Hybrid Working Principles – Guidance For Managers and Employees

Hybrid is a form of flexible working which enables employees, in identified roles, to work in a more flexible way from different locations e.g., home and office. Hybrid working will vary from team to team, within overarching parameters, depending on the roles within the team and the services provided. Hybrid working is one of a suite of flexible working options for teams and individuals to consider in the delivery of effective and efficient services, whilst supporting employees to achieve work-life balance and supporting the type of culture the Council wishes to nurture.

The role of the line manager is critical in establishing and driving these new ways of working and ensuring that they work in practice, within Council wide, set parameters. However, it's everyone's responsibility to maintain effective communication and team working within hybrid teams.

The hybrid working principles, provide managers and employees with some guidance, tips and ideas for enabling effective hybrid working.

Council Set Parameters for Hybrid Working

Employees working in roles identified as being suitable for Hybrid Working will have the option to discuss and agree a hybrid working pattern which best fits the requirements of their role/customers. The organisation wide set parameters for hybrid working are that an employee working full time will normally work a minimum of 2 of these days, 40% of their working week, "on site". Managers should use discretion when agreeing an approach with employees who work less than full time hours.

All employees will require to be on-site at a pattern and frequency to allow them to contribute to the delivery of work and meeting customer needs, as well as having the opportunity to connect and collaborate with colleagues. This may mean part time employees being on site for more than 40% of their working week, where necessary.

NB: "On site" does not necessarily mean an employee's contracted place of work – it could be another Council premises or those of partners/ customers/service users/ stakeholders, essentially not an employee's home.

 NB: The word "normally" is included to allow some flexibility e.g.

   a) if work commitments, such as induction/supervision of a new start, require increased attendance on site for an extended period of time
   b) if work tasks, such as report writing, require an extended period of uninterrupted time which it's felt could be better achieved from working at home.

Principles based around 6 Key Themes

Based around 6 key themes – **Health, Safety & Wellbeing**; **Communication**; **Culture**; **Fairness & Inclusion**; **Technology & Resources**; and **Focus on Results** the principles provide a framework to support the success of hybrid working and ensure it meets employees and organisational needs.

It is important to discuss hybrid working and what this means as an individual, as a team and as an organisation in order to manage expectations. It's essential to have open and honest two-way conversations so people understand the rationale behind any decisions and have the opportunity to contribute to how things will work best across the team. The primary consideration should be the effective delivery of the service however, where possible, consideration should also be given to employee's preferred working style as this can have a positive impact on engagement and wellbeing.

Initial individual and team discussions could include:

- What has worked well for our team to date and what can we learn from this? What should we keep, stop, start or do differently?
- What might hybrid working mean for our team? What would need to be in place for us to work effectively in a hybrid way?
- What are the potential risks or challenges for our team about working in a hybrid way? How can we overcome them?
- How often does our team need to be in the office and how often can we work remotely (within set parameters)? What will the office set up look like and what will that mean for the team e.g., hot desks, softer social spaces. What would be an appropriate balance to ensure that we meet the needs of our communities, service users, customers and colleagues?

- How can we ensure that we are inclusive, fair and work in a healthy way? What would we need to do to ensure that our hybrid model is fair? What we need to do to ensure that our hybrid model is inclusive? What would we need to do to ensure that the hybrid model we operate maintains health and wellbeing of you and others in the team?
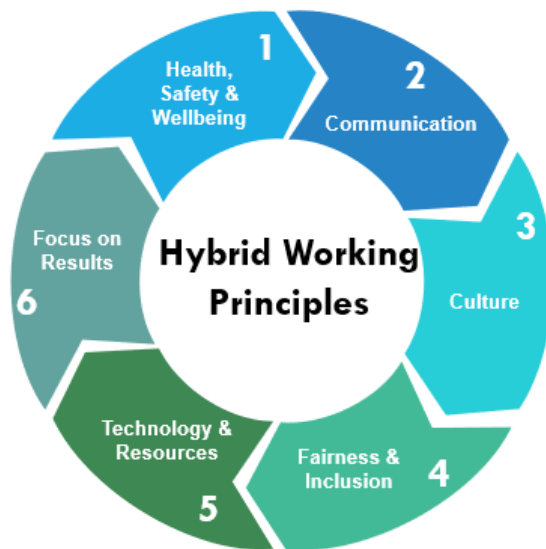
1. Health, Safety & Wellbeing is critical to working in a hybrid way to ensure everyone has a suitable workspace regardless of the location they are working in. Homeworking and Office DSE Assessments are essential to ensure employees have the right equipment and resources to work safely to protect their health. Managers need to have confidence to recognise and support employee's wellbeing when undertaking hybrid working. It's also important for employees to take responsibility for their own wellbeing using self-care approaches e.g. taking regular breaks, annual leave. There is lots of support and tools available to support employee's wellbeing which you can find in the [Employee Wellbeing](#) area.

2. Hybrid working will be more likely to succeed if you have good **Communication** methods that provide opportunities for both formal and informal / social conversations to take place. One of the most important factors in communicating within a hybrid team is ensuring that information reaches everyone, wherever and whenever they are working. Equal access to information and knowledge is key to preventing communication issues and feelings of isolation and unfairness.

Good communication is a shared responsibility across the team so engage the team in a discussion about the best ways to communicate, considering some of the following:

- How often does the team need to meet, and for what purpose? When should meetings be online, and when should they be face-to-face? What other ways are there to communicate other than meetings? What information do people want to have communicated and frequency/method? Remembering, communication is two way, if you have not been informed, ask.
- How do we support learning within the team, particularly with new team members, apprentices and trainees? What needs to be face to face and what can be done on-line? (see Hybrid Guidance)
- Decide the way to communicate across the team. There are many different ways to communicate – but too many can be overwhelming and check that everyone knows how to use them fully.
- How can technology support better communication across the Team / Service i.e. Teams, video-conferencing etc? Discuss and agree how and where key information / resources are saved and stored that support collaboration and sharing? What skills need to be developed within the team to make best use of resources?
- Agree processes for sharing working arrangements and locations so the team know who is working where and when, which could include using status updates or auto-signature messages. From January 2024, location is logged when clocking in and out of MyView and this will be visible to line managers for their team.

3. Creating a **Culture** of open communication, mutual accountability and trust will support an environment where people can flourish. Research has identified 5 behavioural areas which plays a vital role in the health, wellbeing and engagement particularly within hybrid working teams, they are:

- Being open, fair and consistent
- Handling conflict and people management issues
- Providing knowledge, clarity and guidance
- Building and sustaining relationships
- Supporting development
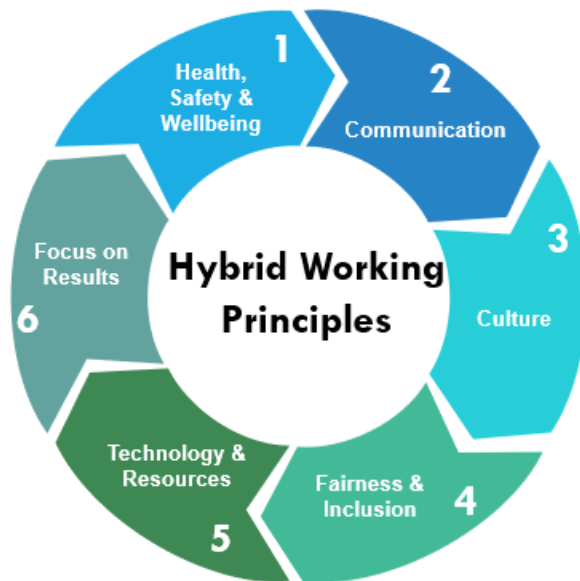
4. Perth & Kinross Council is committed to ensuring that wherever you are working from you will feel valued and included. Hybrid working provides greater flexibility in where people work and therefore supports an inclusive environment for those who may find working in a 9-5 office environment challenging e.g. those with disabilities or who have caring responsibilities outwith work time. **Fairness and Inclusion** must sit at the heart of hybrid working to ensure those working from home feel included and have an equal voice.

5. Having the right **Technology and Resources** to carry out your role regardless of where you work, is paramount. This includes the right IT equipment and connectivity, access to support when required, and training and development opportunities in place to provide everyone with the skills to be fully competent with technology. Digital solutions which support hybrid meetings and collaboration have become increasingly important. Clarity of processes and practices surrounding confidentiality and data security and integrity measures are essential to maintain customer confidence and ensure compliance. Here are some areas to consider:

- Discuss individual responsibilities with regards to data security and ensuring updates are done timeously.
- Connectivity is vital for hybrid working and it's the individual's responsibility to ensure there is a reliable broadband connection at home.
- Consider and discuss the set up in the office i.e., hot desking approach, resources and technology, specialist equipment and what this means individually and as a team. Are any reasonable adjustments required?
- How to track assets within the team to ensure that valuable assets and equipment are retrieved when no longer required.

6.   Working in a hybrid way can deliver better results and outcomes and it's important we continue to **Focus on Results.** Clear objectives and priorities which can be measured and are manageable should be discussed at regular check-ins as this will be key to managing progress and delivering outcomes. Managers should be confident and equipped to provide feedback and direct communication to their teams.

Everyone needs to commit to work together with these principles to ensure any challenges are highlighted, discussed and addressed straight away. The next pages provide links to some key information, documents and support plus a summary of what is expected of us all, to create a successful hybrid working environment.

Sources of Information / Hints & Tips

Health, Safety & Wellbeing	• Employee Wellbeing • Health & Safety Eric Page • Wellbeing newsletters • Health & Wellbeing Plan • Learning Programme • E-Learning	• Homeworking DSE Assessment • Team Time Wellbeing Slides • Discuss employee's wellbeing as part of 1:1's / Supervision • Ensure cameras are on during 1:1's if doing virtually to visually check people are ok.
Communication	• Managers Bulletin • All Staff Teams Site • Ensure regular 1:1's / Supervision • Discuss Hybrid Working regularly at Team Meetings • Agree best way to communicate in teams / Service	• Digital Skills Team • Self Help Resources (Digital Skills) • Consistent messages even if nothing to tell • Agree how the team will communicate with customers / service users i.e., home phones / mobiles / email and ensure everyone regardless of where they work can access.
Culture	• Perth and Kinross Offer • Values • Employee induction	• OD Plan • Unwritten Ground Rules • Leadership Development
Fairness & Inclusion	• Equalities Mainstreaming Report • Fair Work Principles	• CIPD Facilitating Inclusive Cultures
Technology & Resources	• IT Portal • IT Equipment – how to buy • Keeping your Computer Secure • IT Learning Opportunities	• Meeting Rooms – Booking and Equipment to support hybrid meetings • Mobile Desktop Support
Focus on Results	• Individual / Team / Service Plans and Outcomes. • Performance discussed regularly as part of 1:1's / Supervision • Reviewing priorities – what needs to start / stop / change	• Coaching conversations / Direct Feedback • Managing Performance

Hybrid Working - What we expect from you…

Employees We expect you to……….	Managers We expect you to………..
Share your voice and ideas on new ways of working and how you will communicate within the team and with your manager.	Create opportunities for people to contribute to and share their voice on new ways of working and agree how you will communicate within the team and with individuals.
Engage in regular 1:1 meetings with your manager and be open and honest about the challenges and benefits of hybrid working and be willing to share ideas on how things can work better.	Schedule in regular 1:1 meetings with your team and create an environment where staff feel able to be open and honest about the challenges and benefits of hybrid working. Create opportunities for staff to generate ideas and share their views on how things can work better.
Think carefully about tasks which are best suited to office and home working to make the most of the time you are in the office (normally a minimum of 2 days a week for a full time employee). These could be tasks which involve fixed office equipment or collaborative working with your team or others.	Include discussions about type of tasks best suited to different working environments, in 1:1 discussions, to ensure best use of time and avoid team members feeling like they are "coming into the office for no reason".
Focus on your wellbeing to maintain a healthy life-work balance by creating boundaries between work and home and disconnect technology when not working. If you are finding this a challenge discuss with your line manager for support.	Talk about wellbeing and life-work balance with staff. This is good practice at any time, but when you may not be working in the same place or at the same time as your team, scheduling regular time to keep in touch becomes even more important.
Discuss and agree objectives within the role and discuss these regularly during 1:1 meetings with your manager on progress and what's going well / not so well. Be open and willing to receive and provide feedback.	Be clear on objectives and how you will assess an individual's performance with a focus on desired results and outcomes. It is always good practice to have well written objectives and provide regular feedback – this is one more area that becomes increasingly important in a hybrid environment. Be open and willing to give and receive feedback.
Participate in social connection time whether this is face to face or online. During the pandemic most people have missed social	Create opportunities for social connection time whether this is face to face or online. During the pandemic most people have missed social

interaction with colleagues so it's important to build this into new ways of working.	interaction with colleagues so it's important to build this into new ways of working.
Share where / when you will be working so your team know when and where you are working and know how to get hold of you. Remember to update myview with your work location when you clock in and out.	Agree as a team how to share where / when the team will be working, and so your team know when and where you are working and know how to get hold of you if they need your help / decisions.