candidates and may help to fill some hard to fill roles. The various Flexible Working options will also support workforce retention offering greater flexibility and work life balance, and a more inclusive workplace, for existing employees. **Hybrid working can be included in job adverts where applicable, with workstyles also forming part of recruitment discussions.**

This guidance document provides information for employees whilst also guiding managers on how to ensure they have a balance between employee, citizen, colleague and team needs when making Flexible Working decisions.

This guidance applies to all employees of the council except Teachers. For Teachers Flexible Working arrangements will be applied in line with [SNCT guidance](#).

2. Statutory Right to Flexible Working

Employees have a statutory right to request flexible working from day one of employment under the Employment Rights Act 1996 as amended by the Employee Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023 and Flexible Working Regulations 2014 as amended by the Flexible Working (Amendment) Regulations 2023. They are entitled to make two statutory flexible working requests within a 12 month period whether successful or not, before applying again in line with the legislation. These requests must be submitted in writing, should be given careful consideration and the manager must consult with the employee before making a decision. There is no requirement for the employee to explain what effect their request will have on the service or how the impact might be dealt with. If the statutory request is approved, this will result in a permanent contractual change.

Where Statutory Flexible Working Requests are approved and permanent arrangements agreed, updated terms and conditions of employment will include details of the agreed working hours and working locations. Depending on the arrangement, this may impact whether your annual leave is provided in days or hours and how many hours equates to a standard working day for annual leave purposes.

Employers can legally reject an application for any of the following reasons and it is reasonable to refuse the request on those grounds:

- The burden of additional costs
- A detrimental effect on the ability to meet citizen demand
- The inability to reorganise work among existing employees
- The inability to recruit additional employees
- A detrimental impact on quality
- A detrimental impact on performance
- Insufficient work being available during the period the employee proposes to work
- Planned organisational changes

See Appendix A for how to submit a Statutory Flexible Working Request, the appeals process and template letters.

3. Informal Flexible Working Arrangements

In addition to the Statutory entitlements, the Council's ethos around flexible working enables employees to work as flexibly as possible in line with service delivery. Informal arrangements , for

temporary or occasional changes to how or where an employee works, are welcomed from any council employee and will be considered in line with service requirements.

Examples of Informal arrangements are below:

- changes in working hours such as altering start or end times
- changes in working days
- working compressed hours for a specific temporary period
- a change in work location such as working from a friend or family member's house for a short period

The employee should discuss and agree their informal arrangement with their line manager. This would not result in a permanent contractual change and the arrangement would be agreed and managed within the service with management agreement and subject to review. If the employee wishes the arrangement to continue and become permanent, they would be required submit a Statutory Flexible Working request – see Appendix A.

4. Job Families and Workstyles

Job Families provide a way of grouping jobs together that share similar characteristics and workstyles.

All jobs within the Council fall within one of the following Job Families:

- Frontline Operational Services
- Frontline Customer Services
- Social and Community Services
- Information Services
- People Managers
- Teachers (SNCT) Professional Learning and Leadership
- Chief Officer

Click [here](#) to find out more about Job Families and Core Capabilities and to identify where a specific role or Team is grouped. The Core Capabilities within each Job Family can assist identifying the appropriate work style in order to aid Flexible Working discussions and decisions. E.g. roles within the Information Services job family generally rely on digital resources to carry out their work and this means there may be flexibility within these roles to work from alternative locations. Roles within the Frontline Operational Job Family generally provide frontline operational services for the public which may require to be undertaken from a fixed location.

The Council identified 2 workstyles detailed below which can guide employees and managers about what is possible in terms of Flexible Working options and what could work - depending on role and service requirements. Workstyles define where an employee will work e.g. Hybrid working can allow an employee to work from home or an alternative location. Services will identify the workstyles that are appropriate for their teams. Workstyles must be discussed and agreed with line managers.

Regardless of workstyle, all People Policies including normal absence reporting procedures apply to all employees.

WORKSTYLE	DEFINITION
Hybrid Worker	<p>Hybrid Workers split working days between employer location and a remote location which may be their home, in line with service needs.</p> <p>Hybrid workers will need to attend the office / employer location at times in line with service requirements and management requests. This is to maintain contact/relationship with team members e.g. anchor days and/or attend training or specific meetings.</p> <p>Hybrid working could be an agreement to work fixed days between the office and home e.g., set pattern of 3 days at home and 2 days in the office. Or it could be a more flexible arrangement where work location is determined in line with service requirements and could change weekly. Thereby using the most efficient and effective location to ensure the needs of the service are being delivered.</p>
Fixed Location Worker	<p>All working time is spent in the office or site location.</p> <p>Fixed Location Workers are based fully in an office or site location(s), this is due to the requirement for work activities to be completed on site, or due to the employee being unable to complete/undertake work activities elsewhere e.g. at home.</p>

5. Your Working Location

An employee's working location will be agreed with line managers in line with service requirements and an employee's workstyle.

Where it is possible, alternative work locations can improve work-life balance. It might suit an employee to manage medical conditions whilst working, and support an employee with caring responsibilities (see Section 10 for more information on caring responsibilities).

Your Contracted Location

An employee's normal working 'base' location is detailed in contractual terms and conditions. Depending on the employee's role, however, they may be able to work from any council building or from home or an alternative location, using a Council issued device and in agreement with line management.

Considerations for Working From Home or Alternative Location

An employee may be able to work from their home or an alternative location if this meets the needs of their service and citizens and is of benefit to the employee. Employee's must have line manager approval to do so. If requesting to work from home or an alternative location, an employee should ensure they have sufficient Wi-Fi connectivity and that their work set up is Display Screen Equipment compliant, see Section 12 for more information.

An employee working from home will not be paid allowances for any extra heating, electricity or other costs incurred.

Working from home may affect the buildings and contents insurance for the employee's home. Employees are advised to inform their insurance company of any home working. The employee will be responsible for any increase in insurance premiums.

It is accepted that an employee may live in a different town/area from their base location. However, the employee must be able and willing to travel to their base location, or any other council location, at their own expense, within a reasonable timescale when required. What is reasonable will depend on the employee, citizen, colleague and team needs and this should be captured and agreed as part of the Flexible Working Considerations - Checklist for Managers (Appendix E) when considering the suitability of working from home. Some services may require employees to attend a work location at short notice to deal with an emergency situation or to respond to immediate service requirements. Employees should be able to do this if this is a requirement of their role and service. If an employee is unable to meet that requirement, then they should not be working from home or an alternative location.

If an employee requests to work from home **they cannot claim tax relief**. Further information on eligibility for tax relief and how to apply can be found here - <https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/working-at-home>

Working From a Fixed Location

An employee may be required to work solely from a fixed location due to the requirements of their role, or can request to do so due to personal circumstances. A line manager may reasonably require that an employee works solely from a fixed location to meet the needs of the service.

Working From Abroad

Working from abroad for a **short period** may be permitted in exceptional circumstances for example the death of a relative overseas, subject to a formal 'Temporary Request to Work from outwith the UK Form' being submitted and approved by the employee's Chief Officer after following due process. The form should be submitted a minimum of 8 weeks in advance of the start of the request to allow consideration. The maximum time allowed for working abroad in these circumstances is 4 weeks in any 12-month period.

Requests to work from abroad on a longer-term or permanent basis will not be considered or approved due to the additional risks, costs and legal implications for the organisation.

More information can be found in **Appendix B**.

6. Your Working Hours

Flexi Time Scheme – Flexi-time is a contractual arrangement which allows an employee to vary their hours of work within agreed limits. Flexi-time allows an employee to choose, within certain limits, when to begin and end work, and provides the ability for accrued hours to be taken as a flexi day. Flexi time is usually a contractual condition stated within the contract. Within the flexi time scheme there are core hours which normally cover a six hour period with a minimum/maximum break period of 30 minutes to 2 hours. See Appendix F for further details.

Flexibility of Working/Core Hours - Within many roles, there is likely to be some flexibility in how an employee works their contracted hours of work, with the degree of such flexibility being dependent on the nature of the service being delivered, the needs of citizens and an employee's workstyle. This flexibility can be applied to an individual or a team. Depending on the role there may be discretion, with management agreement to be able to determine how contracted hours are worked (outwith the standard working day, 7.00am to 8.00pm and/or core hours as part of the Flexi Time Scheme) provided there is no detriment to service delivery. Some services may be able to remove or adapt core hours to provide greater flexibility whilst still meeting service needs. Some roles may require fixed hours meaning there is less flexibility, this may mean a requirement for core hours to provide structure and to work within the standard working day and / or within Core Hours to support service delivery.

No enhancements are payable where an employee requests to work their contracted hours outwith standard hours, if this is a personal choice and not contractual or a requirement of the role or at the request of the manager.

Commuting times and any voluntary travel between locations is non-working time and does not count towards an employee's contractual hours and travel expenses cannot be claimed

Time off in lieu (TOIL) - applies in exceptional circumstances where an employee has been asked by their manager to work longer hours so that, for example, a particular peak in workload can be dealt with. In these circumstances the manager and employee must agree in advance that the additional hours worked can be taken as time off in lieu at a later date. See Appendix G for more information.

It is important that managers agree how an employee's contracted hours will be worked to:

- ensure that managers know when their team members are working and when they are contactable;
- assist when planning resources if there is an element of cover required from the overall team;
- assist when approving leave requests from team members;
- ensure work can be allocated/managed and outputs are clear;

- ensure that citizens can access services appropriately;
- ensure that internal colleagues and partner organisations are able to collaborate and work with employees effectively;
- support health and wellbeing of all team members.

Where applicable, employees must also update electronic diaries to show working and non-working days, meetings, working location, any leave and any other commitments during the normal working week.

For fixed location workers, as well as hybrid workers who are working in their base location, working hours will be within the building opening hours and as agreed with their manager. Any cover arrangements across a team must be agreed by the line manager.

Employees who choose to work their hours flexibly, should ensure that they do not work excessively long hours on a regular basis and should work their contracted hours with adherence to the Working Time Regulations. The Working Time Regulations 1998 set out:

- Employees can work a maximum of 48 hours a week on average.
- Employees have the right to 11 hours' rest between working days. For example, if you finish work at 8pm, you shouldn't start work again until 7am the next day (at the earliest).
- Employees should take regular breaks as per the Working Time Regulations.

More information on Working Hours and Working Time Regulations can be found here - [Working Hours and Working Time – Aberdeen City Council: People Anytime](#)

7. Flexible Working Options

The guidance has set out in sections 5 and 6 the flexibility that may be available for employees on how and where they work their hours.

In addition to this, there are the following Flexible Working options:

Option	Description	Statutory Request	Flexible Working Arrangement
Part-time working	Part-time covers any arrangement where an employee is contracted to work anything less than full time hours for the type of work in question.	Yes	No
Compressed working	Compressed working is an arrangement where an employee works their contracted hours over a shorter agreed working period, e.g. on a 37 hour per week contract this could be 74 hours over 9 days in a 2 week period.	Yes	Yes

	<p>(In this example, a working day would be 8.22 hours or 8 hours 14 minutes)</p> <p>Or 35 hours over 4 days (in this example a working day would be 8.75 hours or 8 hours 45 minutes)</p> <p>In practice compressed working leads to an employee working for more hours per day, but for fewer days per week or month..</p>		
Annualised hours	The annualised hours scheme allows flexibility for an employee to work more or fewer hours at different times in the year to match demand. It is often associated with services that experience seasonal peaks and troughs.	Yes	No
Term time working	With term time working contracts, the employee will remain an employee of the Council during the school holidays although they will not be required to work during this time. Term time working may be more suited to services that provide and operate primarily during the school term, but is not restricted solely to these services.	Yes	No

For full details of each of these flexible working options, please see **Appendix H**.

8. Manager Considerations

Prior to approving any Flexible Working arrangement, the Manager should complete the Flexible Working Managers Checklist (see Appendix E) and give consideration to the following points in conjunction with the employee:

- The tasks involved in the job role - how effectively can be done at different times and/or in different locations
- Any impact on the team or teamworking
- Any impact on citizens or service delivery
- Any impact on communication – how will the employee maintain communication and how regularly
- How Anchor Days (see below) might be used

- How both the employee and line manager will manage trust and individual outputs and service delivery (consider and agree in advance but may include daily/weekly/regular 1:1s and team meetings)
- Impact on the employee – how will the change impact their cost of living, mental health and wellbeing, productivity and performance, caring responsibilities etc.
- Economic and environmental impacts e.g., travel, travel costs, local economy etc

Anchor Days

Where teams do not work in the same location or have the same workstyle, managers and teams should make regular use of Anchor Days to bring the whole team together and aid team connection, support and employee wellbeing. Anchor days are regularly scheduled days where teams come together in the workplace – they might take place weekly, fortnightly or monthly. On these days, the focus is on relationships, connection, and collaboration – within and across teams and often with the wider business too.

More information on Anchor Days can be found [here](#).

9. Review of Flexible Working Arrangements

All approved flexible working arrangements should be reviewed regularly, at least annually during CR&D, unless there is a need to review prior to this, to ensure that the arrangement is working for the employee and the council. Where an agreed flexible working request has a detrimental impact on the employee and/or the service then the arrangement will be subject to change. Further advice can be sought from Employee Relations and Wellbeing.

10. Caring Responsibilities

Working from home is an extension of the work environment, and it is important that appropriate measures are in place for childcare/caring responsibilities during working time; it is not permissible to be working and caring at the same time. Working from home is not to be used as an alternative to childcare or to care for dependents. However, we recognise that there may be extenuating circumstances and provisions exist within the special leave policy that may be appropriate to the situation. The employee should discuss this with their line manager to determine what may be appropriate in these extenuating circumstances. Further advice can be sought from Employee Relations and Wellbeing.

The Council has a number of policies in place to support employees with caring responsibilities see section 15 below.

11. Equipment

Line managers will ensure that employees receive the appropriate ICT equipment and permissions necessary to undertake their role and that workstations in fixed locations are DSE compliant. Employees must ensure they have read and understood the **ICT Acceptable Use Policy**. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure they adhere to any requests to bring equipment to a Council location for testing, repair or replacement.

When **working from home or an alternative location**, it is the employee's responsibility to ensure that they have a suitable desk, chair, mouse, keyboard, WIFI and other items in accordance with the DSE (Display Screen Equipment) principles. All employees requesting to work from home or an alternative location must complete a DSE Self-Assessment to confirm their work station is DSE compliant. Thereafter, an updated DSE Self-Assessment must be completed annually and/or when there are any changes in circumstances e.g. moving house or work location/room, or where the employee feels they would benefit from an updated assessment. The same would apply whether the employee is working from home or in a Council location. See Section 13 for further information on DSE assessments.

The Council will not provide additional items (only the laptop/device, charger and headset/travel dock as required) to enable working from home. Where an employee does not have a suitable space or equipment in their home or alternative location to be able to carry out their work effectively and safely, they should work from an employer location where equipment is provided.

If there is a requirement for additional equipment/assistive technology following a Reasonable Adjustment (under the Equality Act 2010) and/or an Occupational Health referral/ the recommendation of a healthcare professional, the manager will discuss this with the employee and arrange for any reasonable adjustments to be put in place, including equipment as required.

12. Data Protection and Cyber Security

Employees must ensure that all confidential information (e.g., paperwork, electronic files) and devices containing such are kept secure. When working from home, confidential information must **not** be accessible to family members or visitors and if others are in the same building, headphones should be used during meetings so that conversations cannot be heard.

Employees must also ensure that when they leave a workstation that they lock the screen and secure any confidential paperwork.

Corporate printers are not supplied for home use - all supported printers are office-based and connected to the ACC network. Home printers are not offered or supported. If you require to print as part of your role this must be carried out within the office.

Confidential waste must be returned to the Council as soon as possible for destruction by our certified security partner, and not disposed of in household waste or other locations.

Any Information Security or Data Protection incidents must be reported using the [correct reporting form in ServiceNow](#).

13. Health and Safety

Employees should work with their manager to ensure health and safety compliance at all times. It is important that managers ensure that:

- Emergency contact information is kept up to date

- Working patterns are agreed
- [Lone working](#) arrangements and wellbeing are considered and adequate arrangements and support are in place. Managers should agree how and when they will communicate with their employees
- Where working in a Council work location Manager should take into account first aider and fire safety considerations, [Fire Safety Procedure \(sharepoint.com\)](#) and [First Aid Procedure \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- Managers must complete a [Risk Assessment](#) for each type of workstyle within their team, regardless of where they work
- All employees who work from home regularly should complete a [home worker checklist](#)
- Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Assessments should be completed annually or when there are any changes in circumstances e.g. moving house. Annual assessments should be carried out regardless of where an employee works. The DSE assessment form can be found [here](#)
- Any issues with using workstation equipment or if there is a change to the equipment, the line manager should be notified and another DSE Assessment completed
- Where issues are identified, a trained DSE assessor should complete a [review](#)
- All employees should complete the Display Screen Equipment (DSE) course on [ACC Learn](#)
- Where possible, outlook diaries should be open, and up to date as appropriate, for the team and manager to ensure availability and location is known whilst working

14. Making Best Use of Office Space

When attending the office, employees should consider making use of the most appropriate space/s depending on their time and purpose of being in the office. This may be a desk within the team zone or making use of hot desk/touchdown spaces or across the corporate facilities in the building. In some cases, depending on individual team arrangements, employees may be allocated a desk which will be located within their team zone.

If an employee requires a “fixed desk” for operational, personal or DSE purposes (e.g. reasonable adjustment) this should be discussed with their line manager and allowances for this made within the allocated team zone.

For team zones to function successfully and support hybrid working, appropriate behaviours should be in place and followed by all. As a minimum:

- Clear desk policy must be applied, and employees are responsible for ensuring that workstations are cleared after each use, ensuring that no sensitive data or paperwork is left behind, or on display if you are away from your desk. Personal items should not be left on workstations (including fixed workstations).
- Employees are responsible for the cleaning of workstations and equipment at the start and end of use. Employees should be considerate to surrounding colleagues if choosing to eat at workstations, while employees are encouraged to make use of the breakout spaces and/or canteen spaces for breaks away from the desk.
- Teams are responsible for ensuring the space in and around their team zone is kept clear and tidy. Lockable storage should be used for sensitive data, paperwork and equipment.
- If a desk booking system is in place, then employees should amend or cancel bookings in advance if no longer required.

- Any missing or faulty equipment on desks should be reported to the line manager for action and any replacement equipment ordered through Service Now, if appropriate.
- Employees should be mindful when undertaking meetings in an office location, consider correct space for the conversation. Be mindful of employees and workspace and ensure confidentiality. Making use of break out spaces and use of headphones.

15. Useful Resources

Please visit the Flexible Working SharePoint page for further details on the items below.

- [Smarter Working FAQs \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- [Smarter Working - Equality, Diversity & Inclusion \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- [ED&I Policy](#)
- [DSE / H&S](#)
- [First Aiders](#)
- [Lone Working Policy](#)
- [Virtual Meeting Guidance \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- [Anchor days SHAREPOINT](#)
- [Try out the new tech for great hybrid meetings! \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- [Digital Workplace](#)
- [Data Protection](#)
- [Protecting your data while working from home \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- [Mental Health & Wellbeing – update link**](#)
- [The Return of the Commute: the environmental impact \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- [Financial Wellbeing - Cost of Living Support \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- [Supporting Carers in the Workplace](#)
- [Special Leave Policy](#)
- [Family Friendly Provisions](#)
- [Travel & Subsistence Guidance](#)
- [Working Hours and Working Time – Aberdeen City Council: People Anytime](#)
- [ICT Acceptable Use Policy](#)
- [Guiding Principles](#)
- [Social Media Guidance](#)
- E-learning [ACC Learn](#) courses:
 - Display Screen Equipment e-learning course
 - Introduction to Health and Safety
 - Information Governance
 - Smarter Working Aberdeen
 - Smarter Working for Managers

HOW TO SUBMIT STATUTORY FLEXIBLE WORKING REQUESTS, APPEALS PROCESS AND FORMS

How to Submit Statutory Flexible Working Requests

An employee must complete the 'Request for Statutory Flexible Working Request' form. All requests for flexible working must be given serious consideration by the manager and managers must consult with the employee before rejecting it.

Trial Periods

Any requests for Statutory Flexible Working can be agreed on a trial basis in the first instance. It is recommended for approximately 4 weeks to assess viability and provide an outcome. See section 7 for further information and how to apply.

Dealing with Statutory Flexible Working Requests

Once the request has been received, the manager and employee must meet to discuss the request within 21 days of the request form being submitted and discuss the detail of the request, any concerns, alternative suggestions and trial periods. If an adjournment to consider alternative suggestions is needed, that adjournment should not normally last more than 14 days. An outcome must be given within 2 months of the request being received, however this can be extended as set out below.

- Where the manager and employee agree that more time will be needed to complete a particular part of the procedure.
- Where the manager is absent when the request is submitted. If this is the case then the initial meeting to discuss the request should take place within 28 days of the manager's return to work.

The employee must be informed of the manager's decision in writing within 7 days of the meeting, or within 7 days of the final adjourned meeting. If a change is approved, the manager should inform the HR Service Centre to update the employee's terms and conditions and update CoreHR.

If the line manager does not approve the request, they must write to the employee with the Outcome Letter, giving the business reason(s) for the refusal.

Employers can legally reject an application for any of the following reasons and it is reasonable to refuse the request on those grounds:

- The burden of additional costs
- A detrimental effect on the ability to meet citizen demand
- The inability to reorganise work among existing employees
- The inability to recruit additional employees

- A detrimental impact on quality
- A detrimental impact on performance
- Insufficient work being available during the period the employee proposes to work
- Planned organisational changes

Statutory Flexible Working Request – Appeals

The employee has the right of appeal against the decision, and information will be detailed in the outcome letter of how to submit an appeal.

Appeals must be submitted in writing to the relevant Chief Officer (or if the Chief Officer is the employee's line manager – to the relevant Executive Director) within 14 days of receiving the outcome letter. The appeal should state which of the two grounds for appeal apply and why. The Chief Officer or Executive Director, supported by a People and Organisational Development Adviser, will consider the appeal within 14 days. The employee can be accompanied by a trade union representative or by a work colleague at the appeal meeting if they wish. The employee will be advised in writing of the outcome of the appeal within 14 days of the appeal meeting.

The employee is permitted to make two Statutory Flexible Working requests within a 12-month period, whether successful or not, before applying again.

A Flexible Working arrangement has to be based on trust. The Council has a right to review a Flexible Working arrangement where that trust has potentially been abused and will be managed in line with the relevant Council Policy e.g. Managing Discipline, Managing Attendance etc.

Statutory Flexible Working Request Form

To be considered for a Statutory Flexible Working arrangement you must complete this form (you may continue any part on a separate sheet if necessary) and submit it to your Line Manager. You can make 2 statutory Flexible working requests in a 12 month period.

1. Personal Details

Name (in full): _____ **Payroll No.:** _____

Function and Cluster: _____

Location: _____

Job Title: _____

2. Supporting Information

Please include details of any caring responsibilities you have or of any disability issues which may have contributed to this request.

3. Details of Request

What is your current working pattern (days/hours/times) and work location?

--

What kind of Statutory Flexible Working option would you like to request?

Term Time Working	
Compressed Working	
Annualised Hours	
Part Time working	
Other	

Please describe below the arrangement you would like to request:

--

When would you like your proposed new working arrangement to begin (date)?

4. SIGNATURE

Signed: Date:

5. FOR SERVICE USE

Managers Comments (including any agreed amendments to the above request and details of any trial):

AUTHORISATION

Line Manager Name:

Signed:

Date:

Date application received by Service

Date:

Date of meeting with Employee

Date:

(1) Request approved on a permanent basis (letter sent) Initials Date.....

(2) Request approved on a trial basis (from d/m/y to d/m/y) Initials Date.....
Review before final decision

(3a) *Request approved following trial follow step 1 Initials Date.....

(3b) Request rejected following trial follow step 4 Initials Date.....

(4) Request declined and letter sent Initials Date

(request can only be declined for one of the six specified reasons detailed within the Flexible Working policy and guidance document)

If the request is rejected it must meet one of the statutory grounds below*

Statutory Ground for Refusal	Tick which Ground for refusal and reasons based on evidence
The burden of additional costs	
A detrimental effect on the ability to meet citizen demand	
The inability to reorganise work among existing employees	
The inability to recruit additional employees	
A detrimental impact on quality	
A detrimental impact on performance	
Insufficient work being available during the period you proposes to work	
Planned organisational changes	

Letter to Invite Employee to Initial Meeting

PERSONAL

Dear

STATUTORY FLEXIBLE WORKING REQUEST MEETING

I write to acknowledge receipt of your Statutory Flexible Working request, which I received on <date>.

I would like to invite you to a meeting with me to discuss your flexible working request on <date> at <time> at <location>.

At the meeting I will be accompanied by <name, job title>. You have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative if you so wish.

Please confirm your attendance at the meeting.

Yours sincerely,

NAME

NAME OF OFFICER

Cc: AskHR (for personal file)

Letter to Confirm Statutory Flexible Working Request Has Been Approved Following Initial Meeting

PERSONAL

Dear

STATUTORY FLEXIBLE WORKING REQUEST

Thank you for attending the Statutory Flexible Working Request meeting on [date].

I write to confirm that your request has been approved.

To confirm, from [date] your working pattern will be as follows:

[insert details of working pattern].

Yours sincerely,

NAME OF OFFICER

Cc: AskHR (for personal file)

Letter to Confirm Statutory Flexible Working Request Has Been Rejected Following Initial Meeting

PERSONAL

Dear

STATUTORY FLEXIBLE WORKING REQUEST

Thank you for attending the Statutory Flexible Working Request meeting on [date].

I write to confirm that your request has not been approved.

Your request was to [insert details of request]. Having considered the information provided, I have decided that it is not possible to grant your request.

The grounds for refusal is: ***select one or more of the following**

- The burden of additional costs
- A detrimental effect on the ability to meet citizen demand
- The inability to reorganise work among existing employees
- The inability to recruit additional employees
- A detrimental impact on quality
- A detrimental impact on performance
- Insufficient work being available during the period the employee proposes to work
- Planned organisational changes

My reasons for arriving at this decision are as follows:

[insert details of specific reasons for refusing the request]

You can appeal this decision on one or both of the following grounds:

- There was something important related to your request that I was not aware of when I made my decision.
- You wish to challenge information I used to reach my decision.

If you wish to appeal, the appeal must be registered, in writing, with your Chief Officer (insert Chief Officer's name) within 14 days of receiving this letter.

Yours sincerely,

NAME OF OFFICER

Cc: P&OD Advisor

AskHR (for personal file)

Letter to Confirm Trial Period

PERSONAL

Dear

STATUTORY FLEXIBLE WORKING REQUEST

Thank you for attending the Statutory Flexible Working Request meeting on [date].

I write to confirm that your request has been approved on a trial basis for x weeks.

To confirm, from [date] to [date] your working pattern will be as follows:

[insert details of working pattern].

This working arrangement will be reviewed at the end of the trial period on [*INSERT DATE / TIME / LOCATION*].

Yours sincerely,

NAME OF OFFICER

Cc: AskHR (for personal file)

Letter to End Statutory Flexible Working Trial and not Approve on a Permanent Basis

PERSONAL

Dear

STATUTORY FLEXIBLE WORKING REQUEST

Thank you for attending the follow up meeting [date] to review your Statutory Flexible Working trial period.

I write to confirm that it has been decided to end the flexible working trial period and not to continue with the request at this time.

Your request was to [insert details of request]. Having considered the information provided, and having trialled this since [date], I have decided that it is not possible to grant your request on a permanent basis.

The grounds for refusal is/are: ***select one or more of the following**

- The burden of additional costs
- A detrimental effect on the ability to meet citizen demand
- The inability to reorganise work among existing employees
- The inability to recruit additional employees
- A detrimental impact on quality
- A detrimental impact on performance
- Insufficient work being available during the period the employee proposes to work
- Planned organisational changes

My reasons for arriving at this decision are as follows:

[insert details of specific reasons for refusing the request]

You can appeal this decision on one or both of the following grounds:

- There was something important related to your request that I was not aware of when I made my decision.
- You wish to challenge information I used to reach my decision.

If you wish to appeal, the appeal must be registered, in writing, with the Chief Officer (insert CO's name) within 14 days of receiving this letter.

Yours sincerely,

NAME OF OFFICER

Cc: P&OD Advisor

AskHR for personal file

Letter to confirm Statutory Flexible Working Request Has Been Approved Following Trial

PERSONAL

Dear

STATUTORY FLEXIBLE WORKING REQUEST

Thank you for attending the follow up meeting regarding your Statutory Flexible Working Request trial on [date].

I write to confirm that following a successful trial period your request has been approved.

To confirm, from [date] your working pattern will be as follows:

[insert details of working pattern].

Yours sincerely,

NAME OF OFFICER

Cc: AskHR (for personal file)

Letter to Invite Employee to Appeal Hearing

PERSONAL

Dear

APPEAL HEARING – STATUTORY FLEXIBLE WORKING REQUEST

I have been nominated to hear your appeal against the decision in relation to your Statutory Flexible Working Request.

When the appeal will be heard

I wish to hear the appeal on (date/time) at (location).

Grounds for appeal

In general terms, I understand that the grounds for your appeal are:

(detail grounds for appeal)

I will conduct the hearing as follows:

- Step 1 - Introduction

Firstly, I will explain the purpose and format of the hearing and deal with any procedural issues that may arise.

- Step 2 – Statement of grounds for appeal

I will then ask you to state your grounds and reasons for the appeal.

- Step 3 – Response from manager who dealt with flexible working request

I will then ask the manager who took the decision not to uphold your flexible working request to respond.

- Step 4 – Information gathering

I will then question both the manager and yourself.

- Step 5 – Closing statements

I will then give both parties the opportunity to make a closing statement, firstly the manager then yourself.

- Step 6 - Adjournment

I will then adjourn the hearing to consider all of the relevant issues that have emerged and make a decision.

· Step 7 – Making the decision

I will then decide whether there are sufficient and reasonable grounds to either:

- uphold the appeal in full (in which case the remedy you seek would be actioned)
- uphold the appeal in part (in which case I would offer you a compromise solution)
- reject the appeal (in which case the decision taken will stand)

· Step 8 – Informing you of my decision

I will then re-convene the hearing within 5 working days of the original hearing so that I can notify you of my decision and my reasons for it. I will then confirm the decision in writing.

If exceptional circumstances exist whereby it is not possible to respond by this deadline (for example, where there is a need to discuss the matter with other officers) then I will give you an explanation for the delay and inform you when a response can be expected.

I trust this satisfactorily explains my role and how the hearing will be conducted.

I will be accompanied by (insert name and position). You have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative if you so wish. Please note however that the procedure does not permit you to be accompanied by your partner, spouse or a legal practitioner.

Please confirm that the above date, time and venue is suitable and whether you will be accompanied and if so, by whom

Yours sincerely,

NAME OF OFFICER CONDUCTING THE HEARING

Cc: P&OD Advisor

AskHR for personal file

Letter to Reject Appeal

PERSONAL

Dear

STATUTORY FLEXIBLE WORKING REQUEST APPEAL

Thank you for attending the Statutory Flexible Working Appeal meeting on [date] in the presence of...

I write to confirm that your Flexible Working Appeal has not been approved.

Your request was to [insert details of request]. Having considered the information provided, I have decided that it is not possible to grant your request.

My reasons for arriving at this decision are as follows:

[insert reasons]

I hope you understand and accept my reasons for arriving at this decision. Under the Council's Statutory Flexible Working guidance you have now exercised your right of appeal and my decision is final.

Yours sincerely,

NAME OF OFFICER

Cc: P&OD Advisor

AskHR for Personal File

Letter to Uphold Appeal

PERSONAL

Dear

STATUTORY FLEXIBLE WORKING REQUEST APPEAL

Thank you for attending the Statutory Flexible Working Appeal meeting on [date] in the presence of [insert details].

Your request was to [insert details of request].

Having considered the information provided I write to confirm that your Statutory Flexible Working Appeal has been [*upheld in which case your flexible working request will be actioned / partially upheld and I offer you the following compromise*] (*delete as applicable and add detail where partially upheld*).

Yours sincerely,

NAME OF OFFICER

Cc: P&OD Advisor

AskHR for Personal File

Working Abroad Guidance

Requests to work from abroad on a longer-term or permanent basis will not be considered or approved due to the additional risks, costs and legal implications for the business. Working abroad on a long term or permanent basis is complex and can have implications, risks and costs for both the employee and employer. This includes, for example, data protection risks, information security risks, immigration requirements, employment legislation and tax and NI implications.

Working from abroad for a short period may be permitted **in exceptional circumstances**, subject to a formal request being submitted and approved by the employee's Line Manager and Chief Officer who will consider the circumstances and implications of any such request. A Temporary Request to Work from out with the UK form should be submitted a minimum of 8 weeks in advance of the start of the request to allow consideration. The maximum time allowed for working abroad in these circumstances is 4 weeks in any 12-month period.

Employee Considerations:

- Information Security – the country the employee wishes to work from must be part of the Wassenaar Agreement of which the United Kingdom is a signatory and not be subject to any UK export restrictions on encryption. Employees must refer to the [Change to IT Access from Overseas](#) page and the [UK Government Foreign Travel Advice](#). Refer to IT Security for further advice.
- Data Protection – country must be a recognised safe country. Refer to the Data Protection Team for further advice.
- The full remit of the job role must be able to be undertaken from outwith the UK without any impact on service delivery or citizens.
- Impact on individual performance or the team Insurance implications – refer to the Council's insurance team for further advice.
- What equipment is required to enable the working arrangements e.g., laptops etc. and how will this be securely transported.
- Consider where they will undertake their work and the physical workstation available along with the nature of role –confidentiality of information must be maintained.
- Depending on the role, be available, accounting for any time difference (GMT) in order to ensure service delivery and / or attend agreed team meetings, 1-2-1's etc.
- Check their insurance arrangements for relevant restrictions e.g. travelling to work abroad and carrying equipment such as laptop
- Any associated employment costs with working abroad will be borne by the employee
- Ensure health and safety compliance – risk assess workspace

- Ensure compliance with all Council Policies, Mandatory Codes of Practice and other Guidance
- If the country you are visiting is on the agreed list (see Information Security above), you must ensure that the location you are working from has a suitable and secure internet connection, in line with IT Security guidance (see the Flexible Working Guidance, Section 15 Useful Resources).

Process

- Employee has initial discussion with Line Manager for 'approval in principle', allowing at least 8 weeks prior to the intended work from abroad date to allow completion of the process (In exceptional circumstances, requests may be made outwith this timescale)
- Employee completes Part 1 of the 'Temporary Request to Work from outwith the UK' form.
- If able to proceed, employee completes Part 2 of the 'Temporary Request to Work from outwith the UK' form and submits form to Line Manager.
- Manager initially discusses with Cluster Chief Officer
- If Cluster Chief Officer gives initial approval, Manager to discuss further with ICT, Legal and P&OD.
The Chief Officer decision is final and there is no appeals process to this final decision.
- Manager should confirm decision in writing (see Appendix D), within 2 weeks of request form being received and a copy sent to askhr@aberdeencity.gov.uk for personal file along with the completed request form.

Temporary Request to Work from Outwith the UK Form

To be completed for a temporary request to work from abroad – **only in exceptional circumstances** - and submitted to your Line Manager for consideration

Part 1

1. Personal Details

Name (in full):

Payroll No.:

Function and
Cluster:

Location:

Job Title:

Have you submitted a request to work from abroad form in the last 12 months: **YES / NO**

If **yes** provide further details: _____

Which country are you requesting to work from? _____

What hours / working pattern are you requesting to work from abroad? (Please consider any time difference and provide information in GMT)

What dates would you like your proposed working from abroad arrangement to be in place:

Start Date:.....

End Date:

You must complete the actions in the checklist below.

Action	Yes/No	Comment/Provide Details
Seek Line Manager approval in principle?	Yes/No	
Checked the Change to IT Access from Overseas page and the UK Government Foreign Travel Advice and confirm that the country is suitable for me to work from.	Yes/No	
Service Now Request to D&T seeking approval to progress.	Yes/No	Please provide the email confirmation for this
Email dataprotectionofficer@aberdeencity.gov.uk seeking approval to progress	Yes/No	Please provide the email confirmation for this

If you have answered yes to all in the above checklist, you can now proceed with the remainder of the application.

Part 2

Supporting Information

To help your Manager decide whether your short term request to work from abroad can be approved, please advise the exceptional circumstances to why you are making the request.

How do you think your requested working arrangement will affect:

- Ability to deliver on outcomes
- Working practices / relationships with colleagues, stakeholders or partners etc

Will you have access to sufficient internet access, DSE compliant space to work and can adhere to all applicable policies e.g. ICT Acceptable Use, Data Protection. Please provide details.

Are there any aspects of your role you would be unable to undertake from your proposed location abroad? Please provide detail.

Have you any suggestions about how the possible effects of implementing your Flexible Working request could be managed / minimised?

EMPLOYEE SIGNATURE

Signed:

Date:

FOR SERVICE USE

Managers Comments (including any agreed amendments to the above request and whether they are in agreement with the request or do not approve and the reasons):

AUTHORISATION

Request approved by Line Manager on a temporary basis

Line Manager Name:

Signed:

Date:

Request approved by Cluster Chief Officer on a temporary basis

Signature

Date

OR

Request declined by Cluster Chief Officer (reasons provided to employee by Manager)

Reasons request was declined by Cluster Chief Officer

Signature Date

The Manager should confirm decision in writing within 2 weeks of request form being received

Copy to be sent to askhr@aberdeencity.gov.uk for personal file, along with the outcome letter.

Letter to Confirm Outcome of Temporary Request to Work Outwith the UK

PERSONAL

Dear

TEMPORARY REQUEST TO WORK FROM OUTWITH THE UK

Thank you for submitting your temporary request to work from outwith the UK. The exceptional circumstance for this request are XXX.

I write to confirm that your request has been approved.

To confirm, from [date] you will work from [insert name of country] until [date].

[Provide details of what has been agreed e.g. hours of work, attendance at meetings etc]

OR

I write to confirm that your request has been declined.

[Provide details of why the request has been declined]

The Chief Officer decision is final and there is no appeals process to this final decision.

Yours sincerely,

NAME OF OFFICER

Cc: AskHR (for personal file)

Appendix E

Flexible Working Considerations - Checklist for Managers

This checklist should be used in consideration for any flexible working request.

Consideration	Response
Is the role suited to the employee's flexible working request?	
If not, could the role be amended in some way to make it suitable with minimal impact upon the citizen and service delivery?	
Are there any implications for service delivery?	
Are there any implications for other team members?	
If requesting to work from home, does the employee have sufficient Wi-Fi, suitable space to work with the correct equipment, Health and Safety and Data Protection compliant.	
Have you undertaken a risk assessment for the employee's workstyle? Is it suitable for the flexible working request?	
In order to assess the suitability of the request, the employee must complete a DSE Work Station Assessment for their requested place of work, and for this to be deemed suitable. The DSE Assessment should be updated annually.	
If the request is to work from a different town/area from their base location, is the employee willing/able to travel to their base location or other council location, at their own expense, within a reasonable timescale when required?	
What additional support may the employee need?	
Can clear expectations, outputs, standards, communication and timescales be agreed to ensure productivity is maintained?	
How will you manage the need for face to face meetings / team meetings / anchor days etc. to ensure team dynamic is maintained?	

Are any additional costs or resources required to meet the request for the employee and the service?	
Are there any health, safety and wellbeing implications? E.g. lone working, where working in a Council work location what are first aider and fire safety considerations, working time regulations, mental health and wellbeing impact	
How will confidential information, either paperwork or electronic files be kept secure in line with Council policy?	

Appendix F

FLEXI-TIME GUIDANCE

Flexi-time is a contractual arrangement which allows an employee to vary their hours of work within the agreed limits in agreement with their line manager. Flexi-time allows an employee to choose, within certain limits, when to begin and end work.

Core Hours are recognised by the Council and are periods of time when employees are contractually obliged to be actively in work, available for meetings, to be contacted and / or undertake key tasks.

Core Hours should normally cover:

- A six hour period; with

- A maximum break period of 2 hours; and

- A minimum break period of 30 minutes; and

- At least 4 hours to be worked with no more than one break period.

Core hours recognised by the Council are **10am to 12noon and 2pm to 4pm**. However, there may be flexibility to work outwith the core hours with the agreement of the line manager provided there is no detriment to service delivery.

An employee must work their contracted number of hours during the accounting period of four weeks. Their hours of attendance will be recorded and added up at the end of each accounting period.

An employee can carry over an excess of up to 15 hours or a deficit of up to 7.5 hours from one accounting period to another. A deficit of hours should be made up in the following accounting period. Excess hours may be used to either reduce attendance or request additional leave (flexi-leave), subject to a maximum of two full days or four half days in any accounting period. This leave should be requested and approved by the employee's line manager. The permitted working hours of flexi-time will normally be within the standard working week (i.e. 0700 - 2000). Clusters may vary the hours of the standard working week when normal service provision is outwith these times. However, no enhancements are payable where an employee requests to work their contracted hours outwith standard hours, if this is a personal choice and not contractual or a requirement of the role or manager request.

A maximum of 11 hours may be worked in any 24-hour period. If an employee chooses to work in excess of the recommended maximum, they will not accrue additional time credits. For further information please refer to Working Time Regulations to ensure compliance.

The responsibility for ensuring that the scheme is being properly applied and complied with on a day-to-day basis rests with line management within the Cluster. It is the responsibility of the individual employee to ensure their periods of attendance are recorded accurately.

Employees may request flexi-leave, on the following conditions: -

- Flexi-leave will not exceed two full days in any four week accounting period (this could also be taken as half days).
- You must ensure that the request will not result in a **deficit** more than 7.5 hours at the end of the accounting period.
- You can only book a flexi day within the current or next accounting period.
- Flexi-leave cannot be authorised retrospectively and any such unauthorised absence will be treated as leave without pay.
- The flexi request should, where possible be submitted three working days' in advance of the requested day.
- Flexi time will be granted in line with the demands and needs of the service.

Clusters may develop local arrangements taking account of service operating requirements. If a local flexible working arrangement is needed, the cluster will be responsible for developing the detail of the scheme and for consulting with the trade unions and employees with a view to reaching agreement. Managers must discuss their intentions with the Employee Relations and Wellbeing team before beginning formal consultation so that the legal compliance of the proposals can be confirmed.

The current accounting periods can be found [here](#).

TIME OFF IN LIEU (TOIL) GUIDANCE

Time off in lieu applies in **exceptional** circumstances, where an employee has been asked by their manager to work longer hours so that, for example, a particular peak in workload can be dealt with and should only be used for short term periods.

In these circumstances the manager and employee can agree that the additional hours worked can be taken as time off in lieu at a later date. Managers should ensure that any TOIL does not accrue to an excessive amount. Managers should ensure that they are monitoring the use of TOIL and ensure that the time accrued is given back within a reasonable timescale to ensure that hours due do not become unmanageable, and they should consider longer term options for ensuring service delivery without any reliance on TOIL.

In order to grant time off in lieu the following must apply:

- If applicable, the employee must have a positive flexi balance at the time the arrangement is made
- The manager must have requested that the employee carry out the additional work
- The manager and employee must agree in advance that time off in lieu will be granted for those hours

TOIL can only be given at like for like rates i.e. one additional hour of work gives one hour of TOIL even if worked at a time when enhanced rates would normally apply. The additional hours worked should be recorded. When the employee would like to take those hours off the TOIL can be requested and authorised by their line manager.

Flexible Working Options In Detail**PART-TIME WORKING**

Part-time working covers any arrangement where an employee is contracted to work anything less than full-time hours for the type of work in question. Reducing hours will result in a permanent contractual change with no right to return to the full time hours at a later date.

COMPRESSED WORKING

Compressed working is an arrangement where employees work their contracted hours over an agreed working period, e.g. 74 hours over 9 days in a 2 week period. In practice compressed working leads to an employee working for more hours per day, but for fewer days per week or month. (In this example, a standard working day would be 8.22 hours or 8 hours 14 minutes).

Daily working hours can be flexible between the hours of 07:00 and 20:00. Although there may be some flexibility in start and finish times, employees on compressed working will NOT be entitled to flexi-leave. Compressed working can operate along with other solutions such as Term Time Working or Homeworking.

Local Conditions of Service Section 1.3 provides details of the Working Time Regulations. These are statutory provisions which must be complied with.

Both the employee and the line manager have a duty of responsibility to ensure that all Health and Safety issues are identified and addressed and that performance is maintained at a consistent level.

Annual leave entitlement will be converted into hours for the year this will be pro-rated for part-time employees. For anyone who has their leave in hours, your balance includes your entitlement to public holidays which means that any public holiday which falls on a normal working day for you, will have to be requested as leave through CoreHR to ensure that hours are deducted from your overall entitlement. This is not an automatic process so you must ensure you request these public holidays via CoreHR.

The number of hours that would normally be worked on the annual leave day will be deducted from the annual leave entitlement. As an example, someone working 37 hours per week over a 9-day fortnight works 8.22 hours in each working day. For each day of leave they would deduct 8.22 hours from their leave entitlement.

Public Holiday entitlement will be converted into hours for the year. As an example public holiday entitlement based on an average 37 hour working week is:

$(7 \text{ days} \times 7.4 \text{ hours}) = 51.8 \text{ hours annual leave}$

The number of hours that would normally be worked on the designated public holiday should be deducted from the entitlement.

If a person is NOT scheduled to work on a public holiday no hours will be deducted. (i.e. if as a result of compressed working the normal working day is 8.22 hours, this will only be deducted from the public holiday entitlement if this would have been a normal working day).

Points to consider:

If you are considering a compressed working arrangement request then you should take these points into account:

- Compressed working is only applicable for employees who work days (i.e. Monday to Friday within standard working hours). It does not apply to employees who contractually work outside the standard working hours. Those employees in receipt of a regular non-standard working week payment cannot be considered for compressed working
- The time or day the employee is not required to work will normally be fixed
- The Line Manager will be responsible for ensuring normal service provision on the time or day when the employee is not required to work with no overall changes to the work requirements of any other team member

ANNUALISED HOURS

Annualised hours allows flexibility for employees to work more or fewer hours at different times in the year to match demand. The reduced working time should be at times when service demand is low and increased hours when service demand is high.

The annualised hours arrangement will have to detail:

- The total number of hours to be worked over the year
- A definition of what the working year is (i.e. when it starts and ends)
- The number of hours that have to be worked in each period
- Any flexibility that is allowed in the working hours - Note that employees working annualised hours will not be eligible for flexi-time
- Annual leave arrangements
- Details relating to time recording

Usually the hours will be divided into rostered hours, which are set, and unallocated hours, when an employee can be called into work as demand dictates (and to cover unplanned work and employee absence). Payment will be in 12 equal instalments (although arrangements may be permitted where the pay for the work actually done is in the period to which the payment relates).

The working year is a 12 month period commencing at the first day of January and ending the last day of December.

- In each period the employee will be required to work a minimum of 71% of their contracted hours for that period.

- In each period the employee will **NOT** be permitted to work more than 129% of their contracted hours for that period.

Varying Work Hours during the Year

By definition annualised hours allow an employee to work reduced hours during some part of the year and more hours at another time. The scheme allows for individual working arrangements for employees, where agreed with their Line Manager, not to work for a particular day(s), week(s) or month(s). In this case the notional hours will be calculated over actual total period required.

All annualised working arrangements should be regularly monitored with actual working time being recorded and be within the minimum and maximum working limits per period.

Balancing Months

For individual annualised working arrangements which vary from month to month there is a requirement for the actual working hours to be reconciled against the notional working hours for a preset period.

Annual Leave

The annual leave and public holiday entitlement will be calculated for the year and where appropriate on a pro-rata basis. The number of hours that would normally be worked on the annual leave day will be deducted from the annual leave entitlement.

The Annualised Working Hours Scheme may specify limits on the proportion of annual leave which can be taken during periods of extended working hours.

The annualised hours are broken down into a set number of hours to be worked each week. Every 4 weeks each employee will be informed of the number of hours actually worked against those notionally contracted to work for that period. This will result in either a negative balance if the employee works less than the notional contracted hours for the month or a positive balance if the employee works more. Each period balance is taken forward.

Those employees who at the end of month 11 of the working year are projected to work, or have already worked, more than their annual contracted hours will be allocated additional hours for the year by way of contract variation. Additional hours will be paid at flat rate for all hours worked up to the annual full-time equivalent number of hours and at the agreed overtime rate thereafter. The additional monies will be paid at the earliest opportunity through payroll.

Where a negative balance is projected, arrangements should be made for the employee to work the required hours so that a balance can be achieved.

Group or Individual Annualised Working Arrangements

This scheme allows for group or individual annualised working arrangements. This is likely to be appropriate for a group of workers where the work demands are seasonal or cyclical and can be determined in advance. Where an annualised working arrangement is developed for a group all employees in the group must comply with the pre-set annualised working arrangement. Such an arrangement will not normally require for there to be a “balancing” of working time during the year of actual against notional working hours.

The scheme provides the facility for an individual to agree with their managers their own annualised working arrangement. This may be appropriate where the demands of their job are not predictable and forward planning is not straight forward. For the individual arrangements where working times are more likely to vary from month to month there will be a requirement to “balance” actual working time against the notional hours for the period.

Balancing of Hours on Termination of Employment

On notification of termination of employment the number of hours worked up to the date of termination in the year will be reconciled against the required number of hours in the scheme year and every effort made for the hours required to “balance”. Where the required credits/debits against the required number of hours at the time of leaving the final salary payment will be adjusted in relation to any negative or positive balance of hours worked.

Balancing Hours on Termination

The number of hours worked up to the date of termination in the year will have to be checked against the required number of hours. The employee can then be asked to work more or less hours during the remainder of their employment to try to balance their hours. If that is not possible then the final salary payment will be adjusted in relation to any negative or positive balance of hours worked.

TERM TIME WORKING

Scope

With term time working contracts, the employee will remain an employee of the Council during the school holidays although they will not be required to work during this time.

Term time working may be more suited to those services that provide and operate primarily during the school term, but is not restricted solely to these services.

Working Arrangements

Employees will be required to work their contracted hours during the recognised school term times, for a duration of either 38 weeks (term time not including working on in-service days) or 39 weeks (term time including working on in-service days). The number of weeks to be worked will be established in agreement with the Service Manager. This does not change existing contractual arrangements for school based employees who may be contracted to work for a different number of weeks per year.

Pay

Employees working term time will be paid one twelfth of their annual salary each month. This method of payment ensures that employees receive an income over the full calendar year, even during periods when they are not contracted to work. The annual salary includes payment for working days and annual leave (including public holidays).

The twelve equal salary instalments assume that employees are working all available working days in the year under the term time arrangement and are due full holiday entitlement for the year. When the term time arrangement begins or ends, a calculation will be done to adjust the

first or final salary payment to reflect the proportion of salary due based on the number of working days worked and paid leave days taken under the term time arrangement in the year.

Annual Leave

Employees under term time contracts will not be permitted to request annual leave during term time. Where exceptional circumstances arise which mean that leave has to be taken during term time, the provisions of the Council's Special Leave policy will apply.

Paid leave will be allocated to 5 days during the Easter break, 5 days during the October break and the remainder during the Summer break. The number of weeks paid leave an employee is entitled to will depend on the number of contracted weeks to be worked and their length of service (please see below table for reference). Paid leave will be pro-rated based on contracted working hours.

Annual Leave and Public Holiday entitlement information can be found [here](#)

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Flexible Working Guidance – Summary of Evidence

At the start of the review of the current Smarter Working – Flexible Working in Aberdeen City Council Guidance (version 4, January 2015), a Working Group was set up in 2020 along with a dedicated Steering Group made up of Senior Managers from People & Citizen Services, Digital & Technology, Legal, Health & Safety and Corporate Landlord reflecting the cross Cluster input required.

The following engagement has taken place over the course of the Flexible Working Review between 2021 and 2024:

- Future of Work Survey
- Senior Management Teams across all Clusters
- Initial Focus Group
- Leadership Forum events
- Meeting individually with Managers across the organisation
- Equality Groups both internal and external
- Trade Unions
- Team Plans and Test and Trial Period data
- Benchmarking with other Local Authorities
- Research (CIPD, RGU and Audit Scotland)

The Project has involved further research and consideration of the following themes:

- Aberdeen City Council Workforce Data
- Legislative Changes that came into effect April 2024
- Hybrid Working including managing hybrid teams
- Types of flexibility (temporary changes to working patterns, more flexibility in flexi time and core hours)
- How and when to make contractual changes
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Office Space and Configuration and Aberdeen City Council workplace locations data
- DSE, First Aid and Fire Safety and Lone Working
- Recruitment and Onboarding
- Digital & Technology needs
- Working From Abroad

Theme / Topic	Evidence / Findings	Current Provision	Change(s) / Additions to Policy / Guidance
Legislation	<p>Changes to legislation came into effect from April 2024.</p> <p>Employment Rights Act 1996 and Flexible Working (Amendment) Regulations 2023</p>	<p>In line with current flexible working legislation. Our current guidance already accounts for some of the changes e.g. the time for employers to respond to a request. However, employees can only make 1 flexible working request in a 12 month period unless they can show a substantial change in circumstances.</p> <p>The current guidance also states: It should be noted that employees with 26 weeks of continuous service with Aberdeen City Council have a statutory right to request flexible working.</p>	<p>Legislative changes accounted for in new policy and guidance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Act requires employers to consult with the employee when they make a flexible working request before rejecting it. • It also means the time employers have to respond to a request is reduced to two months, from the three months they are allowed under previous rules. • Employees are be able to make two requests within a 12-month period, compared to the single request they were previously allowed. • There is also no longer be any requirement for the employee to explain what effect their request will have on the employer or how the impact might be dealt with. • New policy and guidance to reflect the council recognises employees have a statutory right to request flexible working, regardless of length service.
Greater Flexibility	<p>The test and trail in particular showed that employees and managers were looking for more flexibility.</p>	<p>Statutory Flexible Working Requests can be submitted for various options such as Compressed Working, Part Time and Annualised Hours.</p>	<p>In addition to the Statutory entitlement, the Policy and Guidance is looking to enable employees to work as</p>

Theme / Topic	Evidence / Findings	Current Provision	Change(s) / Additions to Policy / Guidance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall managers felt working hours should not be prescribed or mandated. A need for more flexibility in number of flexi days per period Relaxed core hours or no core hours Ability to have temporary changes to working patterns <p>Many services trialled some of these areas for example, more than 1 flexi day in a reporting period, not using core hours, being flexible with core hours and reported their findings so the data could be used for the new policy and guidance.</p>	<p>Flexi Time Scheme is a contractual arrangement which allows an employee to vary their hours of work with agreed limits. Within the scheme there are core hours and 1 flexi day per reporting period. The recognised Core Hours are 10am to 12pm and 2pm to 4pm.</p>	<p>flexibly as possible in line with service delivery in line with Council's Flexible Working ethos and principles.</p> <p>The Policy sets out the Statutory entitlements and the process for making and dealing Statutory Flexible Working requests. Approved Statutory Flexible Working Requests will result in a permanent contractual change.</p> <p>The Guidance also sets out the wider flexibility available around how and where an employee works, in line with service requirements. The benefits of this are seen throughout the employee lifecycle from attracting candidates are recruitment stage through to different life events and stages e.g. family, medical and equalities. This flexibility allows for informal arrangements for temporary or occasional changes to how or where an employee works and would not result in any contractual change.</p> <p>Removed Coreless Flexi as an option as this has now been embedded in the Council's ethos to implement greater flexibility and work outwith set core hour in line with the Council's ethos of Flexible Working being beyond Core hours. However, Core Hours can still be recognised for those roles and services that need to have these in place</p> <p>Introduced the ability to request more than 1 flexi day in a reporting period. Employees will be able to take a maximum of 2 flexi days (or 4 half flexi days) in a 4 week</p>

Theme / Topic	Evidence / Findings	Current Provision	Change(s) / Additions to Policy / Guidance
			accounting period. The flexi – time scheme otherwise remains unchanged.
Work Styles	<p>Following Covid-19 many employees continued to work from home and from the office which has become known and recognised as hybrid working.</p> <p>Benchmarking and research showed that hybrid working had been introduced by many organisations. Some organisations were specifying the number of days to be worked in the office and the number of days working from home but the majority were leaving this to the individual services/teams to discuss and agree.</p> <p>From the team plans and engagement forums it was clear that employees/teams wanted more flexibility in how they worked and in particular it was clear that</p>	<p>Working from home is a current option. This is either on a permanent, contractually agreed basis as part of a regular work pattern (this is done via a Flexible Working Request). Or this is on an ad-hoc basis where homeworking is a voluntary arrangement and agreed with line manager, in line with service delivery.</p>	<p>We have introduced 2 workstyles</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hybrid Worker 2. Fixed Location Worker <p>Since Covid-19 many employees have continued to work from home and from the office on varying levels depending on service need. For example, some individuals may have fixed days working from home and the office whilst others vary from week to week. This way of working can be defined as ‘hybrid working’. For hybrid working, there is not a one size fits all and we have not defined the split of working from a Council location and working from home. This is for individuals/ teams/ services to discuss and agree in line with service delivery.</p> <p>We have linked these workstyles to job families which will help teams identify the workstyles appropriate for their roles and team. Also, it will help managers consider if in general terms, roles are suitable for certain flexible working options.</p> <p>With the introduction of Hybrid working, Homeworking as a flexible working option has been removed. Homeworking would now be covered under the Hybrid workstyle. Each employee / job role will be aligned to one of the above workstyles.</p>

Theme / Topic	Evidence / Findings	Current Provision	Change(s) / Additions to Policy / Guidance
	Hybrid was a style of working many employees wanted to maintain following changes in working due to COVID-19.		<p>The reference to remote / satellite / mobile options has also been removed. This is also now covered under the Hybrid workstyle.</p> <p>The guidance provides further detail of each workstyle.</p>
Managing Hybrid Teams	The engagement and research also identified there was the need to have clear guidance on what hybrid means, the benefits, the need and importance for teams to still come together and keep in regular contact, when and what people have to come into the office for. The impact of hybrid working on other elements such as climate change, data protection, childcare etc.	No workstyles defined in the current Smarter Working – Flexible Working in Aberdeen City Council Guidance.	<p>Guidance on the use of Anchor Days has been introduced. Anchor days are a way to bring the whole team together and aid team connection and employee wellbeing. They are regularly scheduled days where teams come together in the workplace.</p> <p>A manager checklist is also included in the guidance, providing a guide for managers on areas to consider when making decisions around flexible working. This covers areas such as how they will maintain contact and communicate with the employee, Health and Safety requirements e.g. lone working, DSE, Data Protection, Trial Periods, dealing with performance issues, impact upon the employee themselves as well as potential team or citizen impact etc.</p> <p>Guidance to provide greater emphasis on Mental Health & Wellbeing, Health and Safety, DSE.</p>
Terms and Conditions	Question over whether contractual changes need to	N/A	Following discussion with Legal, it was agreed that no contractual changes would be made for existing employees

Theme / Topic	Evidence / Findings	Current Provision	Change(s) / Additions to Policy / Guidance
	<p>be made for employees who changed their working pattern / workstyle i.e. Hybrid as a result of Covid-19? For example employees had to work from home due to the pandemic but since restrictions were lifted, most employees continued to work from home and from the office – hybrid. Were contractual changes needed to reflect this?</p> <p>Benchmarking with other local authorities showed that other authorities were not planning to make contractual changes.</p> <p>Legal advice sought on this area too and agreement reached to make no contractual change for existing employees.</p>		<p>who have continued to carry out their current working patterns since covid 19.</p> <p>For new employees (internal move or external appointments) to the Council it was agreed that new contractual terms would be required to reflect the work style e.g. Hybrid or Fixed at a Council Location.</p>
Working from Abroad	Requirement to consider whether permanent requests to work from abroad will be permitted and parameter for	There was nothing in place for managing requests to work from abroad for either permanent or short term.	New process introduced for requesting to work from abroad for up to 4 weeks in a 12 month period in exceptional circumstances. Clarification that no permanent requests to work from abroad will be

Theme / Topic	Evidence / Findings	Current Provision	Change(s) / Additions to Policy / Guidance
	working from abroad for short periods of time in exceptional circumstances.		supported due to risks, costs, taxation and legal and IT implications. However, requests to work from abroad under exceptional circumstances for a maximum of 4 weeks in any 12 month period can be made. Guidance, process, checklist and request form developed.
Caring responsibilities	During Covid-19 and the enforced working from home, lockdown, schools closing etc circumstances were different and the engagement events showed there was a need for clear guidance around caring responsibilities and to ensure that childcare is in place during working hours.	Previous guidance stated that employees could not undertake work and caring responsibilities at the same time. Lines were blurred during covid to allow employees to work when schools and care settings were closed.	Clear guidance on caring responsibilities has been provided. Working from home is an extension of the work environment, and it is important that appropriate measures are in place for childcare/caring responsibilities during working time; it is not permissible to be working and caring at the same time.
Mental Health and Wellbeing	Engagement and research showed that hybrid working / working from home has many benefits for individuals but it does not suit everyone for a variety of reasons. One of these being the potential to impact an individual's mental health and wellbeing e.g. isolation. On the other hand,	Nothing specific in the current guidance.	A manager checklist is included in the guidance, providing a guide for managers on areas to consider when reviewing a flexible working request, whether formal or informal. This includes lone working, and mental health and wellbeing considerations. There are also links to further guidance and support on this and around managing hybrid teams, ensuring regular 121s and check-ins.

Theme / Topic	Evidence / Findings	Current Provision	Change(s) / Additions to Policy / Guidance
	it could also improve an individual's mental health and work life balance.		
Office Space and Configuration	The engagement highlighted office configuration needed to be updated to ensure suitable alternative working spaces such as spaces to take Teams calls, desk booking, team collaboration spaces and use of empty spaces as a result of reduced capacity within buildings.	N/A	Making best use of office space has been added to the Guidance, also the introduction of alternative working spaces and introduction of new IT equipment suitable for hybrid meetings.
DSE and Fire Safety	There was a requirement for further guidance on DSE and Fire and Health and Safety to ensure compliance whilst working from alternative locations, or whilst working out of core hours.	General H&S and DSE guidance and forms.	The policy and guidance highlights the requirement for Health and Safety guidance to be taken into account whilst hybrid working, including ensuring compliance with DSE and ensuring self assessments are carried out for home working desk set up. That consideration of Fire Safety Wardens has been considered and new process in place through H&S to ensure compliance with fire safety requirements including evacuation process etc. Also requirement for managers to consider Lone Working which includes consideration for First Aid provision whilst employees are working outwith Core hours.
Recruitment, Retention and Onboarding	Engagement showed there was a need to ensure there was support/onboarding for new employees / interns / work	Nothing current	The Policy and guidance, highlighted the impact that flexible working has on our Employer of Choice status especially around attracting candidates, in particular to hard to fill posts, by offering greater flexibility this makes

Theme / Topic	Evidence / Findings	Current Provision	Change(s) / Additions to Policy / Guidance
	<p>placements where many teams were working hybrid.</p> <p>Also the need to promote hybrid working to attract more people to come and work for ACC/ support employer of choice.</p>		<p>us an attractive employer for new employees, and also aids retention of existing employees.</p> <p>Where applicable job adverts promote hybrid working and workstyles can form part of recruitment discussions etc. FAQ's include guidance regarding onboarding and team integration for new employees into a hybrid team</p>
Digital & Technology	Internal research showed that there was a requirement for better options of IT equipment to aid hybrid working e.g. meeting rooms equipped for undertaking hybrid meetings.	N/A	As a result of engagement and with the shift of more employees working in a hybrid way, more IT equipment has been installed in meeting rooms around council work spaces to aid hybrid meeting rooms.

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Staff Governance Committee
DATE	27 January 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Volunteers Policy
REPORT NUMBER	CORS/24/294
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Andy MacDonald
CHIEF OFFICER	Isla Newcombe
REPORT AUTHOR	Luci Camilli
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.5

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report has been prepared to update Committee on the progress in relation to the Volunteer project and seek approval for a new Volunteers policy which will set out how any volunteering activity for Aberdeen City Council (ACC) will be managed to ensure uniformity of processes and to mitigate against any potential risks to the Council through the use of volunteers.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

- 2.1 note the content of the report and the progress made to date with the Volunteer Project; and
- 2.2 approve the Volunteers Policy for implementation with effect from 1 February 2025.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 Aberdeen City Council's (ACC's) vision is for Aberdeen as a place where all people can prosper. This means all people being able to access our services, regardless of their background and circumstances, so that we help all people, families, businesses and communities to do well, succeed and flourish in every aspect.
- 3.1.2 The Council previously implemented the Education, Culture & Sport Volunteer Policy 2013 and Making a Difference: Volunteering in Aberdeen Strategy 2013-2015.
- 3.1.3 In 2021 a project group led by the Chief Officer – Early Intervention and Community Empowerment was established with representatives from across

the Council to identify the current volunteering opportunities offered and practices undertaken. The project group began drafting a Volunteers Policy for volunteers from the community who are managed and supported by an ACC manager (for example Libraries and Museums and Galleries). The group had identified that there would be separate policies for employees who volunteer and Community Resilience Groups who correspond with a named ACC manager (for example Corporate Companies and Local Community Groups).

3.1.4 In May 2023 the project group re-established to progress the Volunteer Policy with the focus initially to gather data on the clusters who provide volunteering opportunities. The data obtained identified that there are volunteers utilised across various services within the Council with the majority being members of the public. Volunteering is undertaken on a regular basis in Education establishments, Libraries, Emergency Planning and Resilience, Archives, Galleries and Museums, Environmental Services and Data Insights.

3.1.5 In October 2023, an internal audit review 'Assurance Review of Volunteer Arrangements' was conducted on the volunteer arrangements within ACC. The review concluded in March 2024, Audit Report Number AC2420, and identified that policies and procedures differed between clusters and activities, and these were not consolidated at a corporate level to provide a clear framework or process flowchart that could be applied to any potential volunteer to the Council. The audit made a number of recommendations related to these areas, which included:

Development of a corporate volunteer policy	Completed October 2024
Implementing an online application with a single route for potential volunteers to identify, select and apply for volunteering opportunities	This is currently being developed alongside the accompanying Guidance and will be implemented on 1 February 2025 following approval of the Policy.
Identify the circumstances in which Right to Work and PVG / Disclosure documentation are required	Included in the Policy
The requirements for identification badges for volunteers and circumstances in which expenses might be claimed, and the process for approval and payment thereof	Included in the Policy and further details will be in the accompanying Guidance being developed for completion by 31 January 2025.
Guidance on data recording requirements, including time and task recording, and volunteers' rights in respect of their personal data	Included in the Policy and further details in the accompanying Guidance being developed for completion by 31 January 2025.

Performance and outcomes data should be documented and published in respect of volunteering at individual, cluster, and corporate level	Included in the Policy and further details in the accompanying Guidance being developed for completion by 31 January 2025.
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- 3.1.6 The project group engaged with Trade Unions and Chief Officers/Managers from clusters who offer volunteering opportunities to gain their feedback and support the development of the Volunteers Policy. Benchmarking was also undertaken with other local authorities to consider their policies and guidance for engaging volunteers in rewarding, appropriate and sustainable volunteering activity to support the development of our policy and volunteering arrangements.
- 3.1.7 The meeting of Council in July 2024, approved that ACC would sign up to become a Volunteer Charter Champion, committing to the 10 key principles of the Volunteer Scotland Volunteer Charter, to ensure that volunteers are engaged in rewarding, appropriate and sustainable volunteering activity.
- 3.1.8 Taking account of the internal audit recommendations, benchmarking information from other organisations, data obtained from managers across the organisation who utilise volunteers in their areas, feedback from Trade Unions and Chief Officers, as well as the commitments set out as a Volunteer Scotland Charter Champion, the draft Volunteers Policy from 2021 has been reviewed and updated.
- 3.1.9 The new Volunteers Policy sets out how any volunteering activity within ACC will be managed to ensure uniformity of processes and to mitigate against any potential risks to the Council through the use of volunteers. The policy also ensures compliance with the Volunteer Scotland Charter and that managers uphold best practice in areas such as selecting volunteers and the management of and support to volunteers.
- 3.1.10 The Council recognises that volunteers are involved in appropriate volunteering activities which complement, but never substitute the work of paid employees or the work formerly carried out by paid employees. Benefits gained include building stronger relationships with our communities, opportunities to deliver more effective projects and to learn from volunteers who bring different experiences and knowledge. Undertaking volunteering, enables individuals to develop and broaden their skills for learning, life and employability. Volunteering also provides opportunities to tackle social isolation and improve health and wellbeing.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council utilises volunteers within Environmental Services who assist with Clean Up Aberdeen, Friends Groups and Community Gardening Groups and make a positive impact on the environment by helping keep Aberdeen clean and well maintained with green spaces. This links to the Aberdeen Open Space Strategy, Nature Conservation Strategy and the LOIP “Prosperous Place” outcome with people benefiting from spending time outdoors whilst maintaining the appearance and appreciating the nature of Aberdeen.
- 6.2 Within school establishments in Aberdeen City, there are volunteers who undertake volunteering activities on environmental projects, for example, developing fruit and vegetable allotments. This links to the Keep Beautiful Scotland Eco-Schools initiative which Aberdeen City Council supports through a pupil-led approach to learning for sustainability. The environmental projects undertaken by volunteers in schools also have a positive impact on the environment as the volunteering links to the Nature Conservation and Food Growing strategies.
- 6.3 Where expenses are required to be paid for volunteers’ travel, the volunteer will use public transport (where possible) to help make a positive impact on the environment through the reduction of carbon emissions and achieve Net Zero Emissions by 2045.
- 6.4 As a sustainable food city, Aberdeen City Council has volunteers within the Library and Community Learning service who provide lifestyle choices briefings on growing fruit and vegetables. This links to the Food Growing strategy and the LOIP “Prosperous People (Adults)” outcome by encouraging healthier lifestyles through improved healthy eating behaviours and “Prosperous Place” through the reduction of household waste.

7. RISK

- 7.1 The assessment of risk contained within the table below is considered to be consistent with the Council’s Risk Appetite Statement.

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	No significant risks identified			

Compliance	Engaging a volunteer who is unsuitable to work with children and protected adults	If any volunteering activity involves 1-2-1 contact with children or protected adults, it may be classed as “regulated work” then appropriate checks under the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scheme (PVG) will be required.	L	Yes
	Data breach of personal information	Where volunteers may have access to personal, including confidential information about others as part of the volunteering activity including information about; employees, children, and members of the public. Services should ensure that access to such information is minimized and that appropriate training in the correct handling of data will be provided to mitigate this risk.		
	The selection of volunteers may not comply with the Equality Act 2010	The volunteers policy is committed to ensuring fair and equal treatment of volunteers, open to all, no matter what their background, age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion (including belief and non-belief), marriage & civil partnership and sexual orientation. All managers managing and supporting volunteers must have undertaken the online mandatory Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training.		

Operational	Non-compliance of Health and Safety legislation	The volunteers policy will mitigate the risk by ensuring that tasks undertaken by volunteers will be subject to a risk assessment with appropriate safe systems of work put into operation and any necessary training, equipment and PPE provided. All accidents, injuries or near misses will be reported to the Council through the named person.	L	Yes
Financial	No significant risks identified			
Reputational	Engaging a volunteer who is unsuitable to work with children and protected adults or who is not trained in Data Protection	To mitigate the risk, all staff who manage volunteers must comply with the terms of the Volunteers policy and the Managing Volunteers guidance to ensure compliance with all essential requirements in using volunteers.	L	Yes
	Undertaking activities which substitute the work of current paid employees or former employees	Volunteers can undertake appropriate volunteering activities which complement, but never substitute for, the work of current paid employees or the work formerly carried out by paid employees.		
	Exploitation and radicalisation of vulnerable people	All ACC employees managing and supporting volunteers must complete the mandatory training courses to ensure they have a clear understanding of their role in preventing the exploitation and		

		radicalisation of vulnerable people.		
Environment / Climate	No significant risks identified			

8. OUTCOMES

<u>Council Delivery Plan 2024</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement <u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u>	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of the following aspects of the policy statement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partners to deliver a just transition to net zero and plan to make Aberdeen a net-zero city by no later than 2037, and earlier if that is possible. • Review current recycling and waste minimisation policies and practices within Council establishments and for flatted accommodation with the objective of reducing waste, increasing recycling levels and improve efficiency of the Council collections. • Work with communities to review the management of council-managed open spaces to create more sustainable and safer green areas and open spaces and develop a Community Environmental Improvement Fund, for communities to access, to implement their own small-scale local environmental improvements. • Recognise the importance of Aberdeen's Green Belt, green spaces and open spaces so they can be enjoyed for purposes of leisure, sport and environmental wellbeing, and investigate the creation of new pocket parks. • Recognise the importance of the third sector in Aberdeen's life and economy and support and work with ACVO. • Increase the amount of land available for community market gardens, orchards and allotments for community food growing and support the expansion of community food pantries. • Support voluntary groups and other partners that help people tackle loneliness and isolation.
<u>Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u>	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	The proposals within this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 2 – 74% employment rate for Aberdeen City by 2026. The paper seeks approval of the Volunteers Policy which will help to

	deliver the LOIP Improvement Project Aim 'Support 25 individuals to gain employability skills through volunteering opportunities by 2026'.
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The proposals within this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 10 – Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is 5 years longer by 2026. The paper seeks approval of the Volunteers Policy to enable the Library and Community Library Service volunteers to continue to provide lifestyle choices briefings on growing fruit and vegetables and encourage adoption of healthier lifestyles through a whole family approach.
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	<p>The proposals within this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 13 – Addressing climate change by reducing Aberdeen's carbon emissions by at least 61% by 2026 and adapting to the impacts of our climate change. The paper seeks approval of the Volunteers Policy to enable the Library and Community Library Service volunteers to continue to provide lifestyle choices briefings on growing fruit and vegetables and help achieve a reduction in the generation of household waste.</p> <p>The proposals within this report also support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 15 - 26% of Aberdeen's area will be protected and/or managed for nature and 60% of people report they feel that spaces and buildings are well cared for by 2026. The paper seeks approval of the Volunteers Policy to enable the Environmental Services volunteers to continue to support increasing the diversity, quality and use of Aberdeen's green spaces to help improve individuals' satisfaction, health and wellbeing.</p>
Community Empowerment Stretch Outcomes	The proposals within this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 16 - 50% of people report they feel able to participate in decisions that help change things for the better by 2026. The paper seeks approval of the Volunteers Policy which will build stronger relationships with our communities, provide opportunities to deliver more effective projects and to learn from volunteers who bring different experiences and knowledge whilst enabling individuals to develop and broaden their skills for learning, life and employability.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	New Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed

Data Protection Impact Assessment	Required
Other	N/A

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 [Volunteer Charter](#) (Council, 3 July 2024)

10.2 [Internal Audit – Assurance Review of Volunteer Arrangements](#), Report Number AC2420 (28 March 2024)

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix 1 - Volunteers Policy

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Volunteers Policy

Approved by Staff Governance Committee on
27 January 2025 with an implementation date of 1 February 2025



Document Control

Approval Date	27 January 2025
Implementation Date	1 February 2025
Policy Number	POL-CS-0019
Policy Author/s and Owner	Yvonne Barclay, Library Development Manager – Author Luci Camilli, People and OD Advisor – Author Isla Newcombe, Chief Officer People and Citizen Services - Owner
Approval Authority	Staff Governance Committee
Scheduled Review	Annually
Date and Changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Replaces the Education, Culture and Sport Volunteer Policy 2013• Replaces the Making a Difference: Volunteering in Aberdeen Strategy 2013-2015	

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1. Why does the Council need this Policy?

1.1 This policy sets out how any volunteering activity for Aberdeen City Council (ACC) will be managed to ensure uniformity of processes and to mitigate against any potential risks to the Council through the use of volunteers. The Policy will specifically aim to reduce risk as set out in section 6 around:

- the health and safety of volunteers, employees and our communities
- any potential legislation breaches including data

1.2 ACC recognises that volunteering activities are a choice made freely by the individual.

1.3 ACC recognises volunteers as playing a complementary role alongside paid employees. Benefits gained include building stronger relationships with our communities, opportunities to deliver more effective projects and to learn from volunteers who bring different experiences and knowledge.

1.4 ACC recognises that volunteers should be involved in appropriate volunteering activities which complement but never substitute the work of paid employees or the work formerly carried out by paid employees. Examples of where the Council has volunteers include Libraries, Educational establishments, Environmental Services, Museums and Galleries, Archives and our City Events service.

1.5 There are a variety of volunteering opportunities across the Council which provide high quality experiences that are positive, enriching and enjoyable for all participants. All ACC volunteers will have access to relevant training, support and guidance throughout their time volunteering with ACC, offering quality opportunities to develop and broaden skills for learning, life and employability. Volunteering provides opportunities to tackle social isolation and improve health and wellbeing.

1.6 ACC is a Volunteer Charter Champion and will use the Volunteer Scotland Volunteer Charter alongside this policy to ensure that volunteers are engaged in rewarding, appropriate and sustainable volunteering activity.

1.7 ACC (People and Citizen Services) will maintain a 'pool' of its own employees who wish to volunteer for specific volunteering activities such as Emergency Resilience. This is separate to their substantive roles and contracts of employment.

1.8 This policy sets out the requirements on ACC managers to uphold best practice in selecting volunteers and in the management of and providing support to our volunteers. Relevant procedures are set out in the accompanying guidance with reference to national and local volunteering strategies as well as ensuring compliance with Data Protection and Equality legislation and protecting vulnerable children and adults.

2. Application and Scope Statement

2.1 This policy applies to all staff involved in offering volunteer opportunities and engaging and managing ACC Volunteers.

2.2 This policy only relates to volunteers and volunteering activities. Within this policy, volunteers are defined as the following:

- Volunteers from the community who are managed and supported by an ACC manager. e.g. Libraries and Museums and Galleries
- Community Resilience Groups who correspond with a named ACC manager e.g. Corporate Companies, Local Community Groups
- Council employees who volunteer to support ACC volunteering activities (separate to their substantive roles and contracts of employment) e.g. Emergency Resilience
- Council employees who volunteer to support external volunteering opportunities (separate to their substantive roles and contracts of employment) e.g. Spectra, Tall Ships

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Overall responsibility for this Policy is held by Chief Officer - People and Citizen Services.

3.2 Each individual Cluster will have responsibility for supporting the implementation of the policy within individual services. Specifically, they will:

- Appoint a named person responsible for the management of volunteers in line with the accompanying guidance within individual services.
- Ensure all administration processes related to engaging volunteers, within the Policy and accompanying guidance are completed. Examples include advertising volunteering opportunities, undertaking any necessary checks such as PVG/Disclosure, Right to Work checks, signed Volunteer Agreements and Identification Badges.
- Cover the cost of PVG/Disclosure checks where required.
- Maintain the standards of the Volunteer Scotland Volunteer Charter.
- Ensure volunteers are provided with a Privacy Notice setting out their rights in respect of the use of their personal data.
- Ensure volunteer records are maintained and retained confidentially in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.
- Maintain compliance with Health & Safety legislation by ensuring that tasks undertaken by volunteers will be subject to a risk assessment with appropriate safe systems of work put into operation and any necessary training, equipment and PPE provided. All accidents, injuries or near misses will be reported to the Council through the named person.

- All ACC employees managing and supporting volunteers must complete the mandatory training courses to ensure they have a clear understanding of their role in preventing the exploitation and radicalisation of vulnerable people.
- Discuss with all volunteers any potential expenses that may arise as a result of their volunteering activity e.g. travel costs that would otherwise prevent them from volunteering. Any expenses should be agreed in advance with the named person in accordance with the accompanying guidance.
- Comply with ACC's financial regulations policy.
- Report any non-compliance with this policy to the Chief Officer - People and Citizen Services.
- Provide any feedback on this policy or suggestions for improvement to the Chief Officer - People and Citizen Services and this will be taken into account as part of the regular review of this policy.
- Provide induction, training, support and guidance throughout the volunteer's time that they are engaged in volunteering activity with ACC.
- Report on the usage of volunteers, on a regular basis as set out in the accompanying guidance. The impact of the volunteering activities undertaken across ACC will be monitored by People and Citizen Services.

3.3 ACC will ensure that adequate levels of public liability and employer's liability insurance, which includes volunteers, are maintained at all times. Managers engaging and managing volunteers must ensure that activities are restricted to those set out in their volunteer agreement, and to adhere to corporate policies and procedures as outlined in this document, in order to ensure that the use of volunteers is covered by corporate insurance.

4. Supporting Procedures and Documentation

4.1 There is accompanying Managing Volunteers guidance to support this Policy. Other policies and procedures that may apply include:

- Corporate Health and Safety Policy
- Corporate ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Corporate Information Policy
- Corporate Information Handbook
- Corporate Child Protection Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Risk Assessment Procedure
- The Council's Guiding Principles
- Make a complaint procedure
- Mental Health and Wellbeing guidance
- Retention period for volunteers who volunteer with children or vulnerable adults guidance

- [Retention period for volunteers who do not volunteer with children or vulnerable adults guidance](#)
- [Retention period for unsuccessful volunteer applications guidance](#)
- [Financial Regulations](#)

4.2 Supporting documentation

- [Scottish Government Volunteering For All](#)
- [Volunteer Scotland Volunteer Charter](#)
- [UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [The PVG Scheme](#)
- [Right to Work checks: An Employer's Guide](#)
- [Local Outcome Improvement Plan](#)
- [Council Delivery Plan](#)

5. About this Policy

5.1 The policy is not creating any specific regulations or requirements other than what is stated under section 3 above.

5.2 This policy ensures that volunteers are engaged in rewarding, appropriate and sustainable volunteering activities in line with the Volunteer Scotland Volunteer Charter. This will contribute to building stronger relationships with communities.

5.3 This Policy recognises volunteers as playing a complementary role alongside paid employees but does not substitute the work of paid employees or the work formerly carried out by paid employees.

6. Risk

This Policy and its supporting documentation will mitigate the following risks:

6.1 Compliance Risks

- The volunteering activity may involve 1-2-1 contact with children or protected adults, and may be classed as “regulated work.” Services must ensure that appropriate checks under the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scheme (PVG) are undertaken.
- Volunteers may have access to personal, including confidential information about others as part of the volunteering activity, including information about; employees, children, and members of the public. Services should ensure that access to such information is minimized and that appropriate training in the correct handling of data will be provided to mitigate this risk as detailed in the accompanying guidance.

- The selection of volunteers must comply with the terms of The Equality Act 2010. This policy is committed to ensuring fair and equal treatment of volunteers, open to all, no matter what their background, age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion (including belief and non-belief), marriage & civil partnership and sexual orientation. All managers managing and supporting volunteers must have undertaken the online mandatory Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training to ensure that they understand their obligations under The Equality Act 2010.

6.2 Operational Risks

- The Policy will mitigate the risk of non-compliance with Health & Safety legislation by ensuring that tasks undertaken by volunteers will be subject to a risk assessment with appropriate safe systems of work put into operation and any necessary training, equipment and PPE provided. All accidents, injuries or near misses will be reported to the Council through the named person.

6.3 Reputational Risks

- There is potential for reputational risk arising from engaging unsuitable volunteers, for example a volunteer undertaking 'regulated work' without a PVG/Disclosure check or not being trained in Data Protection. To mitigate against this reputational risk, all staff who manage volunteers must comply with the terms of this policy and the Managing Volunteers guidance to ensure compliance with all essential requirements in using volunteers.
- Volunteers can undertake appropriate volunteering activities which complement, but never substitute for, the work of current paid employees or the work formerly carried out by paid employees.
- All ACC employees managing and supporting volunteers must complete the mandatory training courses to ensure they have a clear understanding of their role in preventing the exploitation and radicalisation of vulnerable people.

7. Environmental Considerations

7.1 ACC will ensure that where expenses are required to be paid for travel, these are agreed with the named person and that the volunteer uses public transport (where possible) to help achieve Net Zero Emissions by 2045.

7.2 ACC has volunteers within Environmental Services who assist with Clean Up Aberdeen, Friends Groups and Community Gardening Groups to help keep Aberdeen's green spaces clean and well maintained. This links to the LOIP "Prosperous Place" outcome with people benefiting from spending time outdoors whilst maintaining the appearance and appreciating the nature of Aberdeen.

7.3 ACC has volunteers who undertake volunteering activity within schools on environmental projects, for example, developing fruit and vegetable allotments. This links to the Keep Beautiful Scotland Eco-Schools initiative which ACC supports through a pupil-led approach to learning for sustainability.

7.4 ACC has volunteers within the Library and Community Learning service who provide lifestyle choices briefings on growing fruit and vegetables. This links to the LOIP “Prosperous People (Adults)” outcome by encouraging healthier lifestyles through improved healthy eating behaviours and “Prosperous Place” through the reduction of household waste.

8. Policy Performance

8.1 Annual reporting will gather and evaluate data collected on volunteer numbers and activity to demonstrate compliance with the policy and the alignment with corporate and LOIP objectives.

8.2 Appropriate data from the report will be shared with relevant partners and statutory bodies, as appropriate.

9. Design and Delivery

9.1 The Policy aims to support the ACC Delivery Plan, focusing on outcomes that make a difference, including working alongside partners to support Children, Young People and Adults with Additional Support Needs.

9.2 The Policy also aims to support ACC responding to emergency situations that may arise across the city.

9.3 This Policy links to outcomes of the LOIP across various actions including “Prosperous Economy” and “Prosperous People” offering support to those on the employability pipeline to gain skills for employment. It directly links to Stretch Outcome 2, Improvement Project Aim 2.8 to “Support 25 individuals to gain employability skills through volunteering opportunities by 2026.”

10. Housekeeping and Maintenance

10.1 The Policy will be reviewed annually and where necessary updates to it and the accompanying guidance document will be completed.

11. Communication and Distribution

11.1 The Policy will be included with other People policies and guidance, published on Sharepoint People Anytime and communicated through various channels to ensure all relevant parties are aware of its content and have a full understanding of the Policy and their responsibilities when offering volunteering opportunities.

11.2 The Policy will be published on the ACC volunteering webpage to be viewed by potential volunteers.

12. Information Management

12.1 Information generated by the application of this policy will be managed in accordance with the Council's Corporate Information Policy and Supporting Procedures.

13. Definitions and Understanding this Policy

13.1 **Volunteering** - "Volunteering is a choice. A choice to give time or energy, a choice undertaken of one's own free will and a choice not motivated for financial gain or for a wage or salary". (Scottish Government, Volunteering for All: national framework)

13.2 **PVG** - The Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) membership scheme "helps ensure people who are unsuitable to work with children and protected adults cannot do regulated work with these vulnerable groups". (MyGov.Scot: The PVG Scheme)

13.3 **Regulated Work** - "There are 2 types of regulated work – work with children and work with protected adults. Examples include: jobs with caring responsibilities, teaching or supervising children or protected adults, providing personal services to children or protected adults and working directly with children or protected adults". (MyGov.Scot: Types of work covered by PVG)

13.4 **Right to Work** - "means allowed to be employed by virtue of qualifying immigration status" (Employer's guide to right to work checks). This definition of work includes volunteering activity.