



HUMBERSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Human Resources

Agile Working Policy

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Responsible Person	Head of Human Resources
Date Written	February 2021
Date of Last Review	March 2024
Date of next review	March 2027
EIA Reviewed	March 2024



What we must
do well



How we support our
communities



We value and support
the people we employ



We efficiently manage
the Service

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1. INTRODUCTION

HFRS recognises the need to maximise its performance by supporting a modern, flexible work environment to support the effective and efficient delivery of its services, advanced communication and information technology enables employees to work from a variety of locations without the traditional limitations of where and when a role can be carried out. The degree of work agility will be dependent on organisational need and the nature of the role.

Agile working creates an environment where employees can think and act with agility. It allows maximum flexibility and minimum constraints around where and how employees can carry out their work.

This means looking at new approaches to the work style of employees and creating an environment where members of staff can work flexibly from any location ranging from a Service building, hot desking within another location, working from home or a blended approach and moving away from the traditional concept of a permanent base and/or desk for all employees. This in turn may assist employees to manage their work-life balance and result in attracting and retaining staff.

Agile working should be considered where this meets the operational needs of the Fire Authority, its customers and employees.

Agile working encourages employees and managers to think differently about the work that they do and to consider how and where they work to deliver services effectively and efficiently. Agile working should:

- Providing better, more responsive services.
- Maximise performance.
- Improving efficiency and productivity, including working at times when we are most effective.
- Better use of premises.
- More cost effective (time and pollution of travelling).
- Ensuring skills are utilised effectively.
- Making more efficient use of technology.
- Improving health and wellbeing by supporting employees to achieve a better balance between work and personal lives and commitments.
- Maintaining business continuity during severe weather conditions and travel disruption.
- Planning and managing work arrangements to best suit certain tasks e.g. scheduling quiet time with less distractions.
- Greater job satisfaction for employees.
- Supporting disabled employees to enter or remain in employment where this would otherwise be difficult.

- Attracting and retaining the top talent.
- Improving levels of attendance.

This policy provides a framework for consistent and fair practice where agile working, including working is adopted.

Core Code of Ethics

HFRS has adopted the Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services. The Service is committed to the ethical principles of the Code and strives to apply them in all we do, therefore, those principles are reflected in this Policy.

National Guidance

Any National Guidance which has been adopted by HFRS, will be reflected in this Policy.

2. EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

HFRS has a legal responsibility under the Equality Act 2010, and a commitment, to ensure it does not discriminate either directly or indirectly in any of its functions and services nor in its treatment of staff, in relation to race, sex, disability, sexual orientation, age, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, gender reassignment or marriage and civil partnership. It also has a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants, employees and service users.

3. AIM AND OBJECTIVES

There are many definitions of agile working. For HFRS it is about work style, where and when people work and how they carry out their activities, including:

- Giving employees the right equipment, working environment and assessments to suit their role/the Service.
- Working in a more agile way that makes best use of employee's skills, time, buildings, and resources.
- Take advantage of changes in technology and working styles to work ever more innovatively, flexibly, effectively and efficiently.

HFRS believes that people work more effective when they can strike a healthy balance between their work responsibilities and other aspects of their lives.

Our work spaces offer a blend of different spaces to work from such as formal, informal, breakout and quiet areas where you can think, collaborate, share ideas, innovate and explore ways for us to keep improving.

4. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- [Equality Impact Analysis](#)
- [Homeworking Risk Assessment Form](#)
- [DSE Assessment](#)
- Legal References
 - Working Time Regulations
 - Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
 - Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (and miscellaneous amendments 2002)
- National Guidance
There is no specific National Guidance relevant to this policy.

5. ADOPTING AGILE WORKING

Employees will be encouraged to consider the various options available to their particular role. This may include:

- Working from a core location or designated contractual work base.
- Working from any suitable Service location.
- Working across sites from other services, or partnership organisations with a secure network.
- Working from home.
- Flexible working.

All HFRS roles fit into four main work styles:

- **Fixed Desk:** Members of staff who are assessed as fixed desk are required to be at a fixed desk in a particular office at all times. They may occasionally attend meetings elsewhere and don't work from alternative service locations.
- **Fixed Location:** Members of staff who are assessed as fixed location are required to work in a particular office at all times, but they will be able to hot desk within this location. They may occasionally attend meetings elsewhere and don't work from alternative service locations.
- **Multi-Site:** Members of staff who are assessed as Multi site will work in different parts of the HFRS estate as well as their primary office base.
- **Roaming:** Members of staff who are assessed as roaming have a role that allows full mobility and the necessary IT equipment to work at any HFRS office, hot desk, and or other locations e.g. local authority, Police, NHS premises, or home.

Work styles provide guidance and a starting point when thinking about new ways of working and will mainly be determined by the needs of the role.

There is no automatic entitlement to participate in a particular work style and work styles may need to adapt as work priorities and projects change.

Managers may decide that a work-style is not appropriate for some employees who need additional support, for example those new to the job, returning after an extended period of absence or where performance concerns have been identified.

Managers regularly review the operation of their teams and generally agile working will be introduced as a result of organisational change aimed to improve the delivery of services, increase efficiency or as a result of changes to accommodation. Managers will involve and consult with staff on changes and give one month's notice.

Employees can propose changes to their working arrangements to their manager, where they believe greater efficiencies and productivity can be achieved.

Managers will work with employees to agree which working style is appropriate for their role taking account of:

- Meeting customer demand, having a clear understanding of customer requirements and delivering positive outcomes;
- Organising work within the team, including the likely effect on customers and colleagues of different working practices;
- Working collaboratively on the potential impact of planned changes across services and directorates and understanding priorities;
- Maximising opportunities for being innovative, applying and sharing knowledge and skills, including work rotas and "hot-desking";
- Growing talent as well as making best use of resources by being ambitious, encouraging and supporting others;
- The personal circumstances of the individual.

Managers will need to consider any cost implications and the requirements of this policy before making a decision.

Where employees want to make a request to work more flexibly in order to achieve a better work life balance and it involves a change in their working hours or pattern of work (this may include home working), the request must be made under the Flexible Working Policy.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Everyone can be an advocate and role model for agile working, actively promoting the possibilities, being responsive to change and creating an environment in which everyone flourishes.

Agile working gives individuals greater responsibility for managing their work and delivering their priorities, with less reliance on day-to-day supervision. Working this way needs managers and employees to develop trusting relationships and adhere to certain principles and working practices.

Managers must:

- Ensure working arrangements support high levels of customer service, including robust arrangements for business continuity and systems to maintain suitable office presence and ensure adequate office/duty cover is in place at all times;
- Ensure staff and teams are making the most efficient and cost-effective use of the Authority's resources in accordance with the aims of HFRS and that arrangements are affordable.
- Ensure the health and safety of employees and regularly monitor work arrangements taking account of the physical work environment and the impact of working more independently.
- Managers supervising employees working from multiple locations should establish a team working strategy that will support employee inclusion and prevent feelings of isolation from their manager and/or team members and should therefore ensure the following are discussed and agreed:

Establish a clear understanding of the role and expectations:

- Set clear and realistic individual targets and objectives that contribute to the team objectives and enables performance to be measured in terms of output and service delivery.
- Set the frequency and methods of communication between the employee, the manager and other team members e.g. Email updates, teams contact, and regular team and one to one meetings.
- Encourage the employee to maintain regular contact and to advise of any problems or issues as soon as they arise.
- Ensure the employee's career development is supported through agile working and that training and development is available to help individual's work smarter and reach their true potential.
- Take full account of the support individual employees need, for example during induction and probation.
- Ensure employees are appropriately trained and understand their responsibilities to protect and maintain the security and confidentiality of sensitive information.
- Ensure teams have the ability to share information and individuals benefit from team working, collaboration and learning from each other.
- Ensure employees have the right skills and knowledge to support them to get the most out of their work-style and the technology issued to them.
- Be accessible to employees even when working flexibly themselves.

Employees must:

- Create positive work environments making the best use of office accommodation for themselves and others.
- Prior to travelling to work at an alternative site, particularly within an external organisation, employees must ensure that appropriate workspace is available.
- Working arrangements should always be discussed and agreed between the manager and the employee to ensure that arrangements are beneficial to the Service and service delivery.
- Managers should ensure that the employee has access to the equipment and facilities to work in an agile way and carry out their role.
- Take responsibility for their own welfare including taking regular breaks, "switching off" at the end of their agreed working day and making it clear to colleagues and Service Users when they are available.
- Keep their manager regularly informed about their work load, issues that they need support to resolve, and provide transparent progress reports on output as their manager requires.
- Attend team and one-to-one meetings (in person and via Microsoft teams) as required by their managers and change their work venue when cover is needed.
- Keep their manager and colleagues informed of their whereabouts at all times, keep outlook calendars, voicemail and out-of-office messages up to date. If away for any length of time, ensure an alternative contact is given.
- Ensure they keep up-to-date with information communicated by HFRS, their directorate and manager through the intranet and other channels.
- Understand HFRS policies regarding confidentiality, data security, use of equipment and health and safety, and ensure arrangements are in place to protect confidential and personal information; ensuring compliance with GDPR, HFRS information security policies and the Acceptable Use Policy.
- Ensure the security of HFRS equipment and property.
- Ensure continual development of skills and knowledge to make the most of the technology available.

Everyone has a responsibility to support a positive work environment, where employees feel welcome to use available work space and vacant desks, which should be made available for other colleagues to use wherever possible.

Suspected abuse of this scheme will be investigated, and any individual suspected of such may be required to return to office-based working whilst an investigation is carried out under the disciplinary policy. If the employee is found to be abusing the scheme, the ability to work from home may be withdrawn temporarily or permanently.

7. HOURS OF WORK AND AVAILABILITY

Managers and employees should agree in advance the appropriate working pattern (in line with the Flexitime Policy).

Any additional time worked should be agreed in advance with the manager and dealt with under existing Flexitime/TOIL/Overtime arrangements.

The Working Time Regulations require that:

- No-one should work more than 48 hours a week averaged over a 17-week period (unless exceptions are agreed for specific work groups like emergency services).
- At least a 20-minute unpaid break must be taken if working 6 hours or more.
- For workers aged 16 to 18 the break must be 30 minutes after 4.5 hours work.
- An average of 11 consecutive hours rest must be taken between each working day.
- A 24-hour break must be taken for every seven days' work.
- Annual leave must always be planned, authorised and taken.

Employees are responsible for working and managing their agreed hours. Where managers believe an employee's health is being affected by working long hours (whether as a result of agile working arrangement or otherwise) they must discuss this with the employee, agree actions and refer them to Occupational Health.

8. MONITORING AND REVIEWING AGILE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

Agile working arrangements should be reviewed between manager and employee on a 6-monthly basis (or more frequently should any concerns arise) to ensure the arrangements in place are working effectively for both parties.

Employees should highlight any concerns about their working arrangements promptly to their manager.

If a manager has concerns that working arrangements are resulting in a loss of performance or insufficient output or having a negative effect on an employee's health then they should discuss this with the employee at the earliest opportunity and determine corrective action and/or alternative arrangements.

9. REPORTING SICKNESS AND ACCIDENTS

Normal reporting procedures must be followed when reporting sickness or accidents.

Managers must consistently follow HFRS absence management procedures, ensuring a return to work discussion takes place when an employee returns to work, for every episode of absence. This may take place via Microsoft teams if appropriate.

Where there are concerns about levels of sickness absence, meetings must be carried out face to-face.

When reporting accidents, it is important to ascertain for insurance purposes whether the employee was working when the accident occurred.

10. PROPERTY AND INSURANCE

The Authority's Employers Liability Insurance will cover employees in the same way irrespective of the employee's working style.

Computers and other equipment provided by HFRS as part of agile working are covered by the Authority's insurance policy. All relevant ICT equipment will be periodically PAT tested as required.

Employees have a duty of care to take all reasonable steps to safeguard equipment from loss or damage and should report any loss or damage to HFRS equipment to their line manager/ICT immediately.

11. EXPENSES

Travelling costs incurred by the employee in travelling to their main work location will not be reimbursed. However, additional travelling costs incurred in attending other HFRS premises or external locations will be reimbursed in accordance with the established arrangements for claiming additional expenditure.

12. WORKPLACE

When working away from the contractual work base, the policies and procedures of the service will still apply. The host organisation is responsible for the health and safety of the building, but employees have a personal responsibility for their own health and safety. Employees must make themselves aware of the requirements at each site visited e.g. signing in/out, fire evacuation etc.

Employees who have been provided with specialist equipment in the office as a result of workplace assessments e.g. footrests, specialist chairs, keyboards etc. will need to discuss with their manager whether the equipment can be transferred to an alternative location. Agile working from more than one site may not be possible as specialist equipment may only be supplied to one location.

A hot desk refers to a designated workspace for any member of staff to use at any time. Where applicable, designated hot desks may/could be used by visiting staff, or alternatively individuals could approach a team member to ask if they may work from a free desk.

Where an employee requires adjustments under the Equality Act 2010, individual needs will be discussed thoroughly, and careful consideration given to how the employee's needs can be reasonably met in the context of agile working.

13. HEALTH AND SAFETY

HFRS complies with the Health and Safety at Work Act. Appropriate risk assessments are carried out on the work activities of agile workers in order to comply with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (and miscellaneous amendments 2002).

Manager's responsibilities:

Ensure that sufficient workstyle risk assessments of employee's activities and working environments are carried out:

- Provide suitable and safe equipment for agile workers.
- Ensure agile workers are aware of their own safety responsibilities.
- Consider what first aid provisions may be required for agile workers
- Make agile workers aware of how to report accidents, incidents, hazards and problems.
- Investigate or otherwise follow up such reports to ensure the risk is properly managed and lessons learnt are widely communicated.
- Provide suitable and appropriate information, instruction and training so that agile workers understand the hazards associated with their work style and can manage their own DSE and workspace.
- Ensure a suitable work space is available for all agile workers (including at home for agile workers who have suitable provision – via an employee completed survey/assessment).
- Have regular One to One/Supervision meetings with agile workers.
- In the case where there has been limited face to face contact, make regular enquiries about the wellbeing of the staff to ensure no detriment arises from agile working.

Employee's responsibilities:

- Take responsibility for their own health and safety as agile workers.
- Carry out DSE risk assessment that covers the hazards from their work style.
- Wherever they work; review and update DSE risk assessments at least annually, or when significant changes occur.
- Participate in training so as to understand the risks associated with the work style and actively manage the controls provided to protect them.
- Use the equipment provided to reduce the risk to their health and safety including separate screen, keyboard, mouse, etc., where available.
- Report any defects, accidents, incidents, near misses and other concerns to the online reporting system or their manager, as appropriate.

- Carry out self-assessment of their workspace when working from home and provide to their manager as required.
- Raise any welfare/wellbeing issues linked to agile working with line manager

Personal Health and Safety

- Ensure reasonable precautions are taken to ensure safety when travelling between sites, travelling alone and visiting service users at home.
- Familiarise themselves with any building they use including welfare facilities, emergency evacuation routes and procedures.
- Check any hazard checklist before visiting new customers.
- Ensure they leave details of visits and timescales when working away from their office base.
- Ensure that, when not returning to the office from a visit they arrange to confirm the conclusion of that visit with their manager, a member of the team or other designated contact.

Home Working

Agile working does not mean home working, but employees may work from home either on an ad-hoc basis or as a regular part of their working week, with agreement from their line manager and if home working:

- Supports the effective performance of the employee's role.
- Supports high quality customer service.
- Is affordable and represents an efficient use of hfrs resources and the employee's time.
- Is practical in terms of the employee's accommodation ensuring health and safety requirements can be met.

To be eligible for Home Working you must have a reliable and secure internet connection at your home address.

HFRS will not provide the facility for this unless other circumstances beyond our control arise.

HFRS ICT Dept will also not support home internet set-ups as there are many means beyond our control to enable us to support this.

If all these requirements cannot be met home working will not be agreed.

The employee must:

- Complete a [Homeworking Risk Assessment Form](#).
- Complete a [DSE Assessment](#) if the work is based on a computer/laptop.

- The completed self-assessments must be sent to the employee's line manager who will review the assessment and discuss/action any unsatisfactory aspects before the home working commences

Approval Process

As detailed above, approval must be given by the manager in writing, in advance for any employee requesting agile working. If a manager refuses a request for agile working the employee may appeal in writing to the Director of the function / department within seven days of the decision being made.

If anyone requires any further guidance / information relating to this document, please contact Human Resources