

## HYBRID AND FLEXIBLE WORKING OPTIONS

The flexibility offered to blend home and office-based working is a positive benefit for HIE staff. This approach gives the option of working on a hybrid basis between home and your contractual place of work. We have not set any fixed ratios between how many days can be worked at home and how many days must be worked in an office. That will be a matter for local decision making and agreement subject to meeting business requirements.

All staff will be expected to come into an office on a regular basis to do certain tasks, functions, connect with colleagues or take part in certain events.

In moving to a model of hybrid working, we are committed to:

- Providing safe and secure environments for people to work in
- Enabling colleagues to work from a range of settings, providing job opportunities across the region
- Providing health and wellbeing support
- Working to support productivity and efficiency
- Working in partnership with our recognised Trade Union and other stakeholders and engage in open, honest dialogue with colleagues
- Adopting best business practices and manage risk
- Promoting diversity and inclusion

In implementing hybrid working business requirements will always come first. The flexibility that hybrid working offers supports our staff in meeting business and customer while balancing work/life. There will always be the need for some level of face-to-face engagement to connect with colleagues, line managers, clients, customers and stakeholders, so we don't envision that there are any roles that can be carried out entirely virtually.

### 1. What do we mean by hybrid working?

Hybrid working enables employees to work partly in the workplace and partly at home, or in future this could be from a local hub.

For most roles, we envisage it will be possible for there to be flexibility on where, when and how work is delivered and for individual colleagues to have a degree of personal choice, subject to business and operational requirements being met.

There are some roles, or duties within roles, where there is an absolute requirement that they are performed in a specific workplace or location at specific times. For such roles or responsibilities, there are very limited options in terms of flexibility that can be offered for where, when and how that work is carried out, and that is unlikely to change.

The majority of staff will be able to work at home on a flexible basis as part of hybrid working. Hybrid working will also include "field" roles that require regular attendance at a location other than an office as well as a proportion of work from home.

Working from home may also continue to play a role in controlling the spread of any subsequent variants.

Whilst HIE takes a flexible approach, some staff may prefer to be based in an office and work on a full-time basis from an office and this can also be accommodated.

## 2. Informal flexibility

Within a hybrid working approach there is scope for informal flexibility where individuals are empowered to adapt their working patterns to deliver their work. Business needs will come first, and team discussions will help clarify what those needs are for your team. You and your line manager should come to a mutual understanding of your work pattern including your location.

Hybrid working should give the opportunity for greater flexibility in start and end times and working location. Working from home on an ad hoc basis is an option as long as it is appropriate to your role and business requirements are met. Also see section 5 below on working hours.

## 3. Hybrid working key principles

### Principle 1: It is essential that business requirements are met

While every effort will be made to accommodate your personal preference, it must always be weighed against business and operational needs. You may have to come into a workplace to do certain tasks, functions or take part in certain events.

### Principle 2: Home /remote working

For those staff working in a role with a hybrid work-style, staff can work from home or remotely on the understanding that they are able to attend their contractual work location in line with the terms of the hybrid working arrangement they have agreed with their manager. These should set out the frequency and the kind of occasion where attendance at the contractual work location will be required. The arrangement may also want to consider the degree to which this can be predicted. Some roles may require a level of flexibility and responsiveness in order to meet business needs week to week, others may be more predictable.

In line with our vision of the Highlands and Islands as a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable region attracting more people to live, work, study, invest and visit, there is the presumption that HIE staff are based within the Highlands and Islands region. As the capacity to attend a specified HIE work location is a contractual requirement, our expectation is that staff will be able to attend their HIE work location as and when needed. This means that staff can choose to live some distance from their contractual work location but in doing so accept that travel to their contractual work location will be in their own time and at their own expense, as commuting costs cannot be paid by HIE.

Individuals that are resident overseas who apply for position with HIE will be required to become resident within the HIE area or within commuting distance of their HIE base if they are successful in their application for employment.

### Principle 3: Expenses

As home working under a hybrid model will be voluntary, you won't be eligible for any specific allowances. Business expenses for things like stationery or phone calls may be reimbursed. There won't be a home working allowance to cover costs such as house insurance, broadband, heating or lighting.

The base location set out your contract will be your nominated office. Travel between home and your nominated office will be seen as your ordinary commute regardless of how frequently that journey is made. Travel and subsistence expenses can only be claimed for journeys to another location that are in excess of that commute.

## 4. Work styles

We do not all need to adopt the same approach to where and when we work even within the same team or wider directorate. Different roles or types of work, have different needs, others offer different possibilities for those who do these roles. It is also not an entirely new concept that teams are made up by people with different working arrangements (e.g., working from different locations and different days/times).

Some roles afford more flexibility than others, some may require us to be at a specific location for a specific purpose, whilst others can be done from other locations.

There are a range of work-styles that will be either on-site, hybrid or potentially permanent home-based working:

### On-site office based

**Workstyle 1** – Staff who spend all their time working at a desk in a single office location. Other than preference, there may be specific reason to be office based (related to job role, health, safety or technical purposes).

**Workstyle 2** - Staff who spend the vast majority of their time working at a desk in an office location. May work from home on an occasional basis with the approval of their manager, this was the position for most HIE staff pre-COVID.

### Hybrid working

**Workstyle 3** - Staff who spend the majority of their time working at a desk in an office location combined with working remotely from home.

**Workstyle 4** – as above but with the majority of time working remotely from home combined with office working.

Based on workstyle preferences, the vast majority of staff will undertake some form of hybrid working.

### Permanent homeworking (permanent home-based working)

**Workstyle 5** – On an exceptional basis, there may be some staff who are home based and carry out most of their work activity from home, working remotely from the office. There is still the ability and requirement to touchdown in a HIE office for regular team contact, face-to-face meetings, training etc. This workstyle will only apply to a small number of employees and will require contractual changes to be agreed.

## 5. Working hours

As outlined above, you may flex your working pattern so that it meets the demands of your role and suits your preferences. You and your manager should come to a mutual agreement on how and when you work.

Our standard working week is 35 hours FTE Monday to Friday. Working arrangements must comply with the Working Time regulations:

Staff may only work a maximum of 10 hours in a day and adequate breaks must be taken:

- A break of at least 30 minutes for every 6 hours worked
- A daily rest break of at least 11 hours
- At least a 24-hour rest period every 7-day period , or a 48-hour rest period every 14-day period

## 6. Dependent care

Working from home can bring benefits to carers and those with children, as it enables employees to work around their caring role. However, when working remotely you must have suitable arrangements in place for dependent care to allow you to focus on your role during working hours.

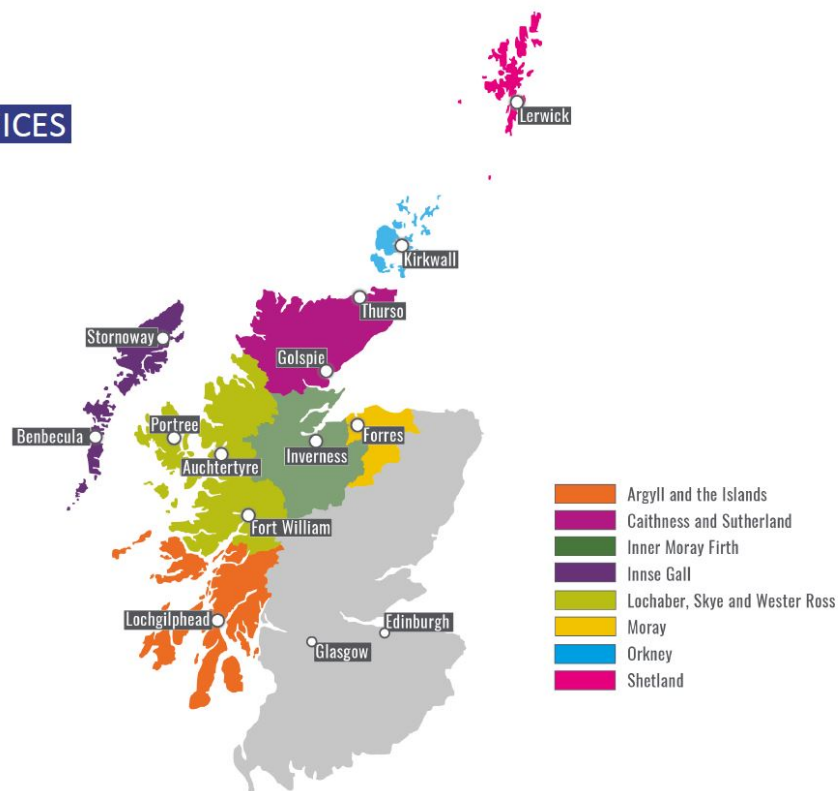
It is important that employees keep their caring role separate from their work and be realistic about the number of hours that can be worked round caring responsibilities in the home.

## 7. Diary management

Agreeing flexibility is based on dialogue and agreement and the way to communicate that is through effective diary management. Outlook diaries need to be kept up to date so everyone (manager, colleagues, direct reports and internal customers) can understand your availability, know how to make contact and have alternative contacts where appropriate. This is also key to ensuring compliance with our Health and Safety policy, particularly lone working.

If you have any queries please contact [HRHelpdesk@hient.co.uk](mailto:HRHelpdesk@hient.co.uk)

### HIE LOCAL AND REGIONAL OFFICES



We would aim to discuss and agree any specific flexible working requests prior to confirming an offer of appointment.