Leeds City Council Remote Working Policy
# Leeds City Council Remote working Policy

## Document Control Sheet

### Version History

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Leeds City Council Remote Working Policy

1.0 Policy statement

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for managing remote working and to reduce the level of risk posed by remote working to the lowest possible level. It sets out the requirements for legal compliance and the Council’s duty of care.

1.2 Remote working is the term used for employees who work away from their main Leeds City Council office base.

1.3 Leeds City Council is committed to developing a more agile organisation and recognises that remote working can be beneficial to customers, the organisation and to the individual employee. To work effectively any such arrangement has to meet the operational requirements of the service, ensuring that the needs of both internal and external customers will be met as well as those of the individual.

1.4 The Remote Working Policy aims to supplement/enhance flexible working arrangements currently available to staff whilst maintaining the Council’s focus on delivering a quality service to the public it serves. It is one of a number of policies under the Work Life Balance initiative and is a component of the Corporate Information Governance Framework.

1.5 Managed remote working can benefit the organisation and assist the Council to reduce costs, make better use of office space and enhance service delivery. Remote working arrangements also support environmental and transport objectives, reducing carbon emissions and the need to travel whilst making better use of the employee’s time. One of the main drivers for remote working is the Changing the Workplace Programme.

1.6 This policy applies to all employees of the Council.

1.7 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Council policy and guidelines:

- People Management Terms of Engagement
- Information Security Policy
- Protective Marking and Asset Control Policy
- Removable Media and Mobile Computing Policy
- Information Systems Acceptable Use Policy
- Clear Desk and Screen Policy
- Security Incident Management and Reporting Policy

1.8 The above list is not intended to be an exhaustive list and other Council policies and guidelines will apply as appropriate. In addition, it is expected that a number of the above will be revised to reflect technological/legislative changes in the future without reference to this policy.
2.0 Statement of Principles

2.1 This policy, and the associated guidance, is founded on the following principles:

- The Council will encourage and support voluntary remote working so long as it does not impair service delivery.

- Remote workers will be provided with the appropriate equipment, connections and technical back up required for them to work efficiently and effectively. The findings of the workstyle questionnaire will be used to assist in assessing requirements.

- All employees will be treated equally, whether they are office based or working remotely, whilst there will be due regard to staff with individual needs and requirements.

- All remote workers, whether contractual or informal arrangements exist, will be expected to comply with Council policies and procedures in particular with regard to information security and Health and Safety.

- The policy provides a fair, consistent, objective and transparent approach to remote working across the Council.

- ICT equipment will be used in accordance with the Council’s Information Security Policy.

3.0 Legislative, Regulatory and Contractual Requirements

3.1 This policy sits within a legislative framework and a number of Acts of Parliament, Government directives and international standards of best practice affect this policy.

3.2 These include, but are not limited to:

- Employment Act 2002
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Working Time Regulations 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- Local Government Data Handling Guidelines
- Government Connect Code of Connection
- ISO/IEC 27000

4.0 Remote Working

4.1 What is Remote Working?

4.1.1 Remote working is the term used for employees who work away from their main LCC office base on a regular basis in either a part-time or full time capacity. This policy covers most remote working situations including:

i. Homebased – home as main base of work
ii. In and Out - main office base, some remote working
iii. Mainly Out – essentially nomadic, touch down base in nominated office
4.1.2 Remote working includes the practice of taking ‘hard copy’ (paper based) material out of the office to read or work on.

4.2 Eligibility and Criteria for Remote Working

4.2.1 The line manager and the individual will assess the suitability of the role and the individual for remote working through the Workstyle Questionnaire. Most jobs are suitable for one of the remote working options.

4.2.2 Effective remote working arrangements must be a balance between service delivery and the remote worker’s needs.

4.2.3 If parties fail to reach agreement, the request will be reviewed by the Head of Service who is responsible for ensuring that all relevant issues are properly addressed, in consultation with HR, to ensure consistency of application across the Council.

4.2.4 Homebased workers will be required to sign a home working agreement before commencing this workstyle.

4.3 Remote Working Principles:

4.3.1 Employees working remotely are subject to the same terms and conditions as those working in an established Leeds City Council base.

4.3.2 Critical hours of work must be agreed between the remote worker and their line manager.

4.3.3 Where hours worked are to fall regularly outside the stated normal operational business hours of the service, this must first be agreed with line managers.

4.3.4 The agreed hours may be worked to suit the remote worker on the condition that it meets the service needs and there is support available.

4.3.5 All contracted hours, irrespective of the time worked, will be paid at plain time rates. Any additional hours worked which are more than the normal contracted hours should first be agreed with the remote worker’s line manager.

4.3.6 Electronic diaries should be kept up to date and open access granted to line managers and team members.

4.3.7 The usual reporting procedures in the event of sickness absence, medical appointments and annual leave/time off requests remain in place for remote workers.

4.3.8 The usual training and development requirements remain in place for remote workers.

4.3.9 Remote workers will be expected to attend designated meetings and appointments as necessary to meet the needs of the service.

4.3.10 Remote workers will be expected to periodically bring devices back into the office for repairs, clean up, tests and upgrades etc.

4.3.11 Remote workers must understand and accept their obligations to protect council information and equipment in line with the Information Security Policy and Protective Marking and Asset Control Policy.
4.3.12 Remote workers must report losses or compromises of information, equipment, tokens and/or hard copy documents immediately.

4.4 Equipment and Office Supplies

4.4.1 Where remote workers are required to store hard-copy information protectively marked ‘Restricted’ or above they will need access to an approved lockable metal cabinet.

4.4.2 The Council will provide equipment to enable staff to access Leeds City Council systems in line with the agreed workstyle. This equipment must only be used for official purposes.

4.4.3 Where the Council provides either a laptop or desktop computer together with an access token, it must be used in line with the Acceptable Use Policy

4.4.4 IT equipment used to access the Council network or systems must comply with the and Acceptable Use Policy the Information Security Policy

4.4.5 The cost of renting a personal land line will not be refunded by the Council.

4.4.6 Electrical sockets and other parts of the domestic electrical system are the employee's responsibility.

4.4.7 All equipment, materials or stationery supplied by the Council will remain the property of Leeds City Council, used for work purposes only and returned to the Council, or reasonable access made possible for representatives of the Council to recover all materials or equipment at the end of the remote working arrangement.

4.4.8 An inventory of items supplied should be maintained at a local level.

4.4.9 Failure to take due care to ensure the safety of the equipment may result in disciplinary action.

4.5 Access for Homebased workers:

4.5.1 Prior to commencing Homebased working, the individual is required to agree to consent to Leeds City Council representatives, at reasonable times and on reasonable notice of no less than 24 hours, entering their home address to:-

- Install, inspect, replace, repair, maintain or service (including PAT testing) Leeds City Council property during their employment.
- Carry out health and safety risk assessments of Leeds City Council property and the individual’s workstation during their employment.
- Carry out security assessments and regular audits regarding Leeds City Council information and property
- Recover Leeds City Council property on or after termination of their employment.
- Return Leeds City Council equipment to the ICT Department for repair / upgrade when requested.

4.6 Change of Circumstances

4.6.1 Termination of Remote Working Arrangements

4.6.1.1 Leeds City Council reserves the right to terminate remote working arrangements where there is clear evidence of a change of operational requirements, personal capability
issues or failure to comply with agreed policies. Leeds City Council will provide reasonable notice of the termination in writing.

4.6.2 Moving House

4.6.2.1 If an employee is working from home and is planning to move house, they must review the workstyle questionnaire together with their line manager. Together, they must agree any required changes.

4.7 Keeping in touch & Communication

4.7.1 In order that the remote working arrangement works successfully it is important that there is a commitment between the remote worker and their Line Manager/colleagues to maintain regular contact. Clear communication systems with remote workers are just as important as for the office based worker. Staff working remotely could easily be cut off from the usual communication channels – formal and informal. It is important to extend these or refine them to include the remote worker.

4.7.2 Team meetings should be arranged with reasonable notice wherever possible for the remote worker to attend. Services such as conference calling or video conferencing should be introduced where practicable.

4.7.3 Under no circumstances are arrangements to be made for clients or representatives to meet with the remote worker at their home. All such meetings should be carried out at the Council’s offices in order to maintain the necessary level of professionalism.

4.7.4 Employees are advised that they should not give their personal phone numbers, addresses etc. to customers.

4.7.5 Arrangements should be put in place so that routine work related communications are only received or dealt with during the employee’s agreed working hours.

4.8 Health & Safety Considerations

4.8.1 Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Council has a responsibility to ensure, so far as it is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of staff, wherever they work. Employees working remotely have the same duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 as all other employees. They must take care of their own health and safety and that of anyone else who might be affected by their actions and cooperate with the Council on all health and safety matters.

4.8.2 Staff must work in accordance with the Working Time Directive and must not work inappropriately long hours. Managers need to monitor that staff are not working unnecessarily long hours.

4.8.3 The following documents outline the relevant policy and guidelines:

- Health & Safety Policy
- DSE Assessment
- Health & safety Executive Guidance on Home-working
- Risk Assessment
- Accident Reporting
- Lone Worker Policy
4.9 Information Security

4.9.1 Remote working presents additional risks to the Council due to the value of remote working equipment to thieves, the ease of which the devices and information can be lost / stolen and the reduced level of physical protection inherent in remote working.

4.9.2 The security classification of the information usually handled by the remote worker must also be taken into consideration when considering suitability for remote working. Only information protectively marked up to ‘Restricted’ can be handled at present. Further information for staff on the protective marking of information is available on the intranet.

4.9.3 Individuals working remotely are responsible for taking adequate steps to ensure the security of Council equipment and information in their possession.

4.9.4 Remote workers are responsible for the confidentiality and security of equipment and information handled by them and should not willingly allow anyone who is not authorised by Leeds City Council to use or have access to the equipment, information or documentation.

4.9.5 Remote workers must take precautions against anyone who does not have a genuine ‘need to know’ having access to Council information.

4.9.6 Remote workers must ensure that they comply with all relevant legislation, in particular the Data Protection Act 1998, as well as all Council policies and procedures whilst working remotely.

4.9.7 Remote workers must ensure that sensitive Council information is not viewed or overheard by anyone else in public areas (including their homes).

4.9.8 If it is necessary to transport any equipment or documentation, it should be securely stored out of sight at all times.

4.9.9 Documents should be returned to appropriate LCC premises as soon they are no longer required so that they can be stored or disposed of in accordance with corporate policy & procedures.

4.9.10 Information that is ‘not protectively marked’, i.e. there would be no business impact to the Council if the information were released into the public domain, is permitted to be processed on non-Council equipment and if required printed off on personal printers. As the information is being provided electronically, the Council will not be in any way liable for the cost or maintenance of the equipment or any ancillary stationery.

4.9.11 Information that has a protective marking of ‘PROTECT’ or higher, i.e. personal and/or sensitive information which could have a negative effect on the Council if it were compromised, must not be printed onto hard copy on any printer when away from Council premises, even if it has been provided by the Council.

4.9.12 Individuals who are working remotely must ensure that their system access token is protected in line with the highest GPMS value of the information / system that it can be used to access (i.e. it should be considered to be ‘Restricted’ if it can be used to access a ‘Restricted’ system).

4.9.13 Remote access equipment, tokens and/or protectively marked material must not be taken out of the United Kingdom without explicit consent from their line manager. Advice may be sought from the Local Information Compliance Officer.
4.9.14 Remote workers must ensure that access tokens are stored separately to the computer and that no passwords are written down.

4.9.15 Personal computing equipment must not be used to store ‘protectively marked’ Council information.

4.9.16 Physical Security Assessment

- A physical security assessment to identify risks to the Council’s information assets will take place as part of the Workstyle Questionnaire in compliance with the Council’s Protective Marking and Asset Control Policy.
- If this assessment identifies any areas of concern, the Local Information Compliance Officer will decide whether appropriate adjustments can be made or the request for working at home declined on the grounds of security.

4.10 Costs, allowances and reimbursements

4.10.1 Where possible meetings and visits will be co-ordinated to ensure effective use of times and costs.

4.10.2 Travel expenses and subsistence should be reclaimed in the normal manner.

4.10.3 If no Council landline or mobile facility is available, telephone calls made on private lines will be reimbursed.

4.10.4 Further details can be found in the document ‘Terms of Engagement’ which can be found on the intranet.

4.11 Insurance

4.11.1 Leeds City Council will be responsible for any necessary insurance of equipment supplied and employee liability insurance.

4.11.2 The Council’s Employer’s Liability insurance will indemnify the Council if it is held to be legally liable in respect of injury to an employee arising out of and in the course of employment at home, provided the work has been authorised by the employee’s line manager. However an employee working at home would be primarily responsible for his/her own working environment.

4.11.3 Working at or from home may affect the home and contents insurance policies of the householder. Employees are advised to check with their insurers if changes need to be made to their policies and make any necessary adjustments before undertaking any working from home, including payment of any additional premiums where applicable. The Council will not accept liability for damage caused to the home or its contents, or any personal items.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 The key responsibilities are outlined below, though it should be noted that this is not a definitive list.

5.2 The final agreement to support remote working will rest with the Head of Service who is responsible for ensuring that the policy is applied fairly and consistently and all relevant
issues are properly addressed, in consultation with the Head of HR, to ensure consistency of approach across the Council.

5.3 **Line managers** are responsible for:-

- Ensuring remote workers understand and comply with this policy and all supporting policy and guidelines
- Administering and agreeing the Workstyle Questionnaire together with the individual
- Ensuring that the individual is fully trained on the required equipment and technology;
- Ensuring that a [Health and Safety Risk Assessment](#) is carried out;
- Keeping in touch with the individual;
- Ensuring that the individual does not become isolated and that they attend team meetings if appropriate; receive communications and attend appropriate training and development activities;
- Reviewing the arrangement with the individual in the event that the status of the remote working arrangement alters in any way, including moving house or a change to the individual's domestic circumstances.

5.4 **Individuals** are responsible for:-

- Ensuring they understand and comply with this policy and all supporting policy and guidelines;
- Working together with their Line Manager to complete and agree the Workstyle Questionnaire
- Maintaining appropriate communication with their Line Manager and colleagues
- Attending meetings and training as and when required to do so;
- Their own Health and Safety and that of others who may be considered to be at risk due to the remote working arrangement;
- Liaising with their insurance company and mortgage lender to ensure compliance;
- Advising their Line Manager if their domestic arrangements alter which may affect the agreement made in the Workstyle Questionnaire;
- Reporting any loss or theft of equipment or documents (including access tokens); system malfunction or any other security breach or incident;
- Granting access to their home as appropriate to allow safety/security checks to be carried out and for furniture and equipment to be delivered at a time and date suitable to both parties;

5.5 The **Council’s Health and Safety Manager** will provide advice and guidance on risk assessments and the application of Health and Safety legislation applicable to remote working.

5.6 **Information Compliance Officers** will provide advice on the security of the remote working environment and the secure handling, storage, transportation and disposal of any information/documentation whilst remote working.

5.7 **ICT Staff** will provide advice and assistance regarding the IT systems and technical requirements for remote working including providing a Helpdesk function during agreed business hours.

5.8 **HR Staff** are responsible for providing advice and guidance on HR related matters and policy interpretation.
6.0 Policy Compliance

6.1 Failure to observe the standards set out in this policy may be regarded as serious and any breach may render the employee liable to disciplinary action which may include dismissal. The Disciplinary Procedure is part of the Local Conditions of employment.

7.0 Policy Review and Maintenance

7.1 This policy will be reviewed every 12 months, or as appropriate in accordance with changes in technology, Council policies, increased risks posed by remote working or in response to security incidents.

7.2 This policy is owned by the Assistant Chief Executive, Planning, Policy & Improvement.

8.0 Policy Governance

8.1 The following table identifies who within LCC is Accountable, Responsible, Informed or Consulted with regards to this policy. The following definitions apply:

- **Responsible** – the person(s) responsible for developing and implementing the policy.
- **Accountable** – the person who has ultimate accountability and authority for the policy.
- **Consulted** – the person(s) or groups to be consulted prior to final policy implementation or amendment.
- **Informed** – the person(s) or groups to be informed after policy implementation or amendment.

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9.0 Equality Impact Assessment

9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out for the whole of the Changing the Workplace project incorporating all the various elements, including Policy Development.