Comments on Draft Hybrid Working Policy (Jan 25)

Document	Comments from SHRBP Team
	Comments on Procedure Document
Procedures	Para 3.3 – Suggest the wording around the required 40% workplace attendance will not impact staff with existing reasonable adjustments be amended to read 'in- office attendance' requirements.
Procedures	Para 4 – Calculation of Workplace Attendance Requirement - may be useful to include here (or in FAQs some examples of what this may look like for different scenarios – compressed hours, term time, partial retirement, part-time / reduced hours and leave arrangements during part of a working week.
Procedures	Para 5.3 – For completeness should there be a reference to cover additional LM attendance e.g. "…. therefore, entailing greater office attendance from the LM". 5.3 Hybrid working may not be suitable for staff who have failed to achieve a satisfactory performance marking in their most recent performance review; and/or are on a performance improvement plan and consequently may, for example, require a period of close supervision. Consider addressing this as a FAQ.
Procedures	Para 5.4 states "may be required to attend the workplace more than 40%…' suggest being more specific and state "will be required to attend the workplace more than 40%…."
Procedures	Para 7.3 Uniform Appeals, Q11 in FAQs and Annex B flow chart - To assist LM and individuals where there is a disagreement on the WSA it might be useful have more information on the uniform appeal process (or as FAQ or step in flow chart) and what happens on UA outcome in terms of the WSA - for example where the appeal is not upheld.

Comments on Draft Hybrid Working Policy (Jan 25)

Procedures	Para 9.2 – Use of word 'encouraged' should be amended and suggest 'LM will be required to address……'
Procedures	Para 10.2 – Bullet point 7 references to links learning bundles should be removed and referenced made to Links Toolkits
Procedures	Para 11.8 – May be helpful to clarify the position around requiring equipment for **both** at home and in the workplace.
Procedures	Annex A - **Benefits** – Not sure that reference to commuting time and cost should be included, as the reality is the change in the policy position means the vast majority of NICS staff will actually be spending more time and money on commuting. Whilst it is a benefit vs doing is 5 days a week, since 2020 this has not been the case, so from a presential perspective it may be best to remove. Hybrid Working is also not available in all Departments i.e. operational areas in DoJ – it might therefore be best to avoid reference to benefits that all NICS staff cannot avail of.
Procedures	Annex C – Reasonable adjustments should specially reference workplace attendance adjustments.
	Comments on Policy Document
Policy	4.4 - Refers to pro-rata arrangements this reference is absent in the Procedures document.
Policy	4.5 – Use of the word 'encouraged' may cause difficulties, particularly for DfC where staff are required to attend the office on a full-time basis for periods of up to 6 months when commencing a new role. Emphasis on business need should be reflected. **(see also comment under 5.4 of procedures document)** 4.6 - Suggest that the use of word 'encouraged' when referring to Office attendance should be reconsidered throughout all documents.
Policy	4.11 - Makes reference to 'abuse of trust' – suggest that this is cross referenced throughout all documents.

Comments on Draft Hybrid Working Policy (Jan 25)

	Comments on FAQ Document
FAQs	See comment at 7.3 under Procedures – suggest cross reference in FAQs at Q11
FAQs	See comment at 4 under Procedures – suggest examples of types of scenarios be included in this document.
FAQs	Q9 refers to LInKS Learning Bundles this should be amended to LInKs Toolkits (see comment for para 10.2 under Procedures.
FAQs	Q15 – Suggest that this Q and Q16 be amalgamated for better clarity/consistency
FAQs	Qs 21 and 22 - wording is ambiguous in terms of caring responsibilities – suggest that wording includes reference to the need to have caring arrangements in place whether working from home or in the Office.
FAQs	Q23 - Suggest that wording reflects that LM have a duty of care for staff members and should be aware on a daily basis of working arrangements/location.
FAQs	Q25 – Use of word 'encouraged' should be amended (see comment at 9.2 under Procedures)
	General Commentary
General Commentary (there is some duplication in comments,	The requirement for staff to be in the office 40% doesn't seem to be underpinned with any best practice or research. The FHRAG note mentions some Departments indicated wanting this % but that is the only link to the rationale for the 40%. It would be helpful if there was solid data/research to show where the 40% came from to encourage buy in and support good comms and change management with the implementation of this policy.

but these have been reflected to ensure all comments are taken into consideration)	From conversations it appears that Departments who wanted this 40% i.e. DfC it isn't happening across the board and that is due to various reasons e.g. type of work, volume of work and the need to work somewhere that increases productivity. There is a lot in the slide deck about best practice when using a hybrid working approach but then the implementation of a 40% min requirement in the office seems to contradict that application of best practice. To maximise benefits and minimise risk associated with this policy direction it shouldn't detail a minimum requirement especially without strong rationale and data to support the direction. Taking some learnings from the DfC current position and TU RD – this focuses very much on the need for business justification to a change in the current WSA, therefore it might be helpful to strengthen the information including in the presentation as to why the decision has been taken to implement a policy change and mandate the 2 days/40% Office attendance. In the main all Departments/Business Areas are/will experience challenges in respect of Estate/accommodation. Whilst not an HR specific issue, this has been raised at Departmental Forums and therefore the availability of space for all staff attending the Office will need to be considered and assurances provided around accommodation prior to the launch of the revised Policy will be required. For example, one Business Area in DoF has advised that the maximum they can operate a hybrid working policy is 33% due to accommodation restrictions. This Business Area operates a 3 weekly working pattern e.g. Week 1 Mon & Tue, Week 2 Wed & Thurs & Week 3 Fri. Other business areas may have a similar issue and should be taken into account. It would be helpful to have an enhanced reference to the variety of workplaces across the NICS, reflecting the roles carried out which are not Office based. Related to this it may be helpful to have some worked examples covering a range of working patterns e.g. how it may work for those on a shift working rota. Should there be an FAQ advising contact points for managers who may need further help and guidance on operational aspects of the hybrid working policy – If this is ER the current dedicated ER contact for each

Comments on Draft Hybrid Working Policy (Jan 25)

	Department could be used and should be reflected. In addition, reference to other Functional Area support, including the Policy Owner would be helpful. Senior management defined as G7 – does it need to be made clear that the G7 must operate their Business Areas in line with Policy and senior direction. Does it need to reflect that SCS have a responsibility to ensure that work areas under them are operating as needed and G7s aligning accordingly. Should go without saying but there have been examples of differences in opinion and approach. Prior to issuing will there be any support for line managers – handling difficult conversations for instance? Has the revised Reasonable Adjustment Policy been approved as there are references to this Policy in the documents reviewed. It will be important that the revised Policy is the reference point for all staff. APEX FACES option – has this been tested? Reference to Support Services should be amended to reflect the rebranding of Inspire to Lena.