

Guidance

Ways of Working

1. Introduction

Our current ways of working and being an employer of choice is central to the Council's ability to efficiently provide services to its residents; cater to the wellbeing and work-life balance of staff who deliver these services with a view to protecting the environment by reducing commuting and other non-essential journeys.

The Council recognises the economic uncertainty and financial pressures being faced by the organisation, therefore a reduction in accommodation means that we need to go further. This guidance has been developed to help managers and staff understand the ways of working guiding principles and how to apply them to our respective service areas.

This will mean more economical and flexible use of office accommodation, more remote and community/field based working. It will also mean new and innovative ways of managing performance and greater flexibility about hours of work and how work is delivered.

The principle aim of the Council's approach is to support the accommodation strategy and reduce our accommodation costs. By implementing modern ways of working, the Council will deliver a more flexible customer service making the best use of technology.

2. Guidance aims

- Set out the Council's approach to ways of working
- Provide managers with a framework for identifying opportunities and implementing ways of working
- Set out the principles to manage people in our current working environment
- Provide staff and managers with information on work styles and the expectations of flexible working, including how to make a request to work flexibly.

3. Responsibilities

Everyone:

- Be honest and open about work styles, ways of working arrangements and share responsibility for making them work
- Engage with activities that promote the implementation of the ways of working programme

Managers:

- Managers are responsible for thinking about how ways of working in your team may help you to achieve your business objectives
- Ensure that health and safety requirements are adhered to
- Effectively manage individuals and your teams using the Council's performance management tools
- Ensure that staff are treated fairly with dignity and respect taking into account equality, diversity and inclusivity

Staff:

- Be open-minded about the opportunities and benefits that ways of working can create
- Be responsible for reading the relevant ways of working guidance and for considering/discussing the impact on your colleagues, the service you provide and how any issues may be overcome
- Take appropriate responsibility for health and safety. Adhere to health and safety policies and ensure that any issues are raised with your manager
- Comply with other associated guidance and policies e.g. ICT and FM
- Ensure the efficient working and performance of both yourself and your team

HR&OD:

- Responsible for keeping the policy and guidance up to date and providing advice to managers and staff

4. Work style definitions

Work can be delivered in various ways, four work styles are set out below:

1. Remote Workers



These roles would predominately work away from an office location with visits to offices for collaborative working and occasional desk-based tasks. These roles work independently for all/most of the week and require minimal face-to-face interaction with service users or daily direct supervision. These roles utilise MS Teams and email to interact with colleagues and service users.

Time spent on-site would involve meetings, manager interaction, training and teamwork collaboration.

Examples: Income Officer, Housing Officer, most traditional desk-based roles (including: Finance, HR&OD, Legal, ICT, Project roles, Business Support).

2. Fixed Based Workers



Resident facing colleagues and/or those who work in a fixed location/office base. Typically the post holder will spend a large proportion of their time at the fixed location.

A role where the job purpose can only be achieved at a specified location with a dedicated desk or team work area and cannot reasonably be conducted elsewhere.

Examples: Library staff, Registrars, Reception staff, Facilities Management, Customer Service staff (where customer facing).

3. Community Based Workers



These roles spend a lot of their time working within our wider community, but are also likely to have a base office building. Their role dictates when and where they work.

Their main job purpose can be achieved through client meetings, visits, project work and reports in order to provide a service to internal/external customers.

These colleagues may need to conduct some desk-based activities, but they will work away from their office base for much of the time.

Examples: Social Worker, Education Welfare Officer, Trading Standards Officer, Highways Inspector, Highways Maintenance Officer/Operative, Youth Workers Enforcement Officer.

4. Field Based Workers



Roles that are working in the community. Their role dictates when and where they work. These are active roles that have no or rare requirement for desk or office-based activities except for occasional access to pick up equipment to undertake their role.

Examples: CCTV Operator, School Crossing Patrol, Mini Bus Driver, Passenger, Transport Assistant, Kitchen Assistant, Caretaker, Street Cleansing Operative Bereavement Services Operative.

5. Hours of work

It is assumed that staff will work their normal working hours. If this is not the case and staff wish to exercise personal flexibility, the arrangements should be agreed with their line manager and the team should be aware of when colleagues are available and working. It is important to make use of tools such as shared calendars and out-of-office messaging and utilising Microsoft Teams to help colleagues be aware of who is working and when. Irrespective of the work style or working hours staff must be available for customer contact, meetings and collaborative activities.

The Council encourages personal flexibility however, if staff wish to continue to use the Council's flexi-time scheme this will remain in place and staff should record their working time in the usual way.

6. Technology & equipment

Equipment needed to carry out a role will be provided by the Council and remains its property. Staff are required to take good care of any equipment provided to them which may include laptops; mobile phones; allowing system updates to be installed; ensuring devices are used only for the purposes they are supplied for in line with Council appropriate usage policies (insert link to details of kit according to work style).

Staff should notify their line manager and the ICT helpdesk of any faults with the equipment. Equipment that is returned damaged through negligence or misuse may result in either requests for compensation or disciplinary action if damage is considered to be intentional or deliberate.

As appropriate staff using Display Screen Equipment (DSE) will need to carry out a risk assessment to ensure that health and safety standards are being met (include links).

Managers are responsible for ensuring that all Council issued devices they request for their staff are returned via the appropriate process (insert link). Staff who are supplied with council-issued equipment must return them prior to leaving the Council. (Insert link)

7. Working from abroad

The Council is committed to agile working and there may be circumstances where it is appropriate to work from abroad. Not all roles can be undertaken remotely and so it may not be possible to accommodate working from abroad requests due to the nature of the job role and work style. However, depending upon the outputs required and other factors, staff may in exceptional circumstances work from abroad for a defined period so long as:

- It is a family emergency or similar
- The application is for a defined period of no more than 6 weeks.
- The role can be performed from a remote, overseas location.

There is no right to work from abroad and managers will need to consider carefully whether any such request can be accommodated without negatively impacting service delivery (Insert link to guidance).

8. Security

The security of sensitive information is essential, and colleagues must ensure it is protected, kept safe and only used for legitimate purposes. The Council encourages its staff to work in a paperless environment. The generation of paper documentation is actively discouraged. Staff should ensure that they are familiar with information security, cyber security and information governance policies and that their use of information is compliant with these (Insert links to guidance and policies)

9. Travel expenses

All staff have an assigned place of work at a Havering Council location, this is the contractual base of staff for HMRC, mileage/travel claims, and other expenses purposes. A major benefit of remote working is its positive impact in reducing commuting and business travel. Staff should carefully consider the need for business travel, especially to attend meetings that could be conducted successfully by other means. Where travel is deemed essential, current rules governing reimbursement will apply, please see the Travel Expense Policy.

10. Performance management

Managing staff in a multi-faceted environment can be a challenge, as their contribution may be less obvious to a line manager who is not present to witness the impact. However staff should be valued for their performance rather than the number of hours they work.

Managers should focus on what staff achieve and how they achieve it. Staff need to understand:

- What they are expected to do
- The method of agreeing/monitoring workload
- How success will be measured
- How this feeds into the performance management process
- What communication is required from them
- How the line manager will communicate with them.

(Insert link to performance management docs)

11. Attending the workplace and booking desks

Remote Workers should work from remote locations e.g. home were possible, and must only use Council buildings for work if it is [essential](#), so that colleagues who have to work from the office have the facilities to do so. This is part of the Council's way of working. If you need to attend the Town Hall Campus you can book a desk using the Desk Booking App [here](#).

12. Parking

Staff may park at the following car parks using virtual permits called MiPermit provided by a company called Chipside Ltd:

Area	Car Park	
Romford	Town Hall	Accessed from Park End Road on weekdays
Romford	Angel Way	Staff virtual parking permits are not valid on weekends

Romford	Como Street	
Hornchurch	Billet Lane	
Hornchurch	Keswick Avenue	
Rainham	Viking Way	
Elm Park	St Nicholas Avenue East	
Upminster	Corbets Tey	

Line managers will need to create an online account for members of their team before they are granted access staff parking. MiPermit is an app you can download from [Google Play](#) or the iPhone [App Store](#). Managers should refer to the parking guide [here](#) to enable parking for your staff. Staff can access the parking application guide [here](#).

13. Sickness absence

When working remotely, staff are not expected to work if they are unwell. If staff is sick and unable to work, the Council’s sickness absence reporting procedure applies as it would if staff were attending the workplace.

14. Well-being

Employees should ensure they are not overworking ‘downtime’ from work is essential. To help maintain overall wellbeing, employees should take adequate rest breaks:

- Take at least 30 minutes for lunch each day
- Even when busy, it is essential to find the time to take a break
- Ensure the time period between stopping work one day and beginning the next is not less than 11 hours
- It is important to move from your workstation at regular intervals to walk around and keep moving.
(Insert link to well-being hub)

Effective date	Review date	Owner	Approved by