REVIEW OF NICS HYBRID WORKING POLICY: RESEARCH/BENCHMARK FINDINGS

NICS Hybrid Working Policy: Implementation Survey Results (Feb 23)

A staff survey to gather feedback on the implementation of the NICS Hybrid Working Policy was carried out across all departments and the PPS between October 2022 and January 2023. There were 5685 responses, representing around a quarter of NICS staff.

The subsequent report, published in February 2023 reflected the range of responses and comments received and noted that similar themes and issues were raised across all departments. Departmental New Ways of Working representatives were sent the data results pertaining to their department to enable them to focus on issues of particular focus within their respective department.

Line Management Support

- 92% of respondents felt supported by line manager and gave positive feedback.

- 8% who did not feel supported cited main reasons below
  - Working pattern with number of fixed days in office implemented with little or no discussion
  - Lack of clarity on business requirements
  - One size fits all approach adopted with no regard for nature and remit of individual roles
  - Staff required to sign generic workstyle agreement that they had not contributed to
  - generic workstyle agreements used for whole groups of staff

Staff Toolkit and Guidance Resources

- 92% of respondents found the toolkit and available guidance resources useful and easy to follow

- Comments from 8% who did not find resources useful related to

  - Significant number did not know what resources available and where to find them or simply chose not to use them
  - Local arrangements negated use of policy and guidance i.e. management already decided approach for their area – working pattern and ratio of workplace attendance across business area
  - Policy should be simplified or clarified in areas including:
  - Workstyle agreement forms: confusion on which form to use
  - Appeals: more information on process and how to navigate it via ESP and HRConnect
  - Management roles: clarify respective roles of line/ countersigning/ monitoring manager

- More clarification on operation of core hours and flexi time when hybrid working

Workstyle Agreement Process

- Over 91% found process straightforward and added positive comments.
- Of those who did not find it straightforward, comments referred to:
  - lack of consultation and communication and non – negotiable approach adopted by higher management
  - Some managers expressed difficulties in agreeing workstyles to suit all their staff, whilst still ensuring level of business cover required.
  - challenges of effectively communicating business requirements and reassuring staff that reasons were legitimate.
  - staff wanting a permanent homeworking arrangement as opposed to a hybrid one.

In summary, many negative responses related to three main areas

Management Commitment to Process

- lack of consultation on workstyle agreements and being required to attend office set number of days per week.
- use of generic workstyle agreements developed without any consultation with individuals.

Process Complexity and Clarity

- process overly bureaucratic and forms contained too much information.
- some confusion over which version of the workstyle agreement to use and where departments generated forms with departmental logos and whether to use these or version on ESP.

If Resolution Cannot be R**eached** –

- need additional information on appeals process and additional guidance on what should happen pending appeal being heard.

Health and Safety Checklists

Over 96% of respondents found **Health & Safety General Checklist** process straightforward with only 3.7% expressing difficulties.

Majority (96%) found **DSE Checklist** process straightforward with only 3.6% expressing difficulties.

Main issues in comments were:

- Not being able to find checklists on Intranet.
- Requests for all forms relating to hybrid working to be combined and collated together on ESP.
- Not fully understanding difference between H&S General Checklist and DSE Checklist
- Clarity around remit of the line manager and when to involve H&S representatives.
- Confusion around the DSE checklists for the workplace and home.
- Not understanding the difference between the H&S General Checklist and DSE Checklist,
- Technical difficulties in submitting DSE Checklist form (where Departments are using the automated H&S system).

Benefits of Hybrid Working

Four main benefits that over 80% of respondents selected were

- better work-life balance,
- less time spent commuting,
- fewer interruptions/better productivity more time for quiet/concentrated work.

Positive environmental impact also featured as a benefit with 63%.

Almost half respondents felt they made better use of face-to-face time with colleagues now.

Other key benefits cited were:

- Better focus resulting in improved productivity and efficiency.
- Commuting cost savings.
- More choice around where and when work is done.

Health benefits e.g. positive lifestyle changes, improved mental health, better sleep, less tiredness.

Disadvantages of Hybrid Working

Almost 76% had not experienced any disadvantages of hybrid working.

23% of respondents said they had experienced disadvantages including:

- Lack of contact with colleagues both within and outside direct work team
- Having to come into the workplace for set days when the business purpose is unclear or it seems unnecessary.
- Staff preferences for homeworking and lack of flexibility around arrangements.
- Commuting and energy expenses when cost of living rising.
- Introducing/embedding new members of staff into the team and building up job knowledge.

- Blurring of boundaries between work and home and the need to be able to switch off outside working hours.

Additional Comments

- different approaches across NICS in relation to communicating an average percentage attendance for the department/business and this being interpreted by business areas as a set number of days per week.
- asked to attend fixed number of days per week and they could not identify any business reason for doing so.
- frustration at being in front-line jobs not suited to hybrid working and no incentives or formal recognition processes in place for them.

Line Management Responses

Training and Guidance

2549 responses from line managers - almost 88% of whom felt they were provided with sufficient training and guidance.

Number of staff indicated that they had not received guidance or training and were not aware what was available. Main suggestions on what would be useful were:

- Improved communication around departmental/business area attendance expectations and business reasons for these approaches.
- More support in relation to what happens when line managers and staff cannot reach agreement.
- More information and advice on what other HR policies should be used when considering an individual's circumstances e.g. reasonable adjustment, disability and health issues.
- Specific training for new and existing Line Managers.

Workstyle Agreements

2508 responses to this question. Majority of line managers (81+%) stated that they had not encountered any difficulties with workstyle agreements with 18.4% indicating they had encountered issues.

Most common difficulty encountered by line managers:

- agreeing workplace/remote working split (9.25%).
- getting clarity on the approach for the business area (7.26%)
- spreading flexibility across the team (4.7%).

Additional Comments

Main difficulties encountered by management largely reflected those relayed by all staff in relation to workstyle agreements and can be summarised as:

- Lack of consultation with management on approaches adopted for minimum levels of workplace attendance left some line managers feeling they had little input or control over the workstyle agreement process.

- Differences of opinion between line managers and their management on the requirements for workplace attendance.
- Staff reluctance to return to the workplace following the Covid period and their preference for lower levels of workplace attendance or permanent homeworking.
- Staff being given pre-determined workstyle agreements by management with little or no scope for amendment.
- More guidance and support required when line managers cannot reach agreement with their staff and clarity on whether the more senior levels of management are able to overrule a line management decision.
- Some line managers felt that for consistency a minimum level of workplace attendance is required while other expressed the view that 'one size does not fit all' and that there should be more discretion for line managers to implement what they feel is required to meet the business needs of their area.
- Current workplace environment not conducive to supporting hybrid working – references to layout, furnishings and IT equipment.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Overall, survey indicated promising start to hybrid working across NICS and PPSNI with the vast majority of responses being positive.

Encouraging particularly as roll out coincided with cessation of prolonged period of homeworking for many NICS staff due to Covid pandemic.

Understandably, many staff reluctant to return to workplace and adopt a hybrid working pattern. They were perceiving the policy implementation as a move from the exceptional homeworking arrangements adopted during Covid rather than a change from their workplace attendance arrangements in normal (i.e. pre-Covid) times.

Despite majority of survey results being favourable, circa 8% of respondents overall expressed dissatisfaction. Their feedback was wide-ranging; from relatively minor aspects such as how the forms and guidance materials are presented to more concerning issues relating to some business areas or spans of control where the spirit and the collaborative, collegiate aspects of the policy do not appear to have been followed in all cases.

Report made number of recommendations in spirit of ensuring that Hybrid Working Policy and its operation continues to be successful and that the benefits of hybrid working positively impacts our customers, staff, operations and processes in our departments and business areas, and our environment.

Recommendations prioritised high, medium and low where High = action within the next 4 months, Medium = action in the next 5-8 months and Low = action in the next 9-12 months.

No.	Topic	Recommendation	Priority
1	Governance	Reconvene the NWW G3 Group with the representatives from across the NICS and PPSNI to ensure buy in and support of senior management in addressing recommendations and any subsequent changes required. The group should also include DOF representation from NICSHR, Properties Division and Digital shared services to ensure alignment and understand timeframes for estate and digital improvements. It is recommended that the G3 Group is led by a senior stakeholder with good knowledge of the Hybrid Policy, the people, technology and place issues and the current and future challenges facing the NICS.	High
2	Governance	Reconvene the NWW Steering Group with the NWW champion representatives from across the NICS and PPSNI to take forward the recommendations collectively and ensure consistency across the NICS. It is recommended that the Steering Group and actions to address the recommendations is led and project managed by a NICSHR representative. Ideally the Project Manager representative will have had previous involvement in the development of the NICS Hybrid Working Policy and the NWW Steering/Workstream Groups.	High
3	Governance	Ensure outcome of survey is communicated via the appropriate CTUS Whitley and that CTUS are consulted regarding any changes required.	High
4	Comms	Communicate outcome of survey to G3 Group and raise the issues and feedback highlighted in relation to business areas with 'blanket' approaches to minimum workplace attendance and the use of pre-filled workstyle agreements in order to agree collegiate, consulted approaches that are within the spirit of the policy.	High
5	Comms	Collate all the Hybrid Policy documents, forms, reference and training materials on ESP (by using links to the Intranet where appropriate) and communicate to all staff to reiterate all the support that is available.	Med
6	Policy	Develop additional content for the policy that relates to and clarifies the arrangements for: - Part time members of staff - Dealing with disagreements and uniform appeals - Differences of opinion re: business requirements between line manager and more senior management - When an individual's circumstances make it is more appropriate to use other policies e.g. reasonable adjustment - Core hours and flexitime: management discretion in relation to hybrid working	High

7	Policy	Consider revision of workstyle agreement forms with the focus of using only one form (abridged) for all workstyle agreements but ensuring the conversation guide (outlined currently in the full form) is used in all cases.	Med
8	Policy	Repeat the Hybrid Working survey in 12 months, around April 2024 when the first annual round of updating workstyle agreements will have taken place. It is important to ensure that the policy is regularly reviewed to ensure that it meets the needs of the service and takes into account any new and emerging aspects of hybrid working and homeworking e.g. recent UK study that trialled a 4-day compressed working week, potential for tax changes in relation to working outside the UK and Ireland, recruitment of homeworkers etc.	Low
9	Benefits Realisation	Develop methodology and metrics for tracking benefits of hybrid working covering all aspects; work-life balance, health & well-being, performance & productivity, reduced costs e.g. accommodation, staff travel, commuting, energy & utilities, environmental benefits - these should include the results of this and subsequent surveys, relevant indicators from other resources e.g. staff engagement scores, days lost due to sickness etc.	Med
10	Training	Following completion of recommendations 6 & 7 - develop a training bundle for all staff and management roles in particular. Training roll-out should aim to be completed in advance of next year's round of workstyle agreement reviews.	Low
11	Reward & Recognition	Use the reformed NWW Steering Group to consider options for staff whose roles are not suited to hybrid working. This should include consideration of options ranging from job rotation, role-sharing, use of digital tools and AI, to recruitment to these roles and exploring any potential for some means of reward or recognition for these groups of staff.	Med

NICS People Survey 2023

The 2023 NICS People Survey was conducted across the nine NICS ministerial departments, the Public Prosecution Service and the Health & Safety Executive for NI. Fieldwork ran from 17th April to 17th May 2023 and all staff, including temporary / agency staff working in these organisations were invited to take part. (Since 2021, NI Prison Service operational staff no longer take part in the Survey, and instead undertake their own separate prison service staff survey). The final overall response rate achieved for permanent staff was 44%. In total, 10,714 people (including 487 agency staff) participated in the survey, which was conducted entirely online.

The survey featured a section on New Ways of Working. Responding to the question '*Where have you mostly worked from during the last 12 months*?':

- 37% of respondents had worked from home'(59% in the last survey in 2021)
- 15% had worked in a NICS workplace, equivalent building or other location (16% in the last survey)
- 48% had worked in a mix of both NICS workplace and home (25% in the last survey)

This means that 85% of respondents had worked at home for at least part of the time, with the percentage working *only* at home reducing substantially since the last survey due to a move to hybrid working.

Staff were also asked about their preference on work location:

- 19% wanted to work from home every day
- 31% wanted to work from home most days
- 39% wanted a mix of working from home and in a NICS workplace
- 8% wanted to work in a NICS workplace most days or every day; and
- 3% were unable to work from home

The demand for hybrid working is therefore extremely high.

Scottish Government Hybrid Working Policy

The Scottish Government provided its Hybrid Working Policy, which blends working in Scottish Government workspaces, from home and in the community with stakeholders. Policy states upfront that successful hybrid working practices *enable us to work together in the most effective way, attract and retain great and diverse talent, and support the long-term wellbeing of colleagues.*

Key extracts from the policy are detailed below under the following sections:

General/Hybrid Working Principles/Finding Your Own Work Style/Local Agreements for Hybrid Working/Business Needs/Contractual Place of Work/Workplace Attendance/Remote Working/Working Abroad /Expenses /Management Support for Hybrid Working Team/Caring and Childcare When Working From Home

1 General

1	Most roles in core Scottish Government suited to hybrid working.
2	Hybrid working encourages approach to leadership that is activity based, outcome focused, and principle led rather than about rules. Collective challenge is ensuring this continued way of working is effective from an organisational, team and individual perspective.
3	Up to all in organisation to make hybrid working a success.
4	Many tasks and circumstances where virtual working can be a good option. Nevertheless, Scottish Government not a virtual organisation and there are some activities which are best done in person. Vision is for an organisation that thrives on connections, such as: • bringing people together regularly enhancing the quality of the work we do • collaborating and working across boundaries • noticing and supporting each other's wellbeing • nurturing long term organisational health and development • assisting those new to the organisation to learn and feel a sense of belonging
5	For this to work well, setting expectations on how regularly and in what ways we bring people and stakeholders together in person will be required.
6	Learning embedded as practices continue to develop and estate transformed.

7	Opportunities will also be available for staff to feedback and share experiences
8	Intention to review these hybrid working arrangements again in two years.

2 Hybrid Working Principles

1	Shaped by feedback from staff on how they would like to work in the future, eight hybrid working principles have been developed. These are to be considered by managers when developing hybrid working practices for their teams and are applied consistently across the organisation, although this does not necessarily mean the same outcome regarding working location pattern.
2	1. We plan our activities with purpose by ensuring where and how we work is a productive fit with our business commitments. 2. We take a customised approach, trusting each other to agree arrangements that respect business, colleague, team and role requirements. 3. We manage performance based on outcomes and understand when our performance may be enhanced by face-to-face contact. 4. We provide an inclusive space to accommodate our activities based on needs. 5. We support each other to get the best from hybrid working by familiarising ourselves with our collaboration tools and maintaining our wellbeing. 6. We simplify collaboration and connectivity by sharing information and work with others regardless of location. 7. We each take responsibility for our shared spaces by leaving space available for others to use when we are finished. 8. We are open to change and innovation by learning as we go.

3 Finding Your Own Work Style

1	Three work styles available: 1. **Home** - for roles where the employee is able to work permanently from home, generally as part of an adjustment under equality legislation. Not expected that many roles fall into this category.

	2. **Hybrid** - for roles that include regular mix between working from home, offices and/or other on-site location. No singular or pre-determined ratio between the number of days in each location. This is a matter for agreement between managers and their colleagues to suit business requirements and personal preferences. This work style may also include field roles that require regular attendance at a location rather than an office. In those cases, colleagues may also do a proportion of their work from home. 3. **On-site** - for roles that require colleagues to be somewhere specific, eg a Scottish Government building. This could also be because they prefer to work predominately in a Scottish Government building or they're unable to work effectively from home.
2	For most areas, there will be an obvious work style for role and team. For others, may need time to consider the relative merits, needs and preferences of team to find the right balance. Examples of different situations to help find right working style as a team linked to policy.
3	Availability of desks or other working spaces in the workplace will also be a factor in deciding when staff will attend workplaces.
4	Important for discussions to consider hybrid working principles and how teams and groups of colleagues will work together. Recommend teams or groups of colleagues also come together to discuss the work style that best reflects the needs of the work being done. Managers should also be mindful that some staff have contractual hours, work part-time or within set hours. When discussing work styles, consider all different working patterns within a team to ensure equal opportunity and inclusion.
	Each have different circumstances at home, preferences and needs. Best teams will consider all these needs and do what they can to support colleagues.

	Flexibility and hybrid work styles are far more likely to succeed over the long term if we're flexible, reasonable and supportive of our colleagues.
5	Staff should not assume that agreed hybrid way of working with manager, can or should remain fixed. Business needs change, situations arise and requests will likely be made that don't fit within a fixed schedule.
6	When considering hybrid working arrangements, all existing personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEP) must be reviewed.

4 Local Agreements for Hybrid Working

1	Agreements are reached locally for roles suited to hybrid working. These agreements should ensure colleagues combine working from home with a presence in a workplace (and for some roles, with stakeholders and in communities) each week.
2	This may vary from week to week depending on business need and it is recognised that some roles will be more location-specific than others eg some will have more interaction with colleagues in roles not suited to hybrid working.
3	Needs of staff who have adjustments in place under equality legislation, or where adaptations are agreed must be met
4	Staff wanting to be office based all the time should be accommodated.

5 Business Needs

1	Business need will look different for different directorates, so no centrally fixed amount of time to be spent in the workplace each week.
2	Directors are expected to agree this locally and support their leadership teams to discuss with colleagues how the principles will work in practice and what it means for teams.

3	Examples of different workplace situations available to give a sense of some of the patterns that may be agreed.
4	May be work required that cannot be done from home and therefore not suited to hybrid working. Local leadership should discuss and agree with colleagues what, if any, flexibility can be offered, and how often this will be reviewed.

6 Contractual Place of Work

1	Contracts won't have colleague's home as contractual place of work.
2	Working from home will be on a voluntary basis.
3	An exception may be where it's appropriate for a formal homeworking agreement to be put in place as part of an adjustment under equality legislation. This won't prevent staff from working on a hybrid basis by splitting time between home and contractual place of work.

7 Workplace Attendance

1	Every effort made to accommodate personal choice but must always be weighed against business and operational needs.
2	Expected that colleagues with hybrid work style will combine working from home with presence in a workplace (and for some roles, with stakeholders and in communities) each week.
3	This expectation means staff may have to come into a workplace to do certain tasks, functions or take part in certain events. Examples might include: 1. Your role is in a specific location working with specific equipment (for example, working within a security control room, on a ship, or because you need confidential printing). 2. You work closely with ministers on a day-to-day basis (for example in the same office). Having formal meetings and informal discussions between meetings is easier and more effective if you're together for at least some of the week. 3. Your colleagues are planning to get together for a group session, white board exercise, or just to check in. This may be ad hoc or you have

	agreed having a regular get together in person, for example around once a week or month, is beneficial for colleagues. 4. You're working closely with a colleague on a task where you agree working face-to-face would be easier. 5. Training sessions or group events where, because of the nature of the course or subject, having one or some of the team in a room and some online would reduce the quality of the experience for everyone. 6. You're inducting a new colleague or you're learning something new or helping someone learn. In this case, being beside someone and enabling them to ask questions throughout the day would be beneficial. 7. You're about to start working with new processes or technology that has just been launched. There will be collective learning where face-to-face conversations throughout the day may be helpful. You're meeting with external parties that aren't set up effectively for online working. 8. You've been asked to work on-site to provide support to other less experienced colleagues who are working on-site. 9. You're interviewing job applicants. 10. A large all staff event is happening that involves presentations, break-out sessions and networking opportunities. **11.** Where people work on issues with a security classification above OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE. You may need to work on material or have conversations above that level in an appropriately secure location.

8 Remote Working

1	In a role with a hybrid work style, staff can work from home remotely on the understanding that they are still able to attend contractual work location in line with hybrid working arrangement agreed with manager.
2	Separate guidance on working from home available
3	Capacity to attend a specified Scottish Government work location remains a contractual requirement.
4	Expectation that staff able to attend their Scottish Government work location as and when needed.

5	Staff can choose to live some distance from contractual work location, but in doing so accept travel to and from home will be in own time and at own expense.
6	Commuting costs can't be paid for by the Scottish Government.

9 Working Abroad

1	Remote working abroad not supported unless there's a genuine requirement to do so in the role.
2	Very short-term requests may be possible (further information in international travel guidance policy)
3	Specific examples of a genuine role requirement are official business travel overseas to attend conferences, meetings and networking opportunities. It could also be required if the role is attached to working from one of our overseas Scottish Government offices.
4	These conditions in line with position agreed across UK Civil Service, which reflects significant issues of compliance related to employing individuals resident in another country. This includes immigration or the right to work in that country, security, taxation, pensions, social security and employment law.
5	If you live overseas and successfully apply for a Scottish Government position, you must become resident in Scotland, or be within commuting distance of your contractual work location.
6	Working from abroad for very short-term periods may be possible, if application form completed and approved. All compliance measures must be met and there can't be any cost to the public purse. The maximum period that can be supported in these circumstances is four weeks in a rolling twelve-month period.

10 Expenses

1	Home working under a hybrid model voluntary, so staff not eligible for any specific allowances.
2	Business expenses like phone calls may be reimbursed.

3	No home working allowance to cover costs such as home insurance, broadband, heating or lighting.
4	Base location set out contract seen as ordinary commute, regardless of how frequently that journey is made.
5	Travel and subsistence expenses can only be claimed for journeys to another location that are in excess of ordinary commute.
6	Business areas are allocated to a building and contractual work locations reflect that. These cannot be amended to another building to suit personal preference. However, colleagues can hot desk from any Scottish Government building where there is space available.

11 Management Support for Hybrid Working Team

1	If managing hybrid team, manager must consider their range of work styles to ensure fairness and that no one excluded due to their working pattern or location.
2	Manager should discuss work styles regularly at monthly conversations to ensure working arrangements continue to meet individual and business needs. Any concerns colleagues may have about their working environment, both at home and when in workplace should be addressed Managers can use this opportunity to discuss staff ability to work effectively under their hybrid working arrangement. Examples for discussion: • how the team will keep in touch to discuss work issues and provide mutual support • being mindful of different working patterns, including those that are contractual or within core hours, and avoiding colleagues' non-working days for meetings • how to ensure all team members, regardless of location, have the same opportunities, e.g. for training, networking and career progression • using shared calendars to show availability (while ensuring confidential meetings are marked as private) • using collaboration tools for team working

	• using MS Teams to ensure those in the office and working from home feel equally involved in meetings • how the workplace is to be used, for example for one-to-ones and team events
3	Continue to check colleagues are taking regular breaks, regardless of work location.
4	Package of learning resources to support hybrid working and managing hybrid teams developed

12 Caring and Childcare When Working From Home

1	Working from home can bring benefits to carers and those with school age children.
2	It can enable colleagues to work around their caring role.
3	Important that colleagues keep their caring role separate from their work on days when working from home and record their hours accordingly eg should clock out of flexi to do the school run and be realistic about the number of hours you can work when children are also at home.
4	Childcare costs for days you need to work in the office will not be met.
5	Childcare expenses only paid in exceptional and unavoidable circumstances e.g. provision of childcare if staff kept on duty for longer than anticipated or called out at short notice.

Ministry of Justice (MoJ) Hybrid Working Policy (May 2022)

Introduction

Hybrid Working is an informal, non-contractual, locally agreed, flexible working arrangement which blends working from MoJ base location, other sites and from home.

Can be useful tool to enable our people to work productively and creatively, to improve wellbeing and work-life balance, to attract and retain diverse staff with different backgrounds.

MoJ is committed to delivering its business more effectively and sustainably by creating modern and inclusive workplaces that enable smart, flexible and hybrid working.

Approach aims to promote principles of hybrid working and encourage business areas to make best use of the flexibilities they have, where possible.

Aims to create more opportunity, for people to explore how and where they work in the most productive, cost-effective and environmentally-friendly way where the business need is supported.

Recognise that some roles more suited to hybrid working than others.

Scope

Applies to all permanent and fixed-term employees, including agency staff.

Policy recognises that one size does not fit all, and that hybrid working will need to operate differently in different parts of the business.

Principles

Principles outline key factors and expectations which should be considered in relation to Hybrid Working arrangements:

MoJ supports and encourages hybrid working and is committed to challenging limitations on the availability of flexible working, taking account of the needs of our people, our work and our customers.

Business need should be prime consideration in determining hybrid working arrangements along with being a modern, inclusive employer.

Some roles not suitable for hybrid working and some tasks need to be done onsite.

Business groups should set clear guidelines for hybrid working to ensure a consistency of treatment for similar roles, conducting an equalities impact assessment and consulting local trade unions in the normal way.

Guidelines should be set at a level appropriate to the business area concerned and empower teams and individuals to set their own norms and expectations with reference to them.

Hybrid working will not be appropriate for some individuals' personal circumstances and may not be the preferred way of working for others.

Security, privacy, health, safety and wellbeing requirements apply wherever the employee is working, including at home.

All hybrid working arrangements must be implemented with regards for inclusion, equality and fairness. This means adopting inclusive ways of working, balancing the needs for the individual and the team while ensuring fair access to hybrid working.

Core Policies

These underpin policy and must be followed by all parts of the business. Purpose of following policies to clearly outline core areas of hybrid working which must be applied. Intended to support consistency across the business where hybrid working arrangements are being implemented.

Hybrid Working is an informal, non-contractual, locally agreed, flexible working arrangement. It does not involve changes to terms and conditions, such as pay and base location. Any working arrangement that involves changes to terms and conditions should be handled in line with the Flexible Working policy.

Hybrid working arrangements must be reviewed at least once every 12 months, when an employee moves to a new role, or when their existing role or personal circumstances change.

MoJ will provide furniture and equipment for use at home to support hybrid working which will remain MoJ property. These should be ordered using the department's usual ordering processes.

Workplace adjustment requests must be considered wherever the employee is working, including at home.

MoJ will not reimburse additional household expenses incurred as a result of hybrid working.
It is the employee's responsibility to let the mortgage company or landlord know they are working from home and get advice from their insurance company.

The option to come into the workplace on a continuous basis remains, including with flexibility to work from home occasionally.

Getting Started

Honest and open conversation with line-manager to discuss your proposed hybrid working arrangement. Issues below should be considered:

- Business need and guidelines for Hybrid Working in your business group.
- The nature of the work, the needs of the team, and needs/preferences of the individual.
- Shared expectations for attending a permanent workplace, reasonable notice to attend the workplace and flexing your attendance pattern.
- Equipment or support needed to work remotely – including any workplace adjustments.
- Security, privacy, health, safety and wellbeing requirements.

Where an agreement has been reached, record this for future reference. (Line-manager emails employee summarising: Proposed arrangement/ Reason for approval/ Time period covered/ Date of review of arrangement).

Otherwise explore whether an alternative arrangement could work.

Agree when arrangements will be reviewed, including any trial period.

If the proposed arrangement cannot be supported, the line-manager must explain objectively why this is, rather than merely stating that it is due to business need. (Line-manager emails employee summarising: Proposed arrangement/ Reason for not being approved/ Whether alternatives were considered).

They should indicate what type of arrangement might be supported.

Consideration should still be given to future proposals made by staff.

Any issues or concerns should be handled in accordance with normal departmental policies.

Supporting Guidance

MOJ has number of guidance documents and toolkits on setting up hybrid working in the first instance and then exploring how it affects different aspects of working life. These are on MoJ Hybrid Working intranet pages.

Guidance Documents outlined in this section of policy listed below. **Those in bold have been received from MOJ and are summarised below.**

Guidance on Introducing Hybrid Working (ie setting Hybrid Working arrangements up in the first instance):

- **Hybrid Working: An Introductory Guide**
  This helps teams get to grips with hybrid working or review how it is operating for them. By working through this guide teams gain more understanding of:
  - context for hybrid working in MoJ and how it relates to MoJ values;
  - different spaces, tools and technology available and examples of kind of work these are best suited to;
  - factors pointing towards a business need for a task to be done in person;

- considerations relating to home and personal circumstances;
- some of benefits and potential pitfalls of hybrid working.
- reflect on what hybrid working could mean for them;
- reset individual working arrangements, team norms and expectations.

- **Hybrid Working: An Introductory Guide (Supporting Materials)**
  - Team Reflection Exercise and Template
  - Personal Reflection Checklist
  - 1 – 2 -1 Discussion Checklist
  - Team Charter Guidance and Checklist

- Introducing Hybrid Working: Leaders Briefing (not provided)

Hybrid Working Subject Guides
Guidance on exploring how Hybrid Working affects different aspects of working life**:**

- **Hybrid Working and Leading a Team**
  - Helps explore leading a team in context of hybrid working.
  - Reminder of some of fundamentals leading a team .
  - Reflection on some of benefits/potential pitfalls of Hybrid Working in relation to leading a team .
  - Different tips on leading team in hybrid working context.

- **Hybrid Working and being Productive and Creative at Work**

  Productivity

  3E's model for being productive at work:
  - Energy – motivation people bring to role and how their own goals overlap with business objectives.
  - Environment – working conditions, tools and systems and support mechanisms.
  - Emotion – how people are feeling, their mindset, their emotional connection to organisation and how they are connecting with each-other.

  Creativity at Work

  Five ways to support creativity in workplace:
  - Making time for teams to come together to generate ideas or solve problems.
  - Giving people a voice and acting on good ideas.
  - Recognising and rewarding creativity.
  - Providing workspaces (virtual as well as physical) that increase connection and inspire creativity.
  - Building teams with a diversity of experience and thought.

  Explains 3 areas that stand-out in relation to being productive and creative at work:

- **Being Your Best Self** – structuring your day, being aware of peaks and troughs in your energy, playing a full part in the life of your team, and being kind to yourself.
- **Working Well as a Dispersed Team** – creating the right narrative, establishing sustainably productive patterns, carving out time and space for collaboration, and valuing social interaction and nurturing networks.
- **Creative and productive workplaces** – planning space around tasks, protocols for shared spaces, and ensuring all workplaces are safe and comfortable.

- **<u>Hybrid Working and Meetings</u>**
  - Helps explore meetings in context of Hybrid Working.
  - Assumes basic hybrid working arrangements already set up.
  - Reminder of some of fundamentals of effective meetings.
  - Reflection on some of benefits and potential pitfalls of Hybrid Working in relation to meetings.
  - Different tips on meetings in hybrid working context.

- **<u>Hybrid Working and Development</u>**

  Encourages individuals to take responsibility for their own development, undertaking learning to develop and perform as well as progress.
  - Individuals to drive and own their learning and development.
  - Line Managers to coach team members and enable them to access opportunities based on their individual needs and their role.
  - Senior leaders to inspire a culture that encourages individuals to engage in learning in order to develop and perform as well as to progress.
  - Based on the needs of the individual and their role.
  - Equal opportunity and access for all.

  Five key areas relating to development are outlined below and explained further in guidance:
  - **Self-Awareness** – being aware of preferences and traits and how they influence the way you learn.
  - **Environments for Learning** – picking right environment for type of learning you are doing and what suits your learning style.
  - **Role of the Line Manager** – playing a full part as a line manager in supporting your team members' development.
  - **Learning from Others** – engaging in a wide range of opportunities for informal learning in addition to courses.
  - **Fairness** – giving everyone fair access to learning.

- Hybrid Working and Workplace Wellbeing (not provided)

Other Related Policies and Guides
- Flexible Working
- Workplace Adjustments
- Smarter Working
- Ordering furniture and equipment
- Health and Safety when working remotely

- Security, privacy and remote working
- Dual workplace tax
- Learning and Development
- Toolkit for Wellbeing Conversations

Documents Provided

1	Scottish Government	Hybrid Working Guidance
2	Ministry of Justice	Hybrid Working Policy
3	Ministry of Justice	Hybrid Working An Introductory Guide
4	Ministry of Justice	Hybrid Working An Introductory Guide: Supporting Resources
5	Ministry of Justice	Hybrid Working And Meetings
6	Ministry of Justice	Hybrid Working And Leading a Team
7	Ministry of Justice	Hybrid Working And Being Productive and Creative at Work
8	Ministry of Justice	Hybrid Working And Development
9	Welsh Government	Smart Working Policy
10	Welsh Government	Formal Homeworking Working Policy
11	Government of Ireland	Blended Working Policy (Aug 22)
12	Government of Ireland	Blended Working Webpage
13	Government of Ireland	Blended Working Policy Framework for Civil Service Organisations
14	Government of Ireland	Blended Working Applications User Guide