

Agile & Flexible Working FAQs

Why can I only work 60% of my time off site from now, when I have been working 100% from home since the beginning of the pandemic?

The Trust appreciates the huge benefits that agile and flexible working brings and wants to ensure this continues, but there are also really important benefits of being based in the work environment with colleagues. There are some tasks and responsibilities in most roles that benefit from face to face meetings and learning & development through direct contact with others that is really important for staff development, and is crucial for new starters. There are many benefits to onsite working including social interaction with colleagues and a greater understanding and knowledge of issues in the workplace. The split between on site and off site working is broadly reflective of how other organisations are managing agile working post pandemic.

Am I able to request to work more than 60% of my contracted hours off site?

On an exceptional basis, your manager has the discretion to consider whether it is feasible for you to work more than 60% off site, as long as this doesn't have a detrimental impact on service delivery, team working and staff development. Additionally, there may be specific challenges with space in certain departments that necessitate the need for staff to work more than 60% of their hours off site, or in alternative on site locations. It is not anticipated that these agreements would require a flexible working request.

As the manager of a department, do I need to formally approve the agile and flexible working arrangements for my team?

It is expected that Heads of Department will have a record of the working arrangements of their team and that all local plans will be made in agreement with the operational manager, without the need for these to be approved by divisional boards.

Can I work on site full time if I want to?

The Trust recognises that for some individuals working from home is not practicable because of variety of reasons, which may include lack of space, other household members working from home and / or for social isolation concerns. In such instances the employee will be able to work their full contracted hours on site. Where this causes challenges with desk space, managers will need to liaise with their Head of Department to assess alternative locations of work or hot desking within the Trust.

Can I choose the days I want to work at home?

It is expected that the days when staff work on site will be agreed in conjunction with their manager and will be approached in a flexible way by both the employee and the manager. The intention of agile working is to provide staff and employers with the opportunity to embrace work life balance and improve wellbeing and productivity. Due to the nature of our business there are constant evolving pressures and the days on which one may be required to work on site could change on week by week basis. To ensure agile working remains a mutually beneficial arrangement it is expected that staff will remain flexible. If an individual advises that they can only attend work in the Trust on certain, fixed days and / or that they need specific start and end times, that would be considered a flexible working request and they will need to follow the Flexible Working Policy request process. [http://hrweb/Pages/category.aspx?HR_Category=Maternity, Childcare, Carers and Family Friendly](http://hrweb/Pages/category.aspx?HR_Category=Maternity,Childcare,CarersandFamilyFriendly)

I have childcare arrangements which means it is easier that I don't work on site on certain days, do I need to submit a flexible working request?

Depending on your departmental circumstances you may need to submit a flexible working request. It is expected that caring arrangements that existed prior to agile and flexible working will remain in place i.e. the location of work does not negate the need for appropriate care arrangements to be in place. Any new caring responsibilities will require the same approach

I don't think my working environment at home meets the DSE standards?

All staff have a personal responsibility to ensure their offsite working environment is safe and appropriately configured to minimise any risk of musculoskeletal harm or injury. All staff must undertake a DSE assessment and the outcomes discussed with your line manager.

<http://nww.avon.nhs.uk/dms/Download.aspx?r=1&did=12992&f=DisplayScreenEquipmentPolicy-7.pdf>

Please also refer to the working from home safely guidance [Coronavirus \(Covid-19\) - Working Safely During Covid-19](#).

How do I ensure my team safely adheres to DSE standards both at home and in the office if I don't have a non-pay budget?

It may be that teams will need to share IT and office equipment to allow staff to have a hybrid working pattern. Managers will need to review the needs of their team in conjunction with the available office space to determine what is required.

How do I run a meeting with some attendees present virtually and some in person?

The chair of the meeting will need to decide if this approach is appropriate for the meeting. If it is, they will need to ensure there is appropriate equipment to enable those attending virtually to hear and be heard by all participants. Papers for the meeting should be sent electronically in advance of the meeting so that everyone attending has sight of the relevant documentation.

Meetings should be held virtually where possible, under what circumstances would a face to face meeting be deemed appropriate?

Managers should consider whether meetings should be held virtually or face to face depending on the nature of the meeting, attendees and what space is needed or required. It will often be preferable to convene face to face meetings where the matters to be discussed are of a sensitive or difficult nature, or in circumstances where interactions are best held face to face, such as training or away days. It is not anticipated that operational or corporate meetings would need to be held face to face.

How will hot desking work?

We are awaiting national guidance from the Department of Health & Social Care as to how to safely facilitate hot desking from an infection, prevention and control perspective. Where there is currently shared desk usage occurring, users should sanitise desks at the start and end of use.

Pending national guidance on safe usage, the Space Group is looking at ways in which hot desking will operate, including how to book desks as well as assessing the availability of space within each department. There will be further communication regarding this.