



Northern Ireland

Civil Service

People and Organisational Development

Aisling Quinn
**Director, People & Organisational
Development**
2-4 Bruce Street
Belfast, BT2 7JD
Tel: [REDACTED]
Email: [aisling.quinn@\[REDACTED\]](mailto:aisling.quinn@[REDACTED])

Robert Murtagh
National Officer NI
FDA

By email: [robert@\[REDACTED\]](mailto:robert@[REDACTED])

Date: 30 July 2025

Dear Robert,

DRAFT HYBRID WORKING POLICY

Thank you for your correspondence dated 22 July regarding the phrasing of paragraph 4.6 in the draft Hybrid Working Policy, which encourages Senior Civil Servants (SCS) to exceed the minimum workplace attendance requirement of 40% per week.

In your letter, you reiterated the FDA's position that NICS policies should be applied consistently across all grades and raised concerns that the implementation of the policy could result in SCS attending the office more frequently than the minimum requirement. You requested that the draft wording proposed by the FDA be reconsidered and indicated the potential for formally registering a disagreement on this matter.

Extensive consultation with trade unions has taken place during the development of the revised policy, including discussion of SCS workplace attendance. Throughout this process—both in Whitley Subject Committees and in written communication to Central Trade Union Side—it has been clarified that the language on workplace attendance for SCS is intended to recognise their leadership responsibilities and the importance of visible leadership. Therefore, the policy encourages increased workplace attendance by the SCS.

The term 'encouraged' was deliberately chosen to convey the expectation of greater workplace attendance, while still allowing for managerial discretion. As set out in paragraph 4.5, staff participating in apprenticeship schemes, the graduate management programme, those in their probationary period, and those who have recently transitioned to a new role, as well as their line managers, are also encouraged to exceed the standard 40% workplace attendance benchmark. This approach will have implications for staff and managers across all grades, not just the SCS.

After careful consideration, I must confirm that the wording proposed by the FDA will not be adopted; the policy will retain its current language as drafted.

Following the most recent Whitley Sub-Committee meeting on 9 July, Management Side considered the consultation process to be complete, and Ministerial approval of the revised policy has now been secured.

Accordingly, we intend to proceed with the preparation of communications to facilitate the implementation of the revised Hybrid Working Policy from September through October 2025.

I wish to assure you that the FDA's perspective has been thoroughly considered, even though consensus was not achieved on this occasion. We very much hope you will be willing to work with us in developing communications—planned for release in August—to help to address any concerns your members may have.

Please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,



AISLING QUINN

Cc: Jill Minne

