Northern Ireland
Civil Service
People and Organisational Development
Forbairt Daoine agus Eagraíochta

Hybrid Working Update

Important Information for all NI Civil Servants

The NI Civil Service remains committed to offering flexible working arrangements, with hybrid working available for many in our workforce, depending on job roles and business need.

Policy Review

A key objective of the NICS People Strategy 2025–2030 is to ensure that our HR policies remain effective and relevant for a changing workforce.

A review of the Hybrid Working Policy has been completed, involving formal consultation with recognised Trade Unions. The updated policy received approval from the Minister of Finance on 23rd July 2025 and will be implemented across all Departments.

Hybrid working remains available to permanent and fixed-term employees, agency staff, and those on secondment to NICS. It is, however, recognised that not all business areas or roles may be suitable for hybrid working. The policy applies equally to all those participating in hybrid working arrangements.

Key Aspects of the Policy

- Staff engaged in hybrid working must attend their designated workplace for at least 40% of their contractual working hours each week.
- For those with alternative working patterns, this requirement will be calculated on a pro-rata basis. Where this equates to fewer than 3 hours and 45 minutes per week, attendance may be averaged over a two-week period, where appropriate.
- A single application form, the Workstyle Agreement, will be used for all requests and must be approved by your line manager (EO2 or above). This process will typically be managed via the HRConnect Self-Service system.
- In exceptional circumstances, subject to business needs and managerial approval, Connect2 hubs may be used as the designated workplace.
- Senior Civil Servants are encouraged to exceed the minimum workplace attendance requirement of 40% per week.

Policy Implementation

The revised Hybrid Working Policy will be rolled out across all Departments during September 2025, with full implementation expected by end of October 2025.

GMB and Unite trade unions have endorsed the updated policy and the Central Trade Union Side (NIPSA, FDA, and the Prison Officers' Association) has not (mainly due to concerns regarding the 40% minimum workplace attendance requirement for civil servants and, in the case of the FDA, expectations for Senior Civil Servants).

Engagement with the CTUS will continue to try to ensure that all practicable measures are taken to address any concerns their members have in relation to the implementation and application of this updated policy, particularly in relation to issues such as line manager discretion; management of annual leave with workplace attendance requirements; and reasonable adjustment requests.

To support the transition, Hybrid Working procedural guidance and FAQs will be published for staff by 12 August. Further communications and guidance for managers and staff will be provided throughout August 2025.

If you require further information or have any questions, please contact your line manager.

Thank you.