

## Appendix D - Agile & Flexible Working

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### Introduction

On the 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021 the legal restrictions on social distancing ended and staff are no longer be instructed to work from home. The government advised that there is a gradual phased return to the office and we can determine the pace at which we wish to do this.

Upon return to the office, the majority of non-patient facing staff will have been working wholly, or partially, from home since March 2020. The necessity to work from home during this period has expedited technological developments in enabling the organisation to work effectively from different locations. In a broader context, the benefits of home working have been accepted as the new 'norm' and consequently society has shifted away from traditional models of working. Individuals now expect the flexibility as to when and where they work, and it is imperative for recruitment and retention, as well as staff wellbeing and productivity, that we continue to provide agile working arrangements beyond the pandemic.

The constraints of the Trust's estate are an additional factor in establishing flexible working locations. There are some teams that exceeded their office space prior to the pandemic and the merger has added pressure to existing shortages across both sites.

### Purpose

This addendum to the Flexible Working Policy aims to provide a clear framework for agile working arrangements now the legal limits on social interactions are removed.

### Definitions

The difference between agile working and flexible working can be broadly split into location of work (agile) and working hours / pattern (flexible). The existing Flexible Working Policy continues to provide the framework to support non-standard patterns of work and should continue to be referred to should an individual wish to alter their working hours or pattern.

### Scope

These principles apply following the end of social distancing measures on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021; however, in light of the ongoing prevalence of Covid-19 it was thought advisable to agree a

date in the future to allow for the gradual return of staff, and to afford managers the time to implement the proposed changes.

It is suggested that these principles start to be implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021. In the interim period current home working arrangements should continue.

## **Policy provisions**

For the purposes of agile working it is proposed that the following principles apply;

- 1) For staff undertaking task that do not require an on-site presence, a maximum of 60% of an individual's contracted working hours can be undertaken outside the work environment, with line manager approval. There may be certain situations where the line manager may be able to increase this time, provided that the service is able to support it.
- 2) We aim to support employee health and wellbeing alongside flexible working and therefore we encourage staff to assess whether they have appropriate space and equipment to work safely at home, for further guidance please see the DSE Assessment.
- 3) We will support those who choose to return to the office environment for their full contracted hours.
- 4) It will be a continuing expectation that an individual, or team, will attend the workplace as required, to meet operational demands, training & to provide supervision, or any other business reason.
- 5) Unless agreed as part of a flexible working request, the days at which an individual can work off site will need to be managed according to the department's operational needs and physical space.
- 6) All agile working arrangements are subject to review and managers will be expected to engage with staff to ensure the needs of the service are met.
- 7) For corporate meetings, the chair will have the flexibility to agree what proportion of meetings are required to be held in person to facilitate networking and training, and or other business reasons.
- 8) It is expected that the majority of meetings will continue to be held virtually unless there is an exceptional reason for it to be conducted face to face. Where meetings must be held in person but some participants wish to attend remotely, the chair should facilitate this where the technology and room configuration allows.

- 9) In accordance with The NHS Long Term Plan, where patient facing services have been delivered remotely during the pandemic, the expectation is that these will not automatically resume as face to face activities.
- 10) Some non-patient facing activity that requires team or co-working such as educational supervision or certain types of training will need to take place on site.
- 11) For contractual purposes your location of work will remain the fixed, or place of business, office or site where you regularly work, regardless of what percentage of agile working is undertaken.
- 12) We will continue to follow government guidance regarding working from home. When this guidance is for everyone to work from home if possible, the maximum off-site working will be 100% instead of 60%.
- 13) Hot desking will be implemented across departments to facilitate the new agile working arrangements.