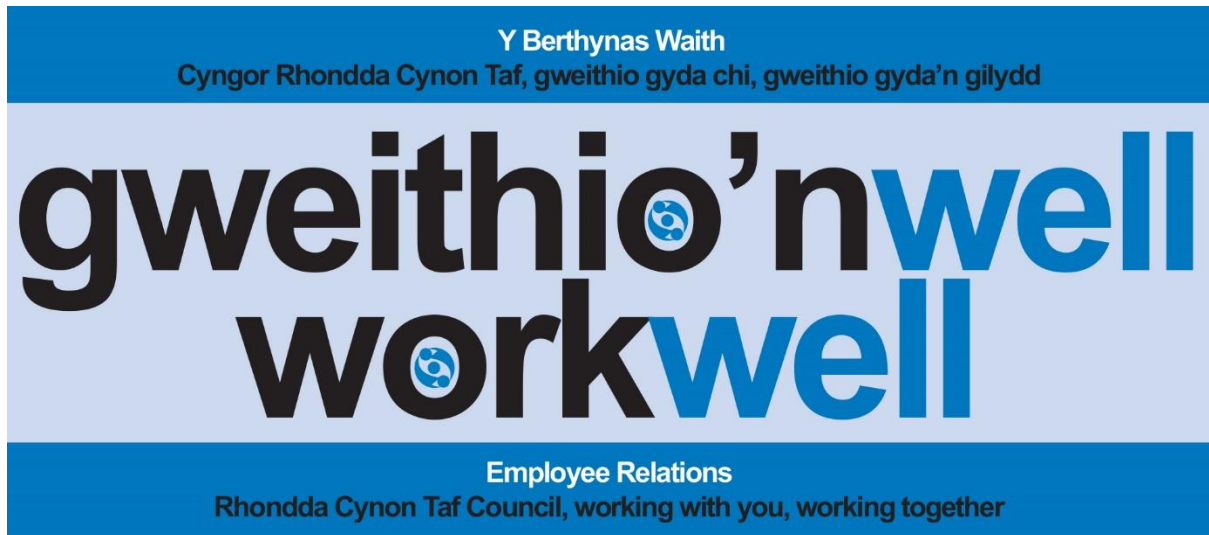


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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL OPERATING MODEL AND WORKING ARRANGEMENTS Policy

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg/This document is also available in Welsh



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1. INTRODUCTION

Within Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, it is very clear that our workforce is committed to provide first class services to the residents of the County Borough. This has never been more evident than during the pandemic period and beyond where our staff have been innovative, collaborative, resilient and resourceful in the face of extreme pressure on many fronts.

Aligned to our vision for sustainable development which places an emphasis on the importance of the health and well-being of our employees, economic growth and de-carbonisation, we are committed to developing and resourcing different working arrangements across our Council to meet these needs.

We also need to remain focused on the long term sustainability of the Council, maintaining the positive culture and ethos which we have and ensure that residents, businesses and our communities are central to our service design and operating arrangements.

Using the categorisations below, the Council has undertaken work to identify which service areas fall under which operating model. These models will of course be kept under review and changes will be made where the business need necessitates.

- i) Frontline Services Working (FL)
- ii) Direct Support / Management of Frontline Services (DSFL)
- iii) Hybrid Office Working (HoFF)
- iv) Agile Working (AGILE)

2. FRONTLINE SERVICES WORKING (FL)

Employees operating under this model, provide a direct front facing role to residents and communities and are necessarily located and deployed either across the County Borough or at physical locations from which our services are provided and / or residents / users visit. Examples of service areas that would operate under this model include residential homes, homecare, streetcare, cleaning, leisure, libraries, theatres, reception, one for all, registrars, etc.

3. DIRECT SUPPORT / MANAGEMENT OF FRONTLINE SERVICES (DSFL)

Employees operating under this model, undertake roles which are wholly or partly enabling the front-line services to be delivered effectively and co-location with service is essential. The expectation is that these roles will be in the workplace 5 days per week, with any exceptions subject to local agreement by the Employing SLT Director, with the minimum 2 day per week rule to apply in line with the Hybrid Office model below. An example of such a reduction, could be if there are specific and one-off packages of work which can be undertaken from home which does not have a detrimental impact on front line service provision.

4. HYBRID OFFICE WORKING (HOFF)

Employees operating under this model, are predominantly within the workplace environment (e.g. administration, transactional, professional and associated management). Employees will be allocated an operating site, and this will be regarded as their fixed centre. This model has a minimum requirement of 2 days in the workplace, with the remaining time spent working at home.

Attendance will be structured around a rolling rota system, co-located with 'Service Team', allocated workstation space but shared with other Service Areas on alternate days, to maximise accommodation/technology usage. In terms of the allocated operating site and rota system, there will be occasions where due to the nature of their role, staff will have to attend other sites for meetings, projects, etc. These events could also take place on days different to those allocated by the rota system and where this occurs, then these days may be counted within the minimum workplace attendance of 2 days.

In respect of the rolling rota system, all staff will be treated the same regardless of their contract. This is best illustrated by the following example, albeit there will of course be other operating patterns to consider.

Example

Member of staff works 3 days per week Monday, Tuesday & Friday. The 4-week rolling rota for their service area may be Week 1 – Mon & Tues; Week 2 – Tues & Wed; Week 3 – Wed & Thurs and Week 4 – Thurs & Fri. On week 1, they will be in the office on Monday and Tuesday - the same as a member of staff that works 5 days a week (a 5 day a week worker can be either full or part time). On week 2, they will be in the office on Tuesday. On week 3, they do not work on a Wed or a Thurs so they would not be in work. On week 4, they will be in the office on a Friday.

In terms of workplace attendance, any employee wishing to use the office more than the team structured arrangement described above (e.g. for well-being requirements) may do so without limit, with appropriate space being made available by managers.

Finally, where staff do not wish to operate under this model, then arrangements will be made for them to attend their office location on their normal working days, in accordance with their existing contract of employment.

5. AGILE WORKING (AGILE)

Employees operating under this model undertake the majority of their work in the community, however some ancillary duties can be undertaken at home/workplace location. The employee will be allocated a fixed workplace location, albeit they may undertake the ancillary duties from home more efficiently.

At the allocated base, a workstation provision will be bookable through 'hot desk'/Team meeting room arrangements and will also be available across several Council locations. It is anticipated that these employees would still require structured face to face Team meetings, and these can be arranged at the allocated base or other council facilities.

Examples of service areas that would operate under this model include environmental health, trading standards, social care (social work, OT's, etc), educational psychologists.

6. WORKING ARRANGEMENTS FOR HOFF & AGILE

In order to ensure that we provide the best possible services we can to our communities, the Council aims to support staff to do their best work, have a good work life balance, work flexibly whilst staying connected and being effective in our roles. This Policy supports the Council's key ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030.

i) What is HoFF & AGILE Working?

These models are, **subject to the needs of the business**, designed to give staff more choice over deciding when and where they work best in a way that balances the needs of the Council, their team and them. It offers a mix of working remotely at home and working in an office environment. Where, when and how you work might depend on the task you are doing and the kind of role you have.

1.1 Key Principles of these Models

- It is based on trust. We trust you to balance your own needs and the needs of your team when operating in these models.
- Working in either of these models should not detrimentally impact the level or quality of service to customers or your colleagues.
- It is open to everyone who has a suitable role regardless of how long they have worked for the Council and whether they are permanent or temporary.
- Physical presence does not equal great performance. Your performance will be evaluated during your 121's, supervision and annual performance reviews and will be assessed on the impact you have and the outcomes you deliver.
- When attending on the allocated office days, staff who operate under the HoFF model should work a minimum of 6 hours per day in the workplace (unless an employee's normal working day is less than this e.g., they work reduced hours each day).
- We will work with you and your needs to help get the right technology and equipment to support you to work in this way. Please note that if your **role** requires specialist equipment and software this may preclude you from working in a hybrid manner.
- The majority of the Council's policies will apply in every location you work from including your home.
- Community and connection are important for your wellbeing. We will continue to provide safe office spaces for you to collaborate and connect with each other.
- When visiting or working from any Council office you should familiarise yourself with the relevant health and safety procedures for that location, including for fire, first aid and the current

measures to comply with COVID restrictions (if applicable).

Some key things to remember about this work:

- Your manager will work with you to explore which model applies to your role and your team, based on the needs of the business. In accordance with these models, this may include (not an exhaustive list):
 - Rota to cover service calls and queries at key times throughout the day, either virtually or face to face
 - Availability to meet Service customers/citizens/partners, face to face
 - Availability to meet colleagues face to face, for development sessions
 - Block attendance at the office for focussed project work
 - Focus sessions to deal with Service demand and performance

It won't work for or be available to everyone. It will depend on the kind of role you do, the part of the Council, the level of supervision you need in your role, any minimum levels of physical cover required as well as the technology and environment you have available to you. (availability/accessibility to customers). It follows therefore, that our teams will function in different ways depending upon the role they undertake driven by the needs of the business.

- Working in this way will not change your contractual terms and conditions of employment in respect of working hours or normal location of work. The policy may be changed from time to time depending on business needs and any public health concerns.
- The expenses you can claim will be unchanged and are in accordance with the Travel Expenses scheme of the Council.
- For employees with disabilities, both of these models may be considered as a reasonable adjustment.
- Just so you know, we will always try to support this way of working if we can and if your role is suitable. **However, please remember that any such arrangement is subject to the ongoing agreement of management and sometimes might need to be changed for business reasons. It is an option and not an entitlement.**

ii) Things To Think About

1.1 Working Hours and Keeping in Touch

Subject to business needs, we want to empower you to flex the times you work. We trust you to manage your own time and make sure you work the hours you are contracted to do. However, there are some important things we would like you to be aware of:

- You must make yourself available to others during office hours when you are needed by your team.
- For AGILE employees, we may ask you to be available at certain times to meet the needs of the business, to physically be in the office to collaborate or attend training/team development sessions.
- Your working times should not result in extra work for other members of the team or compromise the objectives of your team.
- If you choose to work late outside core Council hours, please be courteous and respectful to your colleagues. Be mindful that your colleagues are not expected to respond outside core Council hours.
- We recognise in the Council we have many unpaid carers and working from home can give some caregivers the flexibility to better manage these responsibilities. This policy is intended to support the flexibility that is required for unpaid carers and works alongside existing policies.
- Just so you know you won't be automatically entitled to any overtime if you choose to work outside Core Council hours or more hours than you are contracted to do. **Any such additional time accrued will be compensated either under the flexi working hours or time off in lieu arrangements.**
- We know that modern life is complicated and that working in this way can help you balance your home and work life. However, these models of working are not to be used as a way of managing sickness or for long-term childcare solutions. Please refer to relevant policies to assist you in how the Council can support you to address your specific needs.

1.2 Conducting online Meetings

- When conducting online meetings (whether at home or within the workplace) employees must be suitably dressed. Online meetings must also be free of distractions, again whether at home or within the workplace. Unless there are connection issues, cameras should remain on for the duration of the meetings.

- The Council will develop and deploy a corporate background which must be used.
- On-line meetings are subject to the same expectations of personal and professional conduct as you would expect in the workplace.

1.3 Telephony systems

- All employees who are designated ICT users will be issued with on-line telephony facilities and a direct dial (land-line) number through their laptop.
- It is the responsibility of all members of staff to ensure that calls are answered during office hours;
- Where employees are not working (annual leave) then call forwarding must be activated to an officer / group of officers who will be available to take calls;
- Landline numbers **should not be** forwarded to mobile numbers;
- All employees are responsible for ensuring their contact details as recorded on Inform are correct, these details will be synchronised with outlook based contact information;
- All staff who are issued with Council mobile phones should ensure that these are included on Inform;
- **No personal mobile phones should be included.**

1.4 Equipment and Environment

- It is important for us to know that wherever you are working from, you have the equipment and environment you need to do your job effectively and that you feel safe, well and comfortable.
- All staff who work in part from home, will be able to request a foldable desk, office chair, foot rest and can request any further bespoke requirements through their line manager. **Just so it is clear, you won't be able to claim expenses for any equipment that you decide to buy yourself.**
- All IT equipment needs to be ordered through [Ordering Hardware and Software](#). Similarly if you find you need any extra equipment to help you do your job, you should again use the above link. **Please discuss any technical or supportive equipment requirements that you have with your line manager before ordering as approval will be required.**
- If you already have reasonable adjustments in place it is important that a conversation takes place with your manager prior to commencing hybrid working arrangements, to ensure appropriate adjustments are available in workplace locations. You may want to familiarise yourself with the work location prior to a return to ensure the equipment and environment are accessible to your needs. The Reasonable Adjustments Scheme will support this conversation.

1.5 Display Screen Equipment

- If you are setting yourself up to working remotely or at home, you will need to complete the [Guidance on Working from Home with DSE](#). This will support you to make sure that your place of work is safe, supportive, free from risk and that any access to confidential information or data is treated with care.
- Colleagues working remotely or at home must ensure they have a secure, private and appropriately lit and heated space to work in, with a reliable and secure internet connection. For more information about [HS11 Display Screen Equipment](#) and [HS11A Scheme – Eye and Eyesight Tests and Special Corrective Appliance](#) policies and keeping yourself safe please use the above links.
- When working outside of your normal office location, please be mindful of any potential confidentiality or IT security risks. To read more about keeping information safe and confidential please refer to the [Protecting Information – ICT Security](#) and [Data Protection Awareness](#) e-Learning modules on RCT Source.
- If you have a disability and need any reasonable adjustments to be made to your workstation whether in the office or in another location, please discuss your needs with your line manager.
- If any equipment gets lost, damaged or stolen, you will need to let your line manager know as soon as possible. You should also inform your home insurance provider that you are working from your home as any changes to use could potentially invalidate the policy.

When working from a Council premises, please make sure that you know how to evacuate the building (including the place of assembly and who you need to report to) in the case of an emergency and that you are aware of how to contact the first aider on site.

iii) **Your Wellbeing**

We know that for many of you, working under these models can boost your wellbeing, however there are still some important things for you to be aware of. It can be easy to lose track of time and work more hours than you usually would when working remotely. It is important that to remember to take regular rest breaks; of not less than 30 consecutive minutes if working for 6 hours or more and make time to switch off. Where working for long spells at a screen make sure you take regular breaks away from your screens. Working in this way should not significantly change how many hours you usually work.

Workers have the right to either:

- an uninterrupted 24 hours without any work each week
- an uninterrupted 48 hours without any work each fortnight
- These models should not be used as a way of carrying on working when you are sick. If you are ill, then you would need to take time off until you have recovered and follow our Sickness Absence Policy.
- We know that collaboration, connection and having a sense of belonging can help you stay well. We encourage you to think about what this means for you and to actively make time to connect with your colleagues. To find out what support the Council offers to support you wellbeing contact our wellbeing line (Tel: 01443 424100 e-mail wellbeingHelpline@rctcbc.gov.uk)

iv) **Expenses And Costs**

Your contractual normal location of work won't change when you adopt either of these models of working, so your entitlement to claim will travel expenses will remain the same.

Travelling time

Where an employee spends part of a day on site and either travels directly from home to site or directly from site to home, the time recorded should reflect the provisions of the Scheme for payment of travel expenses and redeployment e.g., if travelling to or from staff's fixed centre, the working day starts and ends at the fixed centre. Alternatively, if travelling to another base or from home, then the shorter distance and time rule will apply.

Similarly, staff cannot claim flexi time, or expenses for travelling to and from their fixed base for part of a day e.g., if starting the day working from home, travelling to their fixed base for a meeting, returning to work from home following the meeting – the time spent travelling cannot be claimed as flexi and travel expenses cannot be claimed.

Travel expenses are in-line with the Council's expense policy, that is only official business mileage will be reimbursed. For clarity, no mileage should be claimed or will be reimbursed for journeys that are constituted as a commute:

- initial/home journey to and from your fixed base
- initial/home journey to a temporary workplace utilised under the flexibility of this policy
- note that if you are required to attend on-site business meetings (excluding your fixed base) with colleagues outside of your immediate service area, then the usual 'shortest distance' claimable rule will continue to apply as per Council expense policy

For more information you can read the Council's expenses policy.
Just so you know, any costs for wi-fi, heating, lighting and electricity and commuting costs to your designated place of work will always be a personal expense.

We would also advise that you check that there isn't anything that would prevent you working from home, for example in your mortgage agreement, lease or insurance. You should also get confirmation of cover from your home insurer should work equipment cause any damage to your home.

v) Technical Issues

On occasions where you experience instances of technical system 'downtime' which prevents you from undertaking your role at home, the following actions should be taken:

- should your laptop fail, you must immediately inform your manager and log a call with the ICT Service desk. Where a new laptop is required then arrangements should be made to either attend a suitable office with pc facilities or you can request to take leave until a replacement laptop is available.
- where you may experience a prolonged downtime with your home wi-fi, again you should inform your manager and arrangements should be made to either attend a suitable office or another secure environment with the appropriate connections.
- where your operating system is taken down for maintenance (planned maintenance scheduled outside core working hours where possible), you may be required to attend your fixed base so that alternative work or team development can be undertaken.

vi) At The Workplace

- When working in offices, staff are asked to maintain the clear desk policy introduced during the pandemic to ensure desks/workspaces/meeting rooms are available for use by other colleagues when not in use.
- Personal belongings are not to be left on desks, any lockers are to be kept locked when not in use and staff are asked to wipe down the desk/facilities before and after use.
- All staff rota'd to work from the office will be provided with a locker. A keyboard and mouse will also be provided for their personal use on days when they are in the office which should be placed in lockers at the end of each working day.
- All office desks will be configured with a docking station and multi-screens.

vii) Working From Outside the UK & Holiday Homes

- Due to the potential complex legal and tax implications, wider compliance issues around access to systems and data security, particularly from countries with a greater 'cyber' threat, working from abroad is not allowed in any circumstances.
- Similarly, unless there are exceptional circumstances staff should not work from holiday homes, holiday caravans or other peoples' homes within the UK area. Any exceptional circumstances request must be agreed by your SLT Director in discussion with the Director of Human Resources.

viii) If You Need Further Support

Remember we have an employee wellbeing line & HR support.