

Hybrid Working Policy

make it happen council of the future

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As a Council of the Future, not all roles require to be worked the traditional 9am – 5pm. Our focus should be on the needs of our customers. Flexibility in working hours and locations improves work life balance, which in turn improves performance and ultimately should provide a better service to our customers.

Using the right technology allows you to work from any location. The concept of hybrid working is wider than just location and can bring flexibility in working hours/patterns, reduce commuting costs and allow for a better work/life balance.

Not all jobs will lend themselves to hybrid working due to the nature of the services being delivered. This policy applies to a large proportion of the workforce who work in posts that historically were predominately office based.

This policy will be subject to ongoing review.

Workstyles and Where you can work from

All employees who were historically predominately office based will be considered to be either a hybrid worker or an office based worker. If you are in any doubt which workstyle applies for your post please speak to your line manager in the first instance as they have a list which identifies hybrid posts and office based posts.

If your post is categorised as hybrid it means that the duties of your post can be worked in a hybrid manner. Whilst the flexibility of hybrid working suits many individuals, it is recognised that it does not suit everyone. You do not have to split your working time between home/office if this is not your preferred option. To start working in a hybrid way you must apply to Opt In to Hybrid Working in the first instance, see 'Opting into Hybrid Working' below.

If you are hybrid working your working base will remain unchanged although you will be able to work from any Falkirk Council building, café or your home, using appropriate technology supplied by Falkirk Council. Obviously, please be aware of your surroundings when working outwith Council premises as not all work tasks will be appropriate to be undertaken in a café or other public location.

Falkirk Council office spaces will predominately be open plan. If you encounter any issues/difficulties working in this environment, then you must raise your concerns with your manager in the first instance.

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Workstyle Descriptions:

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Predominately working from home or across the Council area. Other locations could include Council offices/buildings, meetings in leisure centres, cafes, client homes to meet the needs of the service being delivered. There will likely be the need to attend offices/HQ to catch up with paperwork at a touch down point or to maintain contact/relationships with team members. The amount of time spent working from home/office/other locations will vary depending on job tasks and also personal circumstances i.e. available space at home. In exceptional circumstances working from home for all working hours may be considered, this would be in consultation with your line manager and subject to ongoing review. Please note work patterns can be varied if circumstances change depending on business need and the employer has the right to ask an employee to attend the office where necessary.

There will be some posts that require an office presence each week from team members on a rotational basis and others where attendance at team meetings or one to ones may be the only requirement to come into the office. The How to request and agree appropriate hybrid working pattern provides more detail on this.

Office Based

All working time spent in the office

Fully office based as the tasks of the job are unable to be undertaken in any other mobile/flexible way.

Front line worker

Worker who will have regular/daily interaction usually on face to face basis with members of the public during the completion of their roles/responsibilities on behalf of Falkirk Council and doesn't have the ability to choose which location they work from, for example, roads and grounds workers, nursery nurse.

Home-worker

A home worker differs from a hybrid worker. This category of worker works from home for 100% of their working time, by mutual agreement, usually due to a recommendation from/in consultation with Occupational Health. This is often to support an employee in continuing their working life.

Applicable to All Workstyles - Flexible working requests

There is a statutory right to request flexible working. For any situation not covered by this policy please refer to the [Flexible Working policy \(falkirk.gov.uk\)](https://www.falkirk.gov.uk) which covers other working patterns including job share, compressed hours and annualised hours. Any applications should be made using the [Flexible working application form](#)

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Opting into Hybrid Working

Opt in/Out

If you want to work in a hybrid manner you need to submit a Hybrid Working Opt In form, this is available for completion on Myview. If your post is already categorised as hybrid your Opt In form should be approved by your manager. Although it may be that the number of working days spent in the office requires some discussion. This will be determined based on service delivery needs, for example, attendance may be required to facilitate a rota or a need for team working on particular tasks. Please note that work patterns can be changed/varied if circumstances change depending on business needs. Please refer to [How to - How to request a hybrid working pattern | Falkirk Council](#) for further information.

The Opt In arrangement will be reviewed on an annual basis with your manager at your Good Conversation [Employee development | Falkirk Council](#). However, if your circumstances change and hybrid working is no longer suiting you there is the option to submit an Opt Out form at any time. By opting out of hybrid working you will revert to your previous ways of working.

Appeal

If you submit a Hybrid Opt In form and the form is rejected by your manager, you have the option to appeal this decision.

Any appeal against a rejected Hybrid Opt In submission should be emailed to hrhelpdesk@falkirk.gov.uk in the first instance, within 10 days of the form being rejected, noting the reason for the appeal being submitted. On receipt of an employee appeal the manager who rejected the Opt In form will be asked for a written submission on the reason for the rejection. Appeal submissions will be considered on a monthly basis by a panel consisting of HR representation, Trade Union representation and an independent manager.

Once reviewed by the panel you will be advised of the outcome of your appeal. If you continue to remain unhappy with the decision you should then refer to the Grievance Policy, [Policies - Grievance policy | Falkirk Council](#)

Expenses

It is for each employee to decide whether to Opt In or not to the Hybrid working arrangement. Employees adopting a Hybrid working arrangement are responsible for any home costs/expenses e.g. broadband/heating/electric charges and no expenses will be paid for these costs.

Appropriate Insurance when working from home

Any employee working from home should ensure that their Home Insurance provider is aware that they are working from home for a percentage of their working week and that it does not impact on their insurance cover. Falkirk Council equipment is insured by the Council and your home should not be used for meetings.

Advising mortgage provider/landlord when working from home

You must ensure that you are not in breach of any covenant or agreement by working from home. For example, before working from home, you should check the terms of

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any mortgage, lease or rental agreement and, if necessary, obtain any permissions required to work from home.

Travel to work

Any expenses incurred when travelling to and from your office base from home cannot be claimed. Similarly, you travel to and from your office base in your own time, this does not form part of your working day.

For example: If you are required to attend the office for a team meeting at 2pm, but choose to work from home prior to, and after the meeting, the time taken to travel to and from the office does not count as working time. You could choose to work from the office for the full day and your journey to and from work would not count as working time, as has always been the case. It is a choice to travel during the day, and work from home the rest of the time, the only difference is the time you travel has changed to a different part of the day (perhaps avoiding rush hour traffic), but it still does not form part of your working time.

If you are required to attend a number of different meetings throughout the day, you are encouraged to book a desk at a suitable office location and travel from there. Time taken to travel from the office to a meeting as part of the working day does count as working time.

Energy Use

To help minimise your personal carbon footprint and improve the quality of your working and living environment there are some energy saving tips that you may find useful on Inside Falkirk: [Wellbeing - Guidance on Domestic Energy Saving | Falkirk Council](#)

Attending meetings

Where possible, you should use technology to engage/communicate and avoid mileage, travel time or expenses. Where a meeting is required you should use MS Teams or other approved application. If a physical meeting is necessary you should refer to the [Travel Hierarchy \(falkirk.gov.uk\)](#) for the most appropriate mode of transport. Travel expenses cannot be claimed for travel between your home and base location. Meeting rooms can currently be booked via outlook.

Through MS Teams there is an option to create a 'virtual' office to allow for collaboration with team members whilst continuing to work on other tasks, just as though you were in the office. Teams should consider if this may be of benefit to the team and if so, how frequently.

It is acknowledged that for some meetings, and for some individuals/groups, the preference may be to meet face to face and consideration needs to be given to doing so, where considered appropriate, for example: interviews, line management support/good conversations, team meetings.

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Booking a desk and desk availability

Hotdesks are available in most locations and you can book whichever location is convenient to you dependant on your role/duties/schedule. It is likely that your 'base' location will have an area available for your team to book to allow team members to sit in close proximity. With the exception of Office Based workers, you should ensure you book a desk in advance of attending an office space. Further information on how to book a desk can be found here:

<http://inside.falkirk.gov.uk/employee/desk-booking.aspx>

When booking a desk in your normal 'base' location, you should try and book a desk within your team area although try and sit at a different desk when you can. Where this is not possible, you should book a desk as close as possible to your team area. Your booking should be limited to the time required in the office. You should cancel desk bookings if your arrangements change or you leave early.

Desk space has been reduced in refurbished offices, in recognition of changes to workstyles and ways of working. Desk booking usage will be monitored and discussed at appropriate intervals. Analysis of desk booking information will inform any future changes to desk ratios, which will be considered in consultation with Trade Unions.

Reasonable working locations

It is accepted that you may live in a different town/area as your home base, however you should be able to travel to your work location within a reasonable timescale when required. Ideally you should be able to travel to your work location from home with 2-3 hours. If this is not the case, then you need to have a discussion with your manager and HR in relation to your proposed location.

If working within public areas or space, consideration must always be given to confidentiality and data protection and security of data or discussions. Not all roles/tasks will lend themselves to working in public areas/spaces, for example a café.

When can you work?

Hours of work will depend on the nature of the service being delivered, the needs of customers and your workstyle. You may have fixed hours to support service delivery or may be able to work more flexibly over Monday/Sunday. There is no expectation that your working pattern will change by opting into hybrid working, however hybrid working can lend itself to offering more flexibility in relation to when you work your contractual hours. If you do want to explore the flexibility offered, you should discuss the nature of your job and, subject to service delivery, agree your working hours with your manager. For some posts hours can change and won't be worked in the same pattern every week. Agreeing hours with your manager will:

- ensure that managers know when their team members are working and contactable
- assist when planning staffing if there is an element of office cover required from the overall team
- assist when approving leave requests from team members
- help reduce risk of lone working
- ensure work can be allocated/managed and outputs can be monitored

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- support health and wellbeing including when you can be contacted.

You **must** also update your electronic diary to ensure it is clear when you are due to work, when you are in meetings, and any other commitments you may have during the normal working week. You can add your lunch break into your diary to ensure you are not disturbed.

If you are working outwith normal office hours please select the option to delay your emails so the recipient will receive them within normal working hours.

Your out of office email message should detail your working pattern if it's not the traditional Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm. During non-working times, when working from home, please put your laptop away to ensure you have a separation between work and home life.

Office Based

For Office Based workers, working hours are within the building opening hours and as agreed with Managers. It is anticipated that office cover will be required during normal office hours. Any office cover arrangements across a team require to be agreed by the line manager.

What Equipment is provided?

Your manager will ensure you have appropriate equipment to undertake your role in a hybrid manner. This can include: a laptop, monitor, keyboard, mouse and headphones. It may also include a mobile telephone although for internal Council calls, 'teams' calls should normally be used. Printers will not be provided for use at home as we are working more digitally than ever before, however if you do need to print you will need to attend the office to do so. The Modern Workplace specification is online [{add link to word doc}](#) and is regularly reviewed. Where appropriate updated equipment will be made available and rolled out.

Prior to being provided with any electronic equipment it is essential that you have read and understood the Acceptable Use Policy.

Falkirk Council IT equipment is solely for the use of Falkirk Council employees only and you must adhere to the Acceptable Use Policy, [Strategies, policies, procedures & guidance - ICT policies \(falkirk.gov.uk\)](#). You must not connect any privately owned equipment to the Councils network or IT equipment.

It is your responsibility to ensure the equipment is kept safe and charging of equipment is your responsibility. You must bring the equipment to the office when requested for PAT checking.

If you are a permanent employee and hybrid working, you can purchase a desk and chair to support working from home and reclaim this through myview (£150 maximum allowance). Where appropriate a replacement desk/chair can be provided every 5 years or earlier in specific circumstances on a case by case basis. Temporary employees and casuals should discuss any requirements with their line manager in the first instance.

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Hot desking facilities will be available in offices which will be set up with docking stations to connect your laptop. Further information on how to book a desk, and what locations are available, can be found here:

<http://inside.falkirk.gov.uk/employee/desk-booking.aspx>

Some workers may require specific equipment to support the working arrangement. Specific needs will be considered on an individual basis, and with guidance from Occupational Health. If necessary, the desk can be categorised as an adapted/dedicated workspace on the desk booking app. This would mean that the named worker would get priority for this desk on a day they are working, but it can be booked by others when the named worker is not in work.

Paper diaries should be avoided, instead, you should use outlook to record meetings etc. Your outlook diary will be open for colleagues to view and you must allow full access to your diary for your manager, this is to support lone working, safety, availability and workload.

All computer users should undertake the Olle DSE course. Following which a self-assessment workstation assessment form should be completed on the SHE system, [Employee Portal \(sheasure.net\)](#) You should carry out a workstation assessment when you begin using new equipment. Where you are using standard workstation equipment this self-assessment does not need to be repeated every time you require to work within the office. You should only complete another self assessment if you experience issues using your workstation equipment or there is a change to the equipment provided. You need to make sure you tell your manager immediately of any issues you are experiencing. Reasonable adjustments will be made where appropriate. More information can be found in 'How to undertake Workstation Risk Assessments for Hybrid Working and Homeworking' [{insert link}](#).

Working in the Office

Hot Desks

A bank of desks will be available for use by all hybrid workers as required on a hot desk basis. In time, most offices will have hot desking arrangements for you to work from, although some offices may have limited capacity. Docking stations will be available in some offices for you to directly connect your laptop. The Modern Workplace Guidance [{add link to word doc}](#) provides more detail about workstations. To ensure that a suitable desk is available, you should always book a desk in advance using the booking app: <http://inside.falkirk.gov.uk/employee/desk-booking.aspx>

For arrangements to be successful, appropriate behaviours and principles must be in place. As a minimum, the following list of behaviours and principles support good mobile and flexible working arrangements.

- Clear desk policy applies to all categories. You should leave any desk you use clean and tidy after you use it and leave it how you would want to find the desk. Personal items must not be left on desks.
- Teams may be given a designated bank of desks. Where possible, you should sit within your designated bank of desks when at your working base location
- A locker or personal storage facility will be provided at your working base location

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- Eating at desks should be avoided where possible
- You must use a headset when on an MS Teams call in the open plan office area. This is to reduce disruption to others and keep meetings confidential.
- You must use a background setting or blur the background, so that meeting attendees can't see other office staff who are working in the immediate vicinity.
- Music should not be played in an open plan office environment. If you prefer to listen to music whilst you work, please do so using headphones.
- Use the wipes available to clean desks and equipment after use. Additional stock of wipes can be requested from your Area Cleaning Officer
- Heating/lighting – everyone needs to recognise the different needs and wants of colleagues and be tolerant of others
- You should sit at different desks within the bank to avoid desks being "owned" by one person.
- You should book a desk or meeting room in advance of your attendance at any workplace location
- You should cancel desk or meeting room bookings if your arrangements change.

Office based workstyle

- Clear desk policy applies to all office based teams
- Teams who spend all of their working hours in the office are likely to be given a designated bank of desks. Where possible, you should sit within your designated bank of desks
- It is likely that office cover will be required and it is likely to be restricted to traditional office hours
- In line with the above principles of hybrid working and to ensure fairness to all, office based workers have no automatic right to a particular desk. Desks are available on a hot desk basis unless there is specialised equipment/facilities provided/required for an individual and this is then categorised as an adapted/dedicated desk/space (see below).
- In a small number of specific cases, and only where approved by OH and the Health, Safety & Wellbeing team, it may be that as a reasonable adjustment a worker will require specific equipment for sole use. In these circumstances these desks can be used by all employees although the named worker will always have priority to use the desk. If you choose to use an adapted/dedicated space then the desk must be vacated and made available for the named worker if and when they require the desk. (The booking app will identify if a desk has adjustments/adaptations for a named worker)

Terms and Conditions

Terms and conditions of employment are not altered when working in a hybrid manner. You will still have a Falkirk Council building noted as your base location.

Some workers are likely to have fixed working hours, others will have more flexibility. The working hours of the post will not alter, however the working pattern may become more flexible, as hours can be worked at a time that suits the employee (subject to service delivery/manager approval). Your line manager should know your working hours so they know when they can or can't contact you. You should also

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update your online diary so your colleagues know too. If you choose to work during unsocial hours, no enhancements are payable, as this is a personal choice.

Normal Calling in Sick procedures apply to hybrid workers. Working from home is not to be used as an alternative to childcare or care for dependents and requests for carers leave should follow normal procedures.

Arrangements should be reviewed regularly to ensure there are no issues that require to be addressed

Arrangements are subject to change to meet service delivery requirements, employee wellbeing and the needs of customers, which will always take priority.

Outputs

It is essential that you agree outputs with your manager. This means that you must agree the tasks and actions that need to be completed within an agreed timescale. Subject to service delivery it is up to you to determine when your tasks will be done within the timescales set.

- You need to agree with your manager when you will be available or in the office
- Clear expectations, standards and timescales for each piece of work is essential and must be agreed on a regular basis to ensure productivity is maintained

GDPR/Data Protection

You must ensure that any confidential information, either paperwork or electronic files are kept secure. For example, if working from home any confidential information should not be accessible to family members or visitors to the house. Similarly, if working from another Council location, please ensure any time you leave your work station that you lock your screen and secure any confidential paperwork.

Confidential waste should be returned to the Council as soon as practically possible for destruction and not disposed of with household rubbish or in other locations e.g. cafés.

Inside Falkirk has information and guidance on secure transmission of information, in both paper and electronic form please click on the link for more details: [Information security \(falkirk.gov.uk\)](https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/information-security)

The Olle Data Protection course must be completed annually.

Communication

Managing a team working flexibly brings challenges. In moving to a more flexible way of working there needs to be an acceptance that an immediate response will not always be possible as individuals may work different patterns to suit their circumstances/work commitments. Hybrid working requires an element of trust between you and your manager. Communication between you and your manager is key to success.

- Effective communication is critical and it is important that this takes place on at least a weekly basis

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- There needs to be an agreed process/mechanism of monitoring performance and assessing output
- You are expected to attend team meetings, 1-1s, good conversations and other appointments as necessary in connection with the duties of your post
- More frequent 1-1's may be required to ensure good communication and productivity.

Health and Safety

You should work with your manager to ensure your safety at all times. It is important that managers ensure that:

- Emergency contact information is kept up to date
- Working patterns are agreed
- Lone working arrangements and wellbeing are considered and adequate arrangements and support are in place.
- Any necessary risk assessments are in place and reviewed as required
- All employees complete the Display Screen Equipment (DSE) course on our online learning facility [OLLE](#).
- A [workstation self-assessment](#) is completed by employees
- Diaries must be open to all of your team and your manager at all times to ensure availability and location is known whilst working.
- Regular contact including 1-1's and team meetings are in place to ensure ongoing support
- An agreed workplan is in place for each employee
- All employees complete the Anytime Anywhere [OLLE](#) course.

Useful Links

- E-learning courses:
 - Display Screen Equipment e-learning course <https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/employees/learning-development/courses.aspx?aid=4031>
 - Anytime Anywhere e-learning course [Olle \(brightwave.co.uk\)](#)
- General information and links in relation to Wellbeing <https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/employees/wellbeing/>
- General information in relation to working from home - establishing a routine, setting up a work space, maintaining contact with the office etc. <https://www.falkirk.gov.uk/employees/wellbeing/remote-working.aspx>
- Booking/cancelling desks and meeting rooms <http://inside.falkirk.gov.uk/employee/desk-booking.aspx>
- Anytime Anywhere project information [Mobile and flexible working | Falkirk Council](#)