

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS WHITLEY SUBJECT COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 9TH JULY 2025 AT 11.30AM

BRUCE STREET

Management Side

Aisling Quinn: Director, People & OD
(Chair)

Debbie Sherlock: NICSHR

Joan Fleetham: People & OD

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] People & OD (Secretariat)

Central Trade Union Side

Maria Morgan: NIPSA

[REDACTED] NIPSA

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

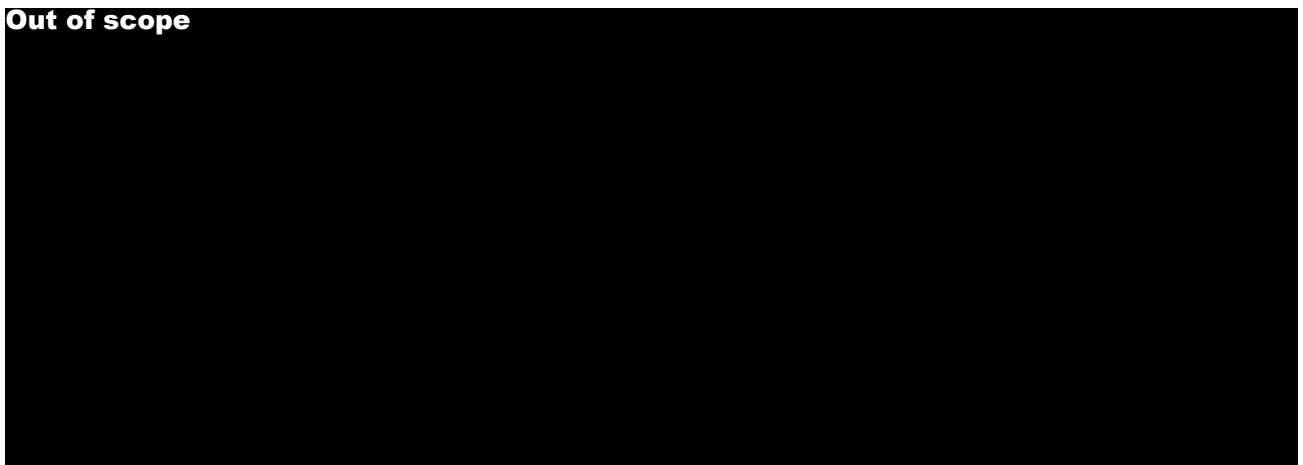
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

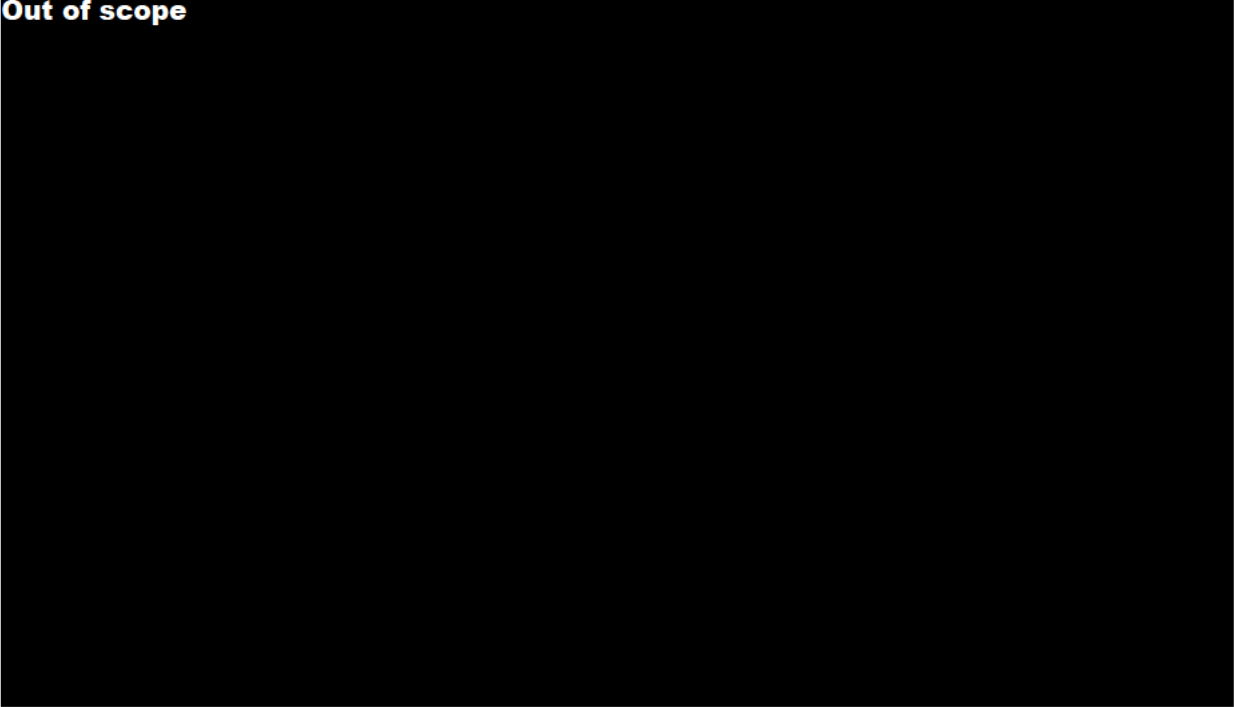
[REDACTED] : FDA

[REDACTED] : NIPSA
(online)

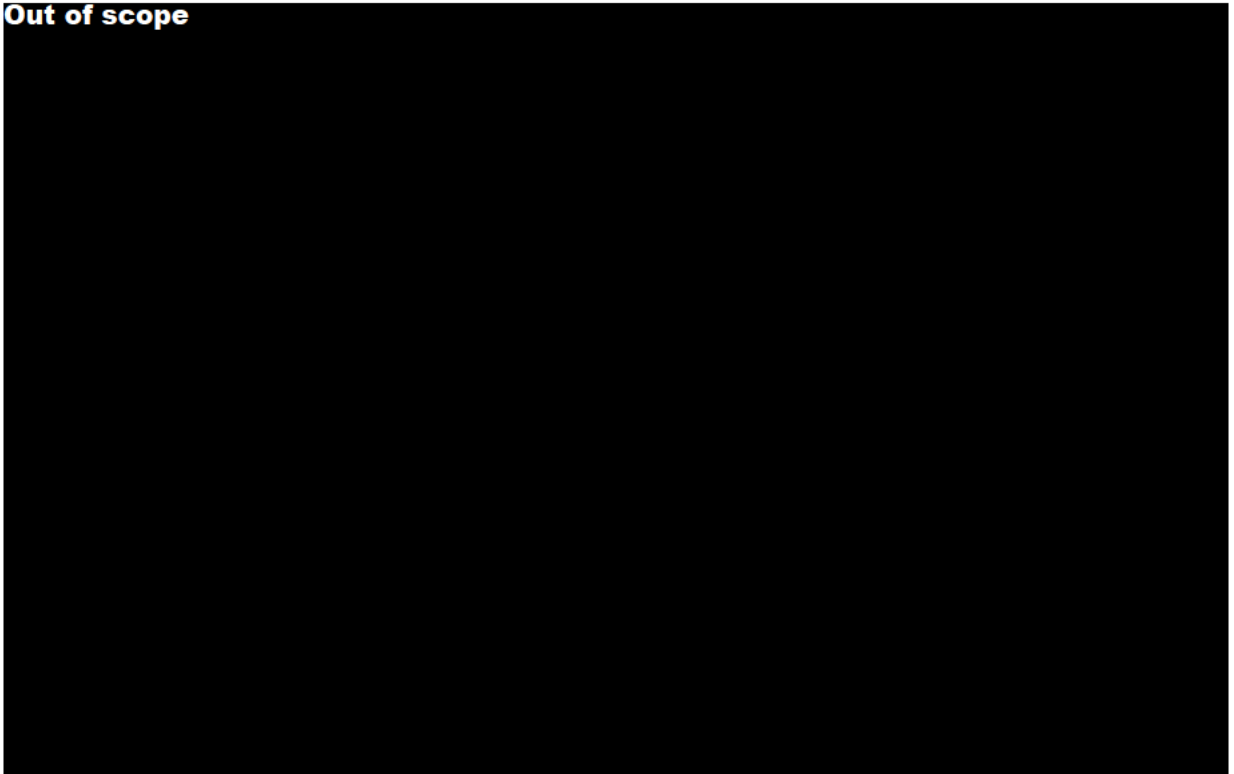
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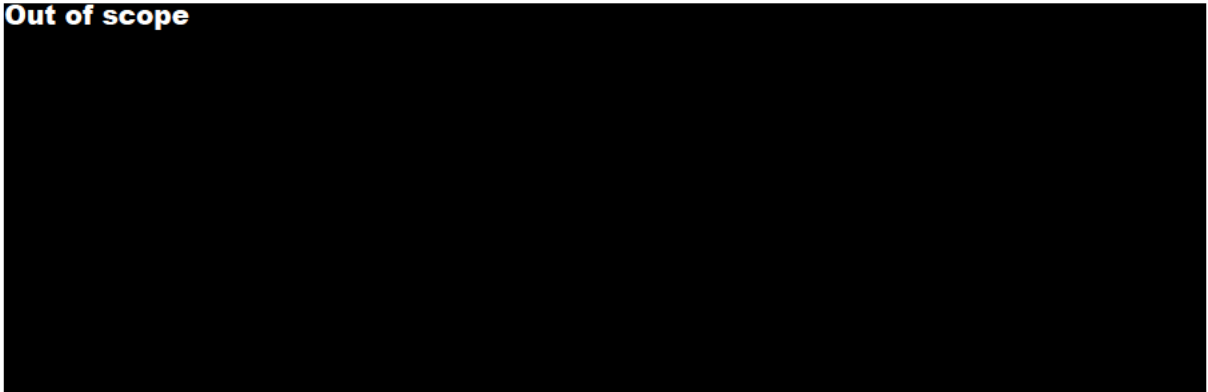
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Out of scope



Out of scope



Out of scope



Hybrid Working Policy Update

12. MS confirmed a letter of response was issued to CTUS 7 July 2025 covering each point raised by CTUS on the draft Hybrid Working Policy and that no response has yet been received. CTUS confirmed they would respond with their position later in the week.

AP1 – 07/25 - CTUS to provide response to MS letter of 7 July 2025

13. MS stated implementation was intended to start September to October 2025 with communications due to issue in August 2025. Implementation should be completed across all departments by the end of October 2025.
14. CTUS noted they remain opposed to the policy and the requirement for all to attend the workplace 40% of their contracted hours but as agreed by both NIPSA and FDA Executives Committees they will continue to work with MS on the implementation approach to gain improvements. CTUS stated implementation should allow enough time for line managers to have good conversations with staff. CTUS expressed concern that some departments may not be ready for implementation by September and asked if implementation would be staggered across departments.
15. MS noted that departments will decide implementation dates and that communication on changes and implementation are due to issue in August to allow line managers sufficient flexibility to have conversations from September to ensure implementation by the end of October 2025 across all departments. MS noted the launch of the revised Hybrid Working policy would be supported with communication to promote the policy, procedure, and FAQs to ensure visibility amongst staff and consistent implementation and management of the policy.
16. MS highlighted the importance of the distinction between reasonable adjustments and hybrid working and MS confirmed that this would be highlighted in communications to support the policy launch. It would also be reinforced in the reasonable adjustment policy which is currently being developed.
17. MS noted that management of annual leave was covered at Q.29 of the FAQs. Further wording to clarify the impact of annual leave would be drafted for

inclusion in both the procedure and FAQs, with updated wording provided to CTUS for consideration.

AP2 – 07/25 - MS to provide updated wording to clarify management of annual leave.

18. MS highlighted the detailed guidance for line managers on workplace attendance conversations was included in Annex C of the Hybrid Working policy supporting procedure.
19. CTUS commented that communication from Permanent Secretaries is key alongside good communication, education, time, space and empathy.
20. MS confirmed that following earlier consultation, CTUS views were considered, and paragraph 3.1 of the policy was subsequently amended to provide that Connect2 hubs could be treated as the workplace on an exceptional basis, subject to business need and line management agreement. It was considered that this provides sufficient flexibility for the use of Connect2 hubs.
21. CTUS noted that the proposed revised wording for SCS attendance requirements was not accepted. MS stated that the wording used in the policy was to reflect the critical leadership role of the SCS and importance of visible leadership; on this basis it was greater attendance by SCS was therefore appropriate. MS emphasised that the policy position 'encouraged' SCS to attend more than 40% of the minimum attendance requirement; it was not a mandatory requirement. MS considered that this struck the appropriate balance and confirmed that the policy wording would remain.
22. There was some discussion on the office estate ability to accommodate 40% workplace attendance. MS confirmed that following engagement with CPD estate capacity had been confirmed (as previously indicated during consultation process) but that business areas may need to operate local arrangements such as desk booking systems, particularly buildings with multi departments occupying. CTUS indicated that it was unconvinced about the ability of the estate to effectively manage 40% workplace attendance despite MS stated

position. MS asked CTUS to confirm if any buildings of particular concern. CTUS confirmed their position related to the ongoing workstation reduction across the NICS Estate and therefore the ability of the estate to manage 40% attendance. CTUS agreed to keep the matter under review.

Out of scope

