

Hybrid Working Scheme

Version 4.0, 1 April 2024

Document control

Title	Hybrid Working Scheme		
Governance group	Corporate Management Team		
Owner	Fiona Whittaker, Chief Officer of People Resources	Contact	whittakerf@northlan.gov.uk
Author	Linda Cullen, Employment and Policy Manager	Contact	CullenLi@northlan.gov.uk

Revision history

Version	Originator	Review start date	Revision description and record of change
3.0	Linda Cullen	1 April 2023	Scheme has been revised to reflect Council position
4.0	Linda Cullen	8 January 2024	Scheme has been revised to reflect Council position

Document approvals

Version	Governance group	Date approved	Date approval to be requested (if document still in draft)
4.0	Corporate CMT	19 January 2024	19 January 2024
4.0	Finance and Resources Committee	28 February 2024	28 February 2024

Consultation record (for most recent update)

Consultation status	Stakeholders consulted		
Stakeholders consulted and dates	People Resources Team Single Status Trade Unions Teaching Trade Unions		

Strategic alignment

Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority - Improve North Lanarkshire's resource base.

Ambition statement - Build a workforce for the future capable of delivering on our priorities and shared ambition.

Programme of Work

Statutory / corporate / service requirement

Next review date

Review Date	Annually from date of approval or before this date if any legislative or organisational changes have an impact on the scheme.
--------------------	---

Contents

1. Introduction	4
2. Scope	4
3. Our Approach to Hybrid Working	5
4. Flexibility of Workforce	6
5. Operating Principles.....	6
6. Technology and Equipment.....	9
7. Expenses	10
8. Health and Safety	11
9. Data Protection/GDPR.....	12
10. Working outside the UK.....	13
11. Terms and Conditions.....	13
12. Review	13
Appendix 1	14

1. Introduction

Hybrid working has become an integral part of working life over the last few years, offering employees flexibility whilst supporting work-life balance, supporting positive health and wellbeing, and helping to achieve better outcomes. Hybrid working is a working arrangement which allows employees to split their working time between the workplace and an agreed remote working location, such as an employee's home. However, whilst hybrid working offers many benefits for employees, it should not have an impact on productivity or performance and consistency in quality and standards are fundamental to its success.

This scheme sets out the Council's approach to hybrid working, allowing employees to continue to work flexibly whilst looking at how our office space can support employees to stay connected and work in their best way.

2. Scope

- The scheme will apply to all posts that are suitable for hybrid working, based on job role and team requirements, which will be determined by the relevant Chief Officer.
- The scheme does not apply to Chief Officer, frontline or direct customer facing posts.
- Third and fourth tier managers are eligible for the scheme, if their role allows for hybrid working, which will be determined by the relevant Chief Officer. However, it should be noted that due to the nature and seniority of the role, additional days are likely to be required within the office out with that described within the scheme.
- There are several factors that will be considered when determining the suitability of a post for hybrid working including: whether the work is capable of being undertaken effectively from home; the impact on the level of service provided to our community and customers; any costs incurred; suitability of the home environment; any potential negative impact on employees working from home and any negative impact on teams or colleagues.
- Not all roles and not all jobs are suitable for hybrid working and this will not be applicable where:
 - an employee needs to be present in the workplace to perform their job (for example, because it involves a high degree of personal interaction with colleagues or third parties or involves equipment that is only available in the workplace).
 - an employee's most recent appraisal identifies any aspect of their performance as unsatisfactory.
 - an employee's line manager has deemed that their current standard of work or work production is unsatisfactory.
 - an employee has an unexpired warning, whether relating to conduct or performance; and
 - an employee needs training or supervision to deliver an acceptable quality or quantity of work.

- Employees will not automatically be entitled to participate in the hybrid working scheme and posts will be determined solely on their suitability, not on individual circumstances. It may also be necessary to review hybrid working arrangements for business or individual needs and appropriate discussions will take place should this be required.
- The Council's standard hybrid working arrangements are a minimum 50/50 contractual time split between the home and the office/site base. Office/site base days must run consecutively on a pattern of Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Monday, and Tuesday.
- Employees who feel that their post is suitable for inclusion in the hybrid working scheme but has not been identified as such should discuss this with their line manager in the first instance.
- Although home working is a feature of the Smarter Working Policy, the hybrid working scheme is about where you work not when you work. The right to apply for smarter working (which mainly concentrates on when you work) remains open to employees and further information can be accessed [here](#).
- The Council will only support full home working arrangements in exceptional circumstances.

3. Our Approach to Hybrid Working

Full-time employees, working a normal working week, are required to attend their service office/site-base for a minimum of 10 days, split over a four-week period. Employees will be required to work Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of week one and Monday, Tuesday of week two either from their home or the office/site base, ensuring that the five days are worked consecutively from the office/site base or home on a rotational basis. Where this is not possible due to operational reasons, an alternative work pattern can be considered by the relevant service manager but must ensure that staff continue to undertake the full 50/50 split.

Employees who are part-time or have an alternative work pattern, should ensure that a minimum of half their working days/hours within a four-week period are based in an office/site base and the work pattern followed is as described above, ensuring attendance in the office/site base on consecutive days and in agreement with their line manager.

The remaining days within the four-week period, can be worked from home or in another community-based hub/location as community workplace capacity is increased.

Employees, who are participating in the hybrid working scheme, are expected to attend the office/site base as described above and less days in the office/site-base will only be approved in exceptional circumstances and through a formal Smarter Working request.

Employees can attend the office/site base more than 10 days in every four-week period subject to availability of space and in agreement with their line manager. Employees are also encouraged to use hubs out with the 10 days in the office/site-base.

For those participating in the hybrid working scheme, their main base will be their office/site location, and this will act as their administrative base.

Those participating in the hybrid working scheme are not permitted to work from abroad or from a holiday home or location. Employees' primary remote working location must be within commuting distance of their workplace and must be available to attend an office or site base, if required, at short notice.

4. Flexibility of Workforce

Given the degree of flexibility that the hybrid working scheme provides, there is an expectation that the workforce will be flexible. This means that employees will be required to attend an office/site base on particular days (occasionally above the minimum requirement) at the request of their line manager, for example, for in-person training or meetings where it is determined they are best conducted in person.

Similarly, there will be circumstances in which employees are asked to work remotely, at home or from another location for specific purposes and service delivery requirements, for instance:

- for operational needs, if there are too many members of a particular team in the office/site base on specific days.
- to deliver a particular element of their role or service.
- if adverse weather prevents attendance at the office/site base and the line manager agrees that it is a health and safety risk to travel.

5. Operating Principles

5.1 Office Working Hours

For days on which employees are attending the office/site base, their normal hours of work as set out in their contract of employment will apply and start and finish times should only be adjusted on any day following the approval of their line manager. Where a level of flexibility is required to facilitate attendance at the office/site base, employees should discuss this with their line manager and an agreement reached.

Employees who have access to flexible working hours (including coreless flexi) must continue to record all hours worked on Myself. Employees should work their normal working hours when in the office/site base. However, where there is a requirement to work additional time, flexitime can be accrued if agreed by the line manager.

Employees who are participating in the hybrid working scheme and are currently on a temporary Smarter Working arrangement will have these reviewed in light of the new hybrid working arrangements. Employees will be encouraged to attend the office/site base for a minimum period every four weeks and only in exceptional circumstances will alternative arrangements be approved on a permanent basis.

5.2 Office Space

During your time in the office/site base, you will attend your office/site base where you will be required to hot-desk. Your line manager will discuss arrangements with you for desk allocation. Personal belongings and moveable work equipment are not allowed on desks overnight and desks should be left clean for use the next day.

Employees participating in the hybrid working scheme are responsible for ensuring that their laptop and other equipment is either taken home or secured away at the end of the working day.

Where employees require specialist equipment to allow them to fulfil their role, permanent desks and equipment may be allocated to them.

5.3 Office Safe-Working Measures

Employee safety is our priority, and all standard workplace health and safety measures will continue to operate. However, due to the use of flexible working arrangements and hot desking, employees need to pay particular attention to the following aspects of health and safety:

- Ensure you have complied with any sign-in procedures, which are necessary to identify building occupancy in the event of an emergency.
- Ensure that you know how to evacuate the building in an emergency and where to assemble. Your line manager will advise if you are not sure.
- Ensure that you know about local first aid arrangements (and how to summon help if needed).
- Ensure that your workstation is kept tidy during the day and that bags and trailing cables do not present trip hazards (this is especially important where hot desks are being used).
- Ensure that your workstation and chair are adjusted properly and set up correctly. Employees should have completed the DSE awareness e-learning course available on LearnNL and completed a DSE self-assessment.

Employees must advise their line manager immediately if they have any concerns, have identified any potential risks, or have any suggestions for further adaptations that are required.

5.4 Working hours from home or Remote Working

When working in a hybrid way, employees must be available and working during their normal working hours, as set out in their contract of employment. An employee's working hours at home or from a remote location should mirror those normally undertaken in the office/site base, unless otherwise agreed by the line manager.

Employees should limit interruptions during the working day, unless otherwise agreed by the line manager. Under no circumstances should an employee undertake any other

responsibility e.g., childcare, or other caring responsibilities during the hours they are contracted to work. Employees are required to make arrangements for the care of any children or other dependants who rely on them for support or care when the employee is working from home.

Employees should also ensure that their working day at home complies with the Working Time Regulations by ensuring that they:

- Take a lunch break each day of at least 30 minutes.
- Ensure that the time between stopping work one day and beginning the next is not less than 11 hours.

(Further information relating to the Working Time Regulations can be found at:

<https://www.acas.org.uk/working-time-rules>)

Line managers must be able to contact their employees throughout the working day and therefore it is important that employees ensure that their outlook calendar is up to date with details of any appointments, meetings, or scheduled visits to other locations. It is also important that staff use the out of office facility when not available. Teams should also consider the use of tools such as shared calendars which can also help colleagues understand each other's availability on any working day.

5.5 Working Space at Home or in Remote Location

Employees participating in the hybrid working scheme must be able to work safely from home or any other location and therefore the appropriate DSE Assessment must be carried out and reviewed by the line manager. Where an employee is unable to work safely from home, they will be required to attend the office/site base and will be withdrawn from the hybrid working scheme.

Where employees have reasonable adjustments in place these should be reviewed to ensure they are suitable and appropriate for their working environment. This review should be undertaken by the employee and their line manager using the Reasonable Adjustments Protocol. The same protocol should be used for any employee who in the future acquires a disability or long-term health condition and requires reasonable adjustments to be made. For more information, please contact your line manager or a member of the Employment and Policy team.

5.6 Conduct whilst working from Home or Remotely

Whilst working from home or remotely, employees must continue to follow the Employee Code of Conduct including ensuring that they are dressed appropriately if participating in virtual meetings. Confidentiality and privacy should also be maintained at all times.

5.7 Sickness whilst working from Home or Remotely

If an employee is sick and unable to work, they must follow the Council's Supporting Attendance Policy reporting procedures and notify their line manager by telephone as early as possible on the first day of absence to explain the reason for their absence and to give an estimate of its probable duration.

Where an employee's agreed working day commences before the normal 8.45 am start time, employees will be required to contact their line manager to advise them of their absence by no later than 9.30 am.

Where an employee's agreed working day commences after the normal 8.45 am start time; employees will be required to contact their line manager within an hour of their scheduled start time or within such other timescales as may be specified by individual Services.

Should telephone contact with their line manager not be possible then notification of the absence should be advised to the line manager or nominated officer by e-mail at their earliest convenience, and the line manager will then require to contact the employee at the first available opportunity.

6. Technology and Equipment

To enable people to work in a hybrid way, the Council will supply, within reason, the IT and associated equipment necessary. As a minimum, employees participating in the hybrid working scheme will receive:

- a laptop computer and software (to be used both remotely and in office/onsite)
- a keyboard and mouse
- a set of headphones
- a monitor
- mobile phone where necessary.

It is an employee's responsibility to ensure that they have all sufficient and appropriate equipment for working from their remote location. The Council is not responsible for the provision, maintenance, replacement, or repair of any personal equipment used by an employee. It is also an employee's responsibility to ensure that they have a suitable workspace at their remote working location with adequate lighting for work. If an employee has a disability, an employee should discuss with their line manager any equipment required to work from their remote working location comfortably.

All equipment provided remains the property of the Council and must be returned upon request. Access to the employee's home may be required for this purpose and arrangements will be discussed in advance to agree a mutually agreeable time.

A record of what equipment an employee has at home should be kept on myTeam. It will be the employee's responsibility to ensure that there is broadband facility and that this is maintained by the employee and is sufficient to support all necessary IT connections and equipment essential for connection to the relevant Council platforms

and databases. Where there is any break in this service liable to last longer than two hours, the employee should arrange to attend work at a local office or site base. If broadband is not sufficient or they do not have this within their household, this should be discussed with their line manager and alternative arrangements will be made for them to work from an office or site.

Only Council approved devices and software should be used for work related activities. Employees should be provided with the appropriate packages to allow them to conduct meetings from home if required. These meetings should be conducted confidentially and away from other household members.

Relevant ICT policies and guidance must be referred to as appropriate. Please see further guidance [here](#).

Permission to use laptops out with the normal working environment must be sought from the line manager and should only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

7. Expenses

7.1 Financial Assistance

The Council will not provide any additional financial assistance for any employee wishing to work from home or remotely. Any costs for Wi-Fi, heating, lighting, electricity, and commuting costs to your office/site base will always be a personal expense in line with HMRC guidelines.

7.2 Business Mileage

Where an employee is required to attend a specific meeting or site visit, they can claim the appropriate business mileage. Any business mileage will be calculated from either the employee's home or administrative base, whichever provides for the lowest mileage.

If an employee commences work at home and they are then required to visit sites throughout the day as part of their role, they can claim business mileage from their home or administrative base, whichever provides the lowest mileage.

On the days when employees commence work from a Council or site base, the journey from home to office/site base will be classed as a commute and business mileage cannot be claimed. The days employees are required to attend the office/site base will be classed as a commute.

Expense claims should be submitted via mySelf and authorised via myTeam. Line managers should ensure employees have appropriate business insurance for work related journeys when travelling in personal vehicles.

7.3 Home Insurance/Mortgage/Landlord

Employees are responsible for ensuring that their home insurance provider is aware that they are working from home for a percentage of their working week and for

considering any impact this may have on their cover. The Council will not reimburse any expenses incurred.

Employees are also responsible for ensuring that they are not in breach of any covenant or agreement by working from home. Employees should check the terms of any mortgage, lease, or rental agreement and if necessary, obtain the permissions required to work from home. The Council will not reimburse any expenses incurred.

8. Health and Safety

Employees should liaise with their line manager and/or Safety and Wellbeing Advisor to ensure that their remote working set-up is appropriate and that they are working in a safe manner. When working from their remote working location, employees have the same health and safety duties as other staff. Employees must also take responsibility for their own health and safety and that of anyone else who is affected by their actions or omissions (for example others in their household when working from home). Employees must keep the work area clean and tidy, avoiding trip/slip hazards. A Risk Assessment must be undertaken for each home workspace at the beginning of the home working arrangement and reviewed periodically thereafter. Guidance will be provided for how these risk assessments should be undertaken and outcomes fed into the line manager for appropriate action.

Employees must notify their line manager if:

- they feel any discomfort due to working remotely (such as back pain) or
- they believe that there are any work-related health and safety hazards
- any work-related accidents occur in their home

Line managers must escalate these matters to a Safety and Wellbeing Advisor who will provide support and look into what action can be taken.

The employee should undertake the relevant online learning to ensure they are clear on the need for good DSE and workstation layout and posture.

The employee has a responsibility to always maintain safe systems of work and a safe working environment. If an employee proposes to make any changes to their home workplace that would impact on any risk assessment, they should notify their line manager. Advice on these matters is available from the Council's Safety and Wellbeing team.

It is the Council's responsibility to ensure all employees are aware of requirements in relation to the safe installation and use of equipment within the home working environment and any necessary training will be provided.

Lone Working

Employees who live at home on their own, should make their manager aware in order that the appropriate arrangements can be put in place to ensure their safety and wellbeing during the times they are working from home.

Wellbeing

Emergency contact details must be completed on iTrent for all employees participating in the hybrid working scheme and line managers should maintain regular contact with their teams both individually and in a group and look out for signs that their mental health may be deteriorating. Managers should react quickly to concerns and ensure that employees are listened to and are pointed to relevant support mechanisms.

Regular contact including 1-1's and team meetings must be in place to ensure ongoing support.

Employees must also look after their own health and wellbeing and alert their line manager to any concerns at the earliest possible point. Supports and advice can be accessed through [workwellNL](#).

9. Data Protection/GDPR

Employees who are participating in the hybrid working scheme are responsible for keeping information associated with our organisation secure at all times. Specifically, those participating in the hybrid working scheme are under a duty to:

- a. practise good computer security, including using a unique password for work laptops and any other devices used for work.
- b. keep theirs, and others,' data secure and make sure personal data is stored, shared, and used lawfully and appropriately.
- c. keep all hard copies of work-related documentation secure, including keeping documents locked away at all times except when in use and
- d. ensure that work-related information is safeguarded when working in public spaces, for example by:
 - positioning your laptop so that others cannot see the screen.
 - not leaving your laptop unattended and
 - not having confidential/business-sensitive conversations in public spaces

Laptops and other equipment provided by the Council must be used for work-related purposes only and must not be used by any other member of the employee's household or a third party at any time or for any purpose.

All information held should be treated in confidence, should not be inappropriately disclosed, and should be in accordance with the Council's Acceptable Use of ICT Policy, the Council's Policy on Data Protection, and the Council's Policy on Information Security. Advice is available from the employee's line manager and on myNL.

Employees should be reminded of their need to complete the mandatory online learning courses on Data Protection Essentials and Information Security Awareness.

Employees must ensure that they do not share sensitive or personal information under any circumstances outside of the secure Council systems. WhatsApp, Zoom or other similar messaging tools or personal email should not be used.

It is not recommended that employees retain paper records at home and should consider scanning materials to save digitally. Retention arrangements for these records should also be considered. Confidential waste should be returned to the Council as soon as practically possible for destruction and not disposed of within household rubbish or in other locations i.e., cafes.

Where employees require to discuss confidential matters, they should ensure their environment allows for this and/or they have appropriate equipment such as headsets to reduce the risk of conversations being overheard. It is recommended that virtual calls that are known to be confidential in nature are arranged out with an open office environment i.e., at home if privacy can be assured or within a designated meeting room. Where these measures cannot be met, employees should discuss this with their manager at the earliest opportunity.

10. Working outside the UK

The Council will not support employees working from outside the UK, for either short- or long-term arrangements. This is due to different compliance and legislative requirements, associated potential risk and costs that this could present to the Council.

11. Terms and Conditions

Hybrid working is a facility not a contractual obligation on the employer. Employees will receive a variation to contract confirming that their normal place of work is the office and their home address. Employees will also be asked to sign that they agree to the conditions and their responsibilities associated with the hybrid working scheme.

The working hours of an employee's post should not alter, although there may be flexibility around the times worked, when working from home or remotely to accommodate particular circumstances. This should be following agreement with the line manager. If an employee chooses to work beyond their contractual hours or during unsocial hours, no enhancements will be payable as this is personal choice.

The Council reserves the right to terminate any hybrid working arrangement, if for example, there is a change in business needs, performance concerns or if an employee's role changes to such an extent that hybrid working is no longer suitable, subject to giving appropriate notice. Employees are also able to terminate their hybrid working arrangements by providing notice to that effect to their manager in writing.

12. Review

This scheme will be reviewed annually, however the Council's hybrid working arrangements will be reviewed regularly to ensure that there are no issues that need to be addressed. Arrangements are also subject to change, with appropriate notice, to meet service delivery requirements, employee wellbeing and the needs of our community, which will always take priority.

North Lanarkshire Council

Hybrid Working Agreement

Detailed below are the general principles and requirements of the Council's Hybrid Working arrangements which you are required to read and consider in conjunction with the Hybrid Working Scheme.

You are required to sign and date this form to confirm your agreement to comply with the Hybrid Working Scheme and the following:

1. You must complete a DSE Assessment for both the home and workplace location and ensure that their workstation set up is satisfactory and not in breach of health and safety.
2. You have a suitable working environment at your remote working location that enables you to carry your role effectively.
3. It is your responsibility to advise your line manager if you do not have suitable accommodation or equipment or of any change to your working environment which would allow you to work from home.
4. You continue to work the hours required by your terms and conditions of employment.
5. You work independently, motivate yourself and use your own initiative.
6. You manage your workload effectively and complete work to set deadlines.
7. You identify and resolve any new pressures created by working from a remote working location.
8. You adapt to new working practices, including maintain contact with your line manager and colleagues at work.
9. You must make your line manager aware immediately if there are any medical conditions that could impact on your ability to work from home or in a hybrid way.
10. If necessary, you will agree to attend occupational health or physiotherapy for support with any identified condition that could possibly impact on hybrid working arrangements.
11. You exercise flexibility to make changes on reasonable request to the hybrid working arrangement, including to the days, times, and locations from which you work (as between your workplace and your agreed remote working location) to meet the needs of the Service and Council.
12. When working from home, you will ensure that their appearance is suitable for working.
13. When attending a meeting on Teams, your camera should be always on, and a background used.
14. When working from home, you must be within commuting distance of, within the same country as your workplace and should be able to return to the office at short notice if required.
15. You are required to determine any resulting tax implications for yourself.
16. You should make arrangements for the care of any children or other dependants who rely on you for support or care when you are working from your remote working location.
17. You are required to finance any travel and/or related expenses incurred when commuting to and from your remote working location and your workplace.

Hybrid Working Scheme - Agreement

I have read and fully understood the terms and conditions associated with the Hybrid Working Scheme in North Lanarkshire Council and agree to comply with them.

Name (Please Print)	
Employee Number	
Job Title	
Signature	
Date	

Please return this part of the form along with the acceptance of your contract variation to the ESCPeopleOperations@northlan.gov.uk