Apply for a flexible working pattern

Flexible working - getting started

Flexible working covers a range of options designed to let you work in a way that suits you and the organisation's needs. Anyone employed by the Scottish Government or associated bodies can request to work flexibly.

This might mean:

- working from home (colleagues in Social Security Scotland should consult local guidance)
- hybrid working
- job sharing
- part-time working and compressed hours
- partial retirement

If you want to request formal or informal flexible working, talk to your manager. Options may not be suitable for all posts, and some arrangements are only available either formally or informally (depending on the flexibility you are requesting).

Your request for flexible working will be considered along with the needs of the department.

Formal flexible working

Job sharing, part-time working and compressed hours can all be requested by a formal flexible working application. You can read further guidance about partial retirement.

You will need to seek your manager's approval to change your hours. Any agreed change in hours will usually be permanent and any formal arrangements will result in a new contract of employment. You can formally apply for a change of hours twice in any 12-month period.

Contracted working hours and daily working hours must be presented in 15 minute increments. For example, you wish to work 32 hours across five days a week, your daily working hours may look like:

- Monday: 6 hours 30 minutes
- Tuesday: 6 hours 30 minutes
- Wednesday: 6 hours 30 minutes

- Thursday: 6 hours 30 minutes
- Friday: 6 hours

Where hours have been altered, a revised job description should be drawn up and objectives agreed at the outset. These should be achievable within your new agreed hours.

Reducing or increasing your hours will impact your pay and any allowances, annual leave, and public and privilege holiday entitlement. Your pension entitlements will also be affected.

Formal changes can take up to two months to be considered, or longer if there are any issues with your application.

Informal flexible working

Hybrid working

Hybrid working will be managed as an informal local arrangement and your contract of employment will not be amended to reflect any hybrid working arrangement.

Compressed hours

Colleagues can choose to work compressed hours either as an informal or formal arrangement, where an informal arrangement does not require a contractual change. For informal compressed hours, colleagues would have a local agreement with their manager to take a flexi day using accrued flexi leave on set days each month. But where critical work was required, the arrangement offers the flexibility for you to work on the set day rather than take the day off.

Home working

In general, permanent home working arrangements will not be agreed. However, colleagues may need to work from home as a reasonable adjustment. In this scenario, and if the duties of the role can be done from home on a permanent basis, home working arrangements will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Where a case is complex or a member of staff or manager would like support in considering or implementing a request, you can discuss this with the workplace adjustments service (or equivalent HR contact if you do not work in core Scottish Government).

They can help you identify adjustments or seek input from other professionals.

Where home working is agreed, you and your manager will record the arrangement in the employee passport. Doing this captures all the relevant detail and allows for flexibility to record any changes to adjustments due to changing needs. For example, your manager could set out any requirements when attendance at an office may be required, such as at stakeholder meetings, and record dates for reviewing the arrangements to ensure they are still meeting your needs.

Your parent office will still be classed as your place of work. When attending the parent office, your travel to work would still be at your own cost and normal travel and subsistence expenses rules will apply. (This is unless you have alternative reasonable adjustments arrangements agreed by the workplace adjustments service, or equivalent HR contact if you do not work in core Scottish Government.)

Flexible working application process

Once you have discussed your options, you should formally apply to your manager, stating the following:

- your current working pattern
- the flexible working pattern you're applying for, noting the hours and days you wish to work (excluding any lunch breaks)
- the date you wish the change to take effect
- if you've made a previous application and when that was
- whether your application is for caring purposes
- for home working, which hours you'll be working from home

Your application must be in writing (email or letter) and dated. You should explain what effect, if any, your request would have on business, and how this could be dealt with.

Guidance for senior civil servants is also available on applying for senior civil servant roles as a job sharer.

If your application is approved by your manager, update Oracle Cloud to formalise the request.

How to approve or refuse a flexible working request

As a manager you should:

- advise the individual of the outcome
- agree the effective date of the change
- if relevant, make staff aware of the effects of working long hours

Your colleague will need to update their own Oracle Cloud record with their change of hours. The effective date is the first working day of the new pattern. They will also receive a new contract letter.

Refusing a flexible working request

A manager can only refuse an application on one or more of these business grounds:

- potential for additional costs
- adverse effect on ability to meet customer demand
- inability to reorganise work among existing staff
- inability to recruit additional staff
- adverse effect on quality
- adverse effect on performance
- lack of work during the periods the applicant proposes to work
- planned structural changes

You must consult your colleague before you make a decision and invite them to a meeting to discuss the request. You should consider the impacts and practical considerations of the request and, if the request cannot be accepted in full, whether it's possible to agree to an alternative arrangement. If a request is to be refused, you should explain the reasons for refusing a request with your colleague and provide a letter setting out:

- the date on which the decision was made
- the business ground(s) for rejecting the request and why they apply
- details of the appeals procedure

The letter should clearly relate to the situation in the business area in which the applicant works.

Appealing a refused application for flexible working

You can make an appeal within 14 days of receiving a flexible working application refusal.

The appeal should be heard within 14 days of receiving your letter of appeal. You can ask a colleague or union representative to attend the appeal meeting with you.

For reasons of fairness and independence, the colleague appointed to consider your case will not have been involved in the original decision. This would normally be your countersigning officer.

An appeal by a senior civil servant will normally be considered by a senior manager one grade above them who was not involved in the original decision.

The appeal decision

You will receive the appeal decision within 14 days of the hearing.

Where an appeal is upheld, steps will be taken to enable you to put in place your flexible working pattern with your manager.

If an appeal is dismissed, you'll receive a copy of the report prepared by the colleague who considered the appeal. This will explain the reasons for the decision.

There is no appeal procedure beyond the decision made by the appointed deciding officer.

If your appeal is dismissed, but you're still interested in job reshaping leading to partial retirement, email HR Help to discuss your options.

ncreasing an individual's working hours

It is essential that before a manager approves an increase in the individual's working hours, the senior business manager must ensure that the position the individual is currently assigned to has sufficient approved full time equivalent (FTE) and headcount available to accommodate the additional FTE and their agreed working hours. It is the responsibility of the line manager to keep an open engagement with their senior business manager (SBM key contact list) to ensure the necessary position management activity is completed to support this process.

Any change to an individual's FTE will be managed at the individual assignment record, however the FTE of their position may need to be increased to accommodate this change. The senior business manager can

follow the ‘amend a position’ process and update the position with the correct FTE creating a 'vacancy'.

It is essential that local workforce planning and budget management processes are complied with before a position is created or has its FTE amended.

Once the correct position has the right FTE and therefore 'vacancy' the manager is able to approve a change of hours.

Decreasing an individual's working hours

It is essential for the change of hours process to be followed correctly to ensure the change in individual’s FTE can be processed in the system. Once this is complete, the senior business manager is able to conclude this process with the necessary position management action. It is the responsibility of the manager to keep an open engagement with their senior business manager to ensure the necessary position management activity is completed to support this process.

Any change to an individual’s FTE will be managed at the individual assignment record, and a reduction in an individual’s FTE will result in a ‘vacancy’ being left behind in their position. The senior business manager will need to make a decision in line with business needs, to assess whether the vacancy in the position is still required (to be backfilled or open for recruitment) or if the vacancy should be closed. The decision to close the vacancy will require the FTE of the position to be reduced through amending the position. See ‘amend a position’ process.

ARTICLE

Guidelines for managers dealing with flexible working requests

Managers are responsible for approving any changes to working patterns.

You must consider all flexible working requests objectively and with sensitivity, and treat all applicants equally and fairly. It may not be possible to accommodate every flexible working request.

For each applicant, you should think about:

- whether the work can be carried out in a more flexible way
- the likely effects on customer service
- if the benefits will outweigh any additional costs
- how to supervise the new pattern
- how the change will affect the rest of the team
- if and when you will review the arrangement

If you agree to an informal request for flexible working, you should record this locally. If it's a formal request, this should be requested on Oracle Cloud when it is available.

As part of hybrid working, working from home is on a voluntary basis. Contracts that have an individual's home as their contractual place of work won't be issued.

An exception may be where it's appropriate for formal homeworking agreements to be in place as part of an adjustment under equality legislation.

You can agree a hybrid working arrangement where your employee splits their time between home and a contractual place of work informally. This must take into account business needs and expectations.

ARTICLE

Health and safety when working from home

Published 02/07/2025

A home-worker is any colleague who, with the agreement of their manager, works in their home on an occasional, regular or permanent basis. You should consider all the information on this page when homeworking.

Read more information on working from home,

Managers are responsible for:

- taking into account health and safety issues when considering requests for home-working
- supporting the purchase of necessary additional equipment
- seeking advice from the corporate health, safety and fire unit where problems arise
- working with Information and Technology Services (iTECS) regarding any specialist equipment needs and to check compatibility of home equipment or set up connections

Colleagues are responsible for:

- completing the online display screen equipment (DSE) training and self assessment
- reviewing their work area and replicating the office environment as far as reasonably practical applying best practice for home-working
- reporting to their manager any health and safety concerns or discomfort experienced while working at home
- reporting all accidents, incidents and near misses while working at home, using the accident reporting form

Health and safety liaison officers (HSLOs) are responsible for:

- assisting with any display screen equipment (DSE) queries and providing best practice guidance
- providing home-workers with health and safety advice

The corporate health, safety and fire unit is responsible for providing professional advice on the health and safety implications of homeworking.

Equipment for home-workers

Equipment used at home must meet the minimum standards specified in the Display Screen Equipment Regulations 1992, as amended in 2002. Equipment to help you have a comfortable and healthy home working environment can be provided.

To assist with the correct set up of your equipment, you should complete the display screen equipment e-learning module.

You can order the following equipment for homeworking:

- adjustable chair
- folding desk

Complete the homeworking equipment request form (form will download), and email the homeworking equipment mailbox:

For a standard wired keyboard, standard wired mouse, or laptop stand, read the buying IT accessories guidance. The homeworking equipment mailbox cannot supply monitors, headsets, docking stations or cables - to get these items follow the ordering IT hardware guidance.

Folding desk

A folding desk which is 740mm in height, doesn't need any assembly and can be folded down and stored flat at the end of the working day is available if you need one.

You can order a folding desk for homeworking by emailing the homeworking equipment mailbox. Please seek approval from your business manager before placing the order. Please seek approval from your business manager before placing the order, as your team will be charged.

The cost of the desk is £108 + VAT plus delivery charges which are £30 + VAT for Central Scotland (Edinburgh, Glasgow, Fife, Stirling), £40 + VAT for Perthshire and Tayside, £50 + VAT for Aberdeenshire, Inverness-shire, Dumfries and Galloway. Pricing for Scottish Islands and other UK areas will vary. Please allow for a 6.253% management fee on the order total.

Once the order is placed, you'll be sent a video explaining how to safely set up the desk. It's your responsibility to follow the set up instructions in the video to prevent potential injury when folding and unfolding the table.

Returning equipment

If you are leaving the Scottish Government and are able to, please return all equipment to an office. However, if you need items picked up for you, we can collect chairs and folding desks. Chairs must be cleaned before collection. We don't collect keyboards, mice and laptop stands, or other kinds of furniture. Monitors are issued by your division. Contact your business manager if you are unsure for local return policies. You must return laptops, mobile phones and MiFi devices to iTECS.

New and expectant mothers

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires the Scottish Government to assess risks to home-workers who are new or expectant mothers. The risks include those to the unborn child and to the child of a mother who is breastfeeding, as well as the mother herself.

Help and support

Read some practical advice on working from home, including reviewing any risks, organising your home workspace and maintaining a healthy wellbeing.

If you have further queries around working from home, email the corporate health, safety and fire unit.

If you have a medical condition or disability, you may ask for additional support from the corporate health, safety and fire unit, workplace adjustments or people advice and wellbeing advisers. You should contact the relevant team for advice on your homeworking set up.

If you work in one of our executive agencies, non-ministerial departments or non-departmental public bodies, arrangements will be different. You should follow the guidance for your organisation.

Hybrid working overview

Read our new hybrid working policy which sets out the policy for Scottish Government (SG) core staff that will apply from October 2025. Hybrid working blends working in Scottish Government workspaces, from home and in communities with our customers and partners.

Following an internal review, the Executive Team concluded that staff in roles compatible with hybrid working should aim to spend 40% of their contracted working time working in person at their contractual workplace, or (on an ad-hoc basis) at another agreed location, unless an agreed adjustment or approved location exemption has been put in place.

Our policy was developed after considering recommendations from the hybrid working review, consultation with SG trade unions and engagement with staff networks.

This policy does not apply in organisations outside of SG core, for example, executive agencies and non-ministerial offices which form part of the SG main bargaining unit. Such organisations will set out their own local approaches. It also does not apply to staff whose roles are not compatible with hybrid working, such as roles which require all hours to be worked in person at a Scottish Government office or other agreed workplace.

Read the published Equality Impact Assessment for the revision of the hybrid working policy.

Hybrid working - team agreements

To support the successful implementation of the Scottish Government's hybrid working policy, teams should come together to discuss the work style that best reflects the needs of the work being done.

Local areas have flexibility to determine what works best for their area, and should consider what activities ('anchor activities') may be beneficial to carry out in person.

As far as possible, colleagues should be encouraged to co-ordinate their efforts to achieve the 40% in person target around those 'anchor activities'. Line managers should consider the competing demands on time, different working patterns within the team, being mindful that some staff have

different contractual hours, work reduced hours or within set hours and depending on circumstances, may have adjustments or a location exemption in place to support them. Time spent working in person with stakeholders will count towards the 40% target.

The outcome of team discussions about hybrid working practices, including consideration of engagement with stakeholders, should be captured in a team agreement.

Deputy directors will lead on arrangements for the effective development and review of team agreements.

Anchor activities

The term 'anchor activities' is shorthand for activities that a business area considers may be beneficial to carry out in person. What a team's anchor activities are would be discussed as part of the team agreement. For instance, a team may have specific tasks it completes that are better done in-person and would benefit from in-person interaction.

Anchor activities may include, but are not limited to:

- regular team meetings
- monthly conversations, mid-year and end-year reviews
- working with specific equipment in a specific location
- working closely with ministers
- training sessions or group events
- induction activities
- in-person meetings with external stakeholders
- interviewing job applicants
- working on issues with a security classification above OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE where documents need to be printed
- learning and development activities, including on the job learning and coaching and mentoring activities
- project-based collaborative work
- team building activity
- other regular face to face interaction with colleagues

Teams have flexibility to determine what anchor activities are appropriate for their area, taking account of business needs and patterns of work.

Scope of team agreements

Everyone should be covered by a team agreement. Senior managers (deputy directors or above) will determine how many team agreements are needed for their area. For instance, some divisions will be made up of teams where the nature of work and location is broadly similar. In those instances, one team agreement covering all those teams might be appropriate. Some might have teams doing very different work, with different stakeholders, and may be better supported through individual team agreements.

Role of managers

Senior managers:

- should define teams locally which accurately reflect the needs of a particular function or service and use these to guide decisions on how many team agreements will be needed for their area of responsibility (some deputy directors may need more than one team agreement)
- should define and explain which roles are compatible or not compatible with hybrid working with direct reference to the duties of the role
- should lead on the development and revision of team agreements in accordance with this policy and associated guidance
- are expected to ensure team members are engaged in discussion about how and where they will work, taking account of local business or delivery plans and make decisions to finalise team agreements including resolution of any issues or conflicts arising
- retain the team agreement for future reference, periodic review and to provide assurance, as required

Managers:

- should ensure all team members are engaged in the team agreement process so far as is possible. Where team members have not been able to be involved, managers should document this and discuss and agree with the appropriate senior manager any follow-up approach

- support staff discussions about taking forward the policy, being open to discuss options to resolve issues and concerns they may have
- should, in relation to adjustments and location exemptions, recognise the importance of discreetly following the appropriate process, including recognising the voluntary use of employee passports, and ensuring colleagues' confidentiality and dignity at all times
- are responsible for sign-off, record-keeping and ensuring there is a process in place for periodic review, for example when there are significant changes to the composition of the team or business needs change
- are responsible for making the finalised team agreement available to:
    - all team members, including colleagues new to the team
    - senior managers, for the purpose of consistency of approach, that team agreements are in place as appropriate and that the impact of arrangements on the business are understood and signed-off

Support for senior managers

In order to support senior managers with implementing team agreements across their areas, HR Business Partners and the Hybrid Implementation Team will be able to provide guidance on how to develop a team agreement.

Team questions to consider

HOW - Agree as a team how you will work effectively together in a hybrid way

- as a team how will we communicate with each other? What communication or other team activities are best done in-person versus other work that can be done remotely?
- recognising that we're moving to a target of 40% in-person working, what processes and approaches will we have to adopt (or adapt) to support each other and achieve the work of our team?
- how will we ensure that those not present in the office, for whatever reason, are genuinely included?

WHERE - A key element of this new way of working is the flexibility for teams to agree and consider where they work, for example what activities work best in person at a Scottish Government building or other agreed workplace or at home?

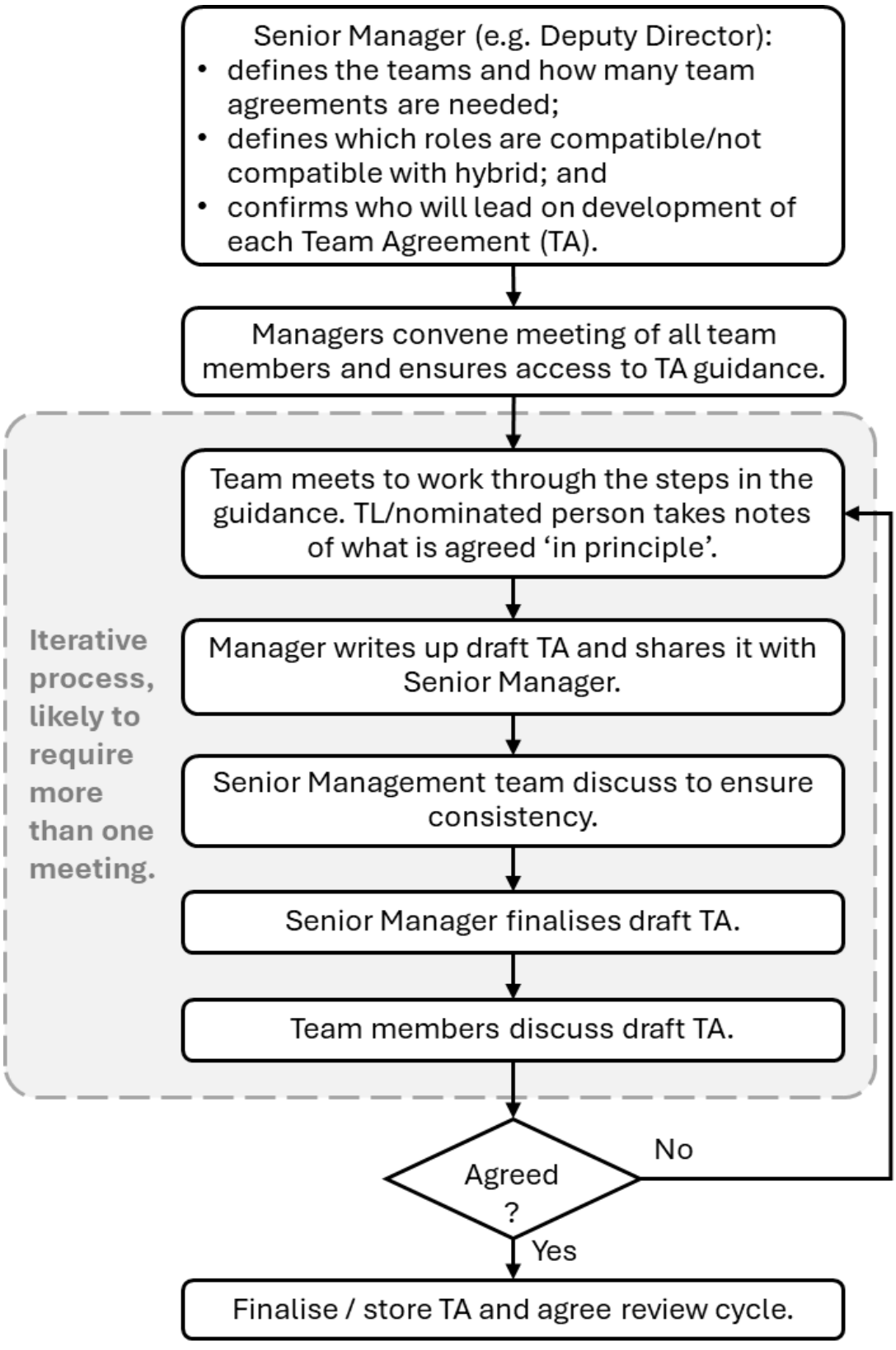
- as a team, what anchor activities do we agree work better in person?
- are there regular weekly/monthly/quarterly meetings or activities that are part of how we work together?
- what activities do we agree as a team can work effectively using a hybrid approach?
- what location(s) will we use as a team to work from? Particularly important if the team is split across SG sites
- if your team accommodation is shared (for example Atlantic Quay), how can you optimise the shared office environment to make the best of purposeful presence for your team?
- how will we use our workspace differently?
- is there anything else about where we work that we want to change or improve?

WHEN - Agree what this new way of working will mean for the team and how this aligns to the business needs of our organisation

- how do we know when people in the team are available?
- what is the most effective way to structure the working day/week/month?
- are there any barriers in the team for in-person working?
- what stakeholder requirements do we need to consider when determining when we work in person or from home?
- when and where will we connect as a team?
- how do we build in 'social' time, ensuring that there is 'downtime' as a team?

Illustrative high-level team agreement process map

A text version of this process map graphic follows.



Note: individual workplace/reasonable adjustments or location exemption should not be part of team agreement discussions.

The senior manager (for example deputy director) starts the team agreement (TA) process by defining the team(s) in their area, deciding how many team agreements are required, and which posts are compatible or not compatible with hybrid working. They then confirm who will lead on development of the TA for each team.

Managers convene a meeting of all team members, and ensure they have access to the TA guidance. At the meeting, the team works through the steps in the guidance and a nominated person takes notes of what is agreed 'in principle.' This is then captured by the manager in a draft TA, which they share with the senior manager.

The senior management team discuss to ensure consistency. The senior manager finalises the draft TA. This is then shared back with team members to discuss and reach a consensus draft TA. Upon agreement, finalise and store the TA and agree a review cycle. If consensus isn't reached, another meeting is convened of all team members and the process repeated.

The TA process is iterative and may require more than one meeting.

It is also important to note that consideration of individual workplace adjustments (employee passport) or reasonable adjustments (see disability and you) is independent of team agreement discussions.

Hybrid working - interim guidance for location related exemptions

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the hybrid working policy for staff employed in Scottish Government (SG) core. In general, staff should expect to attend their contractual workplace when seeking to meet the hybrid working target, however, this provides interim guidance on how those staff may:

- make requests to work regularly on an interim basis from any location (including home) other than their contractual workplace
- have those requests considered and responded to

In the context of hybrid working policy, 'regularly' means more than ad-hoc, occasional visits to another work location, which all staff may expect to undertake from time to time.

Policy position

The Scottish Government intends to commence a review on a long-term location policy to support workforce planning later this year. Nothing in this guidance alters existing terms and conditions for staff, including their contractual location – normal travel and expenses rules will continue to apply. It does not remove the statutory right to request flexible working under the Employment Rights Act 1996 and/or reasonable adjustments in relation to a disability recognised under the Equality Act 2010.

This guidance should be considered interim guidance that is provided until a long-term location policy has been established. It should be followed for all requests to work regularly on an interim basis from a location other than an individual's contractual location. However, where a colleague is seeking a location exemption related to a disability, they can request a reasonable adjustment and consider completing an employee passport.

This guidance sets out a process through which:

- any new requests by staff to work regularly from a location other than their contractual location from the date this guidance is published must be made to, and considered by, the relevant senior manager (deputy director or above) through the location exemption form
- existing arrangements must be recorded on the location exemption form by the relevant senior manager or referenced to the employee passport where completed

Process for making location exemption requests

Where staff wish to request an exemption to enable them to regularly work at a location other than their contractual workplace, or vary a previously agreed exemption, they should discuss this with their manager using the location exemption form. This should be the case whether they are seeking a full exemption (i.e. to meet the 40% hybrid working target in full from an alternative location) or a partial exemption (i.e. to meet part of the 40% hybrid working target from an alternative location).

Managers should consider the request for work to be undertaken at an alternative agreed work location during the interim period only, considering:

- any reasons given for the request
- the nature of the job role and associated business needs including, but not limited to, those set out in the team agreement 'anchor activities'
- the staff member's individual circumstances, including, but not restricted to, their proximity to Scottish Government contractual location and/or other premises or workplaces
- the location they want to work from and frequency
- advice on capacity at the desired location, via workplace division
- what is reasonable in the context of team agreements
- broad consistency of application across the team
- how the individual's circumstances may have changed over time. For instance, when and whether they moved house further away from their contractual work location

Line managers should submit the completed location exemption form to the senior manager for approval, including their recommendations considering scenarios provided in this guidance. If the senior manager requires clarification or wishes to discuss the application further, they will arrange to discuss this directly, in confidence, only with the line manager.

Decision-making

Senior managers have discretion to agree exemptions to work regularly from a location other than the staff member's contractual work location in line with the illustrative scenarios provided below, considering manager's recommendations, oversight of team agreements and the aim of achieving broad consistency of application across the division/directorate for which they are responsible. Requests, discussions and decisions will be treated sympathetically, in keeping with Scottish Government values.

Managers will advise staff of the decision, and this will be recorded on the location exemption form, which should be retained in the individual and line manager's personal eRDM file.

Approved exemptions will be in effect until the earlier of:

- any agreed review date put in place by senior managers as part of the arrangement
- any agreed review date put in place by SG in relation to future approved location policy

- a change of individual circumstances, for example moving closer to their contractual work location or changing role/team, in which case fresh consideration should be given to any location exemption

Guiding scenarios

When considering requests for an exemption during the interim arrangements, senior managers should consider the following scenarios to guide their decision-making. These scenarios are illustrative, and not exhaustive. In deciding on a request for an exemption, senior managers should consider the extent to which the exemption enables the staff member to actively engage with their team and stakeholders.

Pre-existing arrangements to work regularly from a location other than an individual's contractual location

Where arrangements for staff to work regularly from a location other than their contractual workplace were in place before the introduction of this guidance, the location exemption form should still be used to record those arrangements. If the supporting information on which that arrangement already exists in an employee passport, managers have discretion to either:

- refer to that document when completing the location exemption form, including when it was agreed/last reviewed
- copy non-sensitive information onto the location exemption form, to aid understanding of the circumstances which led to the arrangement

A completed location exemption form should be submitted to the senior manager to ensure visibility of all such arrangements in their area of responsibility.

For the avoidance of doubt, there is no expectation that the senior manager will review pre-existing arrangements based on this exercise. The process of competing location exemption forms for pre-existing arrangements is designed to more formally and consistently record those, for improved corporate governance.

Illustrative scenarios

Scenario 1

A member of staff is contracted to work in St Andrew's House (SAH), is not seeking to change their current job but already lives closer to Atlantic Quay.

They have been contracted to work in St Andrew's House for many years prior to Covid and had historically travelled to SAH on a routine basis where their team is also based, despite having always lived closer to Atlantic Quay. They request the ability to regularly attend Atlantic Quay to meet hybrid working policy expectations, rather than their contractual location.

Conclusion: The individual should reasonably expect to travel to St Andrew's House to meet the hybrid working expectation as that is what they were doing prior to the pandemic and where their team currently all work. However, the senior manager would consider the needs of the job role and other aspects outlined under the process for making exemption requests to consider whether the exemption can be granted. The manager may ask for regular or occasional attendance at St Andrew's House in line with the team agreement, for example for team meetings.

Scenario 2

A member of staff is contracted to work in St Andrew's House (SAH), is not seeking to change their current job but would like to move to a home location (for example, Aberdeen) that would make regular commuting to their contractual workplace challenging but would be commutable to other existing Scottish Government premises (for example, the Aberdeen office). They request agreement that, if/when they move, they will be able to use alternative Scottish Government premises to meet hybrid working policy expectations, rather than their contractual location.

Conclusion: The member of staff should reasonably expect to travel to SAH as that is where their team are based and SAH remains their contractual office location. The senior manager would consider the aspects outlined under the process for making exemption requests to consider whether the exemption can be granted. The individual would need to accept that this is **ultimately a temporary arrangement**, pending the publication of the long-term location strategy.

Scenario 3

A member of staff is not seeking to change their current job, is currently contracted to work in Victoria Quay, but would like to move to a home

location that would make regular commuting to any Scottish Government premises challenging, for example Belfast. They request agreement that, if they move, they will be able to work from home.

Conclusion: The individual would need to accept that this is **ultimately a temporary arrangement** with no change to contractual location, pending the publication of the location strategy. The individual should also expect to continue needing to attend Victoria Quay as that is where their team is based and where the individual has historically worked from. As there is no alternative SG accommodation the individual could work from, the senior manager would need to consider the aspects outlined under the process for making exemption requests to consider whether the exemption can be granted. The senior manager may require regular or occasional attendance at Victoria Quay in line with the team agreement, for example for team meetings.

Scenario 4

A member of staff would like to apply for another post that is advertised in Saughton House and the team are all based in Saughton. As they live in Aberdeen, it may be challenging for them to regularly commute to Saughton House for that post, but they would be able to attend alternative Scottish Government premises (for example, Aberdeen) to meet hybrid working policy expectations. Staff should raise this with the recruiting manager prior to applying for the vacancy.

Conclusion: As the individual has chosen to apply for a job located in Saughton House, they should expect to travel to that location to meet the 40% in-person expectation as that's where the team are. Until the longer-term location strategy is published, this will remain a **temporary arrangement**. However, the recruiting manager would consider the aspects outlined under the process for making exemption requests to consider whether an exemption can be granted before the closing date.

Hybrid working - learning and support

A new learning pathway is now live to support our hybrid working policy, offering practical guidance and development for colleagues and line managers. It includes resources on leading through change, effective line

management, wellbeing, the Employee Passport, a new hybrid working toolkit and a new e-learning module.

For support on the hybrid working arrangements, in the first instance please discuss with your line manager.

Hybrid working contact points:

- the Hybrid Implementation team iFix Portal - hybrid working policies – for queries relating to the policy, including team agreements and location exemptions
- HR people advice team for other HR queries and support
- the HR wellbeing services team
- the recognised trade union representative (if a member) or the local branch secretary as a first point of contact (Council of Scottish Government Unions)
- workplace division for managers or deputy directors to check availability of space

Purpose and scope of the hybrid working policy

Purpose

This page sets out the policy covering hybrid working arrangements for Scottish Government (SG) core staff that will apply from week commencing 27 October 2025 and links to associated policies, procedures and guidance for managers and staff.

Its aim is to continue to support In the service of Scotland, which sets out the vision for how Scottish Government can deliver for ministers and the people of Scotland.

SG recognises that many teams have developed positive and collaborative ways of working that have allowed them to deliver for ministers and the people of Scotland. We will learn from those teams, share examples of good hybrid practice and foster a culture and environment where staff are able to experience the benefits of in-person working. SG wants our workplaces to be accessible, inclusive and positive spaces for teams to come together.

In scope

The policy applies to all staff employed in Scottish Government (SG) core working in roles that are compatible with hybrid working. It applies to staff regardless of grade and takes into account different working hours and patterns.

Individuals not employed by but working in or providing services to Scottish Government (SG) core, insofar as they are working in roles compatible with hybrid working, will be expected to adhere to the principles of this policy, including engagement on team agreements.

Out of scope

This policy does not apply in organisations outside of Scottish Government (SG) core, for example, executive agencies and non-ministerial offices which form part of the SG main bargaining unit. Such organisations will set out their own local approaches.

This policy does not apply to staff whose roles are not compatible with hybrid working, such as roles which require all hours to be worked in person at a Scottish Government office or other agreed workplace.

This policy does not change formal terms and conditions for staff, including their contractual location. It does not remove the statutory right to request flexible working under the Employment Rights Act 1996 and/or request reasonable adjustments in relation to a disability recognised under the Equality Act 2010.

The policy should be read in conjunction with relevant policies and guidance in this regard.

Working in person hybrid working

Staff in roles compatible with hybrid working should aim to spend 40% of their contracted working time working in person at their contractual workplace, or (on an ad-hoc basis) at another agreed location, unless approval to depart from this target has been authorised due to an agreed adjustment or approved location exemption.

The 40% target can be spent in different ways including, but not limited to, meeting in teams, collaborating with colleagues, operating out in the field, participating at in-person events such as training/conferences or meeting with customers/stakeholders at their premises.

The 40% target is based on contracted hours (excluding periods of authorised absence or leave). Travel time on official business within contracted hours can count towards the 40% target.

For the majority of staff working a standard pattern, the 40% target will be calculated over a 4-week reference period. For those working alternative working patterns (shift working or other arrangements) the 40% should be calculated with reference to their specific working pattern.

The current SG target of 40% in person attendance will not change without formal consultation with the Council of Scottish Government Unions (CSGU).

40% working in person target

The target is 40% working in-person. The target is not a mandate.

It is understood and accepted that this needs to be implemented in an appropriate way that recognises necessary variation between individuals.

SG has agreed the following:

- consideration will be given to requests for workplace/reasonable adjustments or location exemptions, where staff feel they cannot work the 40% in-person, and to remove barriers where possible
- monitoring will be carried out at a building level, as opposed to individual or team level, to track occupancy and provide important information and data to inform decisions in relation to the SG estate
- regular engagement with staff will continue, through managers, as a normal part of the working relationship, on a range of issues including wellbeing, hybrid working arrangements, workload and health and safety
- there will be no change to existing terms and conditions
- SG will not set performance objectives or assess performance purely on 40% in person attendance. Nor shall SG treat falling short of the 40% target in isolation as a disciplinary matter

Hybrid working - location exemptions

- The Scottish Government intends to establish a formal location policy to further support workforce planning and intends to commence a review to support the development of that policy later this year.
- The period from the publication of this hybrid working policy until the date of implementation of a formal location policy is to be considered an interim period.
- In the interim period, where staff wish to work regularly from a location other than their contractual location, they can request an exemption to enable them to do so by following the guidance and completing the location exemption form.
- Where a request for an exemption to location is made in connection with a reasonable adjustment, the process for reasonable adjustment should be followed.
- Notwithstanding staff statutory rights (including their right to make a flexible working request), formal changes to contractual workplace, for example requests for a home working contract or other change to contractual workplace, will not be agreed during the interim period. Managers do not have authority to make changes to contractual

location. The location exemption process should be used to facilitate any arrangements around temporary variation to location.
- Decisions made about exemptions must be properly recorded and retained in the individual and managers personal eRDM file.

Hybrid working - workplace and reasonable adjustments

Staff may have concerns relating to disabilities, health conditions or other circumstances that could impact on work and can request adjustments to support them and remove barriers.

SG has a legal duty under equalities legislation to consider and implement reasonable adjustments for disabled staff; however, all staff may request workplace adjustments.

Staff should discuss their concerns about meeting the 40% target with their manager and can complete an employee passport to discuss with managers any support or measures to remove barriers. If more complex or specialist input is required, part two of the employee passport can be used for discussion with the HR workplace adjustments service and to put in place agreed adjustments.

Decisions made about adjustments must be retained in the individual and manager's personal eRDM file or, if a specialist decision has been taken, by the HR workplace adjustment service.

Hybrid working - team agreements

Teams and groups should come together to discuss the work style that best reflects the needs of the work being done.

Local areas have flexibility to determine what works best for their area and should consider what activities (‘anchor activities’) may be beneficial to carry out in person.

The 40% in person target should be co-ordinated as far as possible, for example, arranging team meetings on days that most staff can attend, thereby maximising the in-person time for team members. Managers should consider ‘anchor activities‘ and the different working patterns

and/or adjustments/exemptions within the team, being mindful that some staff have different contractual hours, work reduced hours or within set hours.

Managers and staff should bear in mind that competing demands on time will arise on occasion, for example if a member of staff is required to attend a training course, an external meeting, or other work commitment which conflicts with their team agreement, they should do so. Time spent on competing work commitments will count towards the 40% target even if it is not time spent with colleagues.

Teams should discuss and agree how they will meet the 40% target and record their approach in the team agreement.

Team agreements should be reviewed if, and when, there are changes to the team and/or business needs and in line with the review cycle agreed by the deputy director.

Roles and responsibilities of the hybrid working policy

Staff will**:**

- familiarise themselves with the policy and associated guidance to ensure they understand these
- take part in discussions and work with colleagues to develop, agree, implement, review and maintain team agreements, being open to discuss options to resolve issues and concerns they may have
- raise any concerns or barriers to meeting the targets of the policy with their manager, considering use of the employee passport to document these
- retain a record of any adjustments agreed in their personal eRDM file
- work together, regardless of where team members are based, to ensure that all are fully included and engaged in teamwork and activities

Line managers will:

- play an active, local leadership role in the implementation of this policy, for example by ensuring that they are familiar with the policy and associated guidance and encouraging staff to do the same
- support staff discussions about taking forward the policy to enable effective team working, being open to resolve issues and concerns and establish whether any potential adjustment or exemption should be considered ahead of putting in place a team agreement
- support staff and discuss potential workplace or reasonable adjustments, considering requests and putting in place agreed adjustments to remove any barriers to working in person, keeping a record of agreements in their personal eRDM file for the duration of the managerial relationship
- discuss and consider requests to work regularly from a location other than contractual work location in line with the location exemption process, ensuring that the request is provided to senior managers for a decision
- keep discussions and reasons for adjustment confidential unless the staff member agrees for information to be shared or, as required, to discuss with HR for business reasons
- agree how, when and methods of keeping regularly in touch with staff members and the wider team
- support senior managers, as required, in leading the development and review of team agreements to reach consensus on ways of working

Senior managers (directors / deputy directors) will:

- define teams locally which accurately reflect the needs of a particular function or service in their area and which require a team agreement (some senior managers may need more than one team agreement)
- define and explain which roles are compatible or not compatible with hybrid working with direct reference to the duties of the role
- lead on the development and revision of team agreements in accordance with this policy and associated guidance
- ensure team members are engaged in discussion about how and where they will work, taking account of local business/delivery plans and make decisions to finalise team agreements including resolution of any issues or conflicts arising

- follow the location exemption process, consider requests and make decisions about staff working regularly from a location other than their contractual work location during the interim period
- retain the team agreement for future reference, periodic review and to provide assurance, as required

DG Corporate teams

The hybrid policy and implementation team will

- provide advice and support on this policy and its application, including team agreements and location exemptions
- receive and collate data on location exemption requests and existing arrangements

HR business partners will:

- provide support and advice on the hybrid policy and guidance to senior leaders

The workplace adjustments service will:

- give advice and put in place adjustments which cannot be agreed locally

Workplace division will:

- support managers, as appropriate, in provision of equipment to enable staff to work in a hybrid manner

iTECS will:

- in conjunction with Workplace Division, support managers and staff in provision of IT equipment (laptops) and accessories to enable teams to work in a hybrid manner
- work with HR workplace adjustments service to provide appropriate IT in connection with agreed adjustments

Recognised trade unions (CSGU) colleagues will:

- provide advice and support to staff who are members of the trade union on any issue connected with this policy
- provide feedback to the employer on lessons learnt to continually improve the process and outcomes

Sources of support for the hybrid working policy

Staff should raise any concerns within their line management chain in the first instance.

If staff need further support and advice they can contact:

- the Hybrid Implementation team iFix Portal - hybrid working policies – for queries relating to the policy, including team agreements and location exemptions
- the HR people advice team for other HR queries and support
- the HR wellbeing services team
- the recognised trade union representative (if a member) or the local branch secretary as a first point of contact

Relevant terms and conditions of hybrid working

No changes are being made to formal terms and conditions of employment for staff as a result of this revised hybrid working policy.

This section sets out the terms and conditions that apply to hybrid working.

Contractual place of work

All colleagues have a contractual location which is usually the location stated in your contract of employment and is listed on Oracle Cloud. If you have moved roles internally and changed location, this should be confirmed on appointment and updated on Oracle Cloud as part of the internal recruitment process. It is a legal requirement for all colleagues to have a stated contractual location.

We will not issue contracts that have a colleague's home as their contractual place of work, and working from home will be on a voluntary basis as part of a hybrid working arrangement.

There may be circumstances where it's appropriate for a homeworking arrangement to be put in place as part of a reasonable adjustment under equality legislation. In the majority of these cases, adjustments are agreed between the colleague and their manager and recorded on the employee

passport. Where requirements are more complex, managers should seek advice from their HR people advice manager.

Changes to contractual place of work

Every directorate is allocated a location or locations within the Scottish Government estate. The locations available to teams from these allocations (for example, where there is more than one location), are determined by the director, based on work requirements.

If you think your work location on Oracle Cloud is incorrect, you must get confirmation from your director on the agreed correct location. If the location is outwith your directorate's allocated locations, your director also needs to get agreement from the Workplace Division.

Contractual locations cannot be changed to suit personal preference nor to claim what HMRC would view as commuting costs.

For any of the location changes stated on this page, directors must ensure when making any changes they are satisfied these conform to the travel and subsistence rules and guidance. They should also meet HMRC rules regarding taxation on 'benefits in kind' and 'dual workplace' related to travel for work purposes.

Remote working

In a role with a hybrid work style, you can work from home remotely. If you plan to do this, you should read the guidance about working from home. You can work remotely on the understanding you are still able to attend your contractual work location in line with the hybrid working arrangement agreed with your manager.

Capacity to attend a specified Scottish Government work location will remain a contractual requirement.

You can choose to live some distance from your contractual work location, but in doing so you accept travel to and from home will be in your own time and at your own expense. Commuting costs cannot be paid for by the Scottish Government.

Long-term working abroad

We are unable to support remote working abroad, unless there's a genuine requirement to do so in the role. Specific examples of a genuine role requirement would be 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.

These conditions are in line with the position agreed across the UK Civil Service. The position 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.

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.

Short-term requests to work abroad
Very short-term requests to work abroad may be possible. An international travel request form must be 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. Further information is available in the international travel guidance. Such periods of approved short-term working abroad with deputy director approval are considered to be an exemption from the 40% in person working at the contractual location.

Security considerations when working remotely
It's important to make sure when working from any location that conversations cannot be overheard and screens cannot be read by others. You should also never leave mobile phones and laptops unattended.

Expenses and hybrid working
Home working under a hybrid model is voluntary so you won't be eligible for any specific allowances. There won't be a home working allowance to cover costs such as home insurance, broadband, heating or lighting.

The base location set out in your contract (for example St Andrew's House, Saughton House, Atlantic Quay) is seen as your ordinary commute. This is

regardless of how frequently that journey is made. You can only claim travel and subsistence expenses for journeys undertaken on authorised official business to another location that are in excess of that commute. Business areas are allocated to a building and contractual work locations reflect that. You can't amend these to another building to suit your personal preference.

Working at a different location from your contractual location
You cannot claim expenses where you choose to work and it has been agreed from a different location on a regular basis rather than your contractual permanent location. This is even if you have an agreement to work from another building recorded as per the location guidance. For example, you may have an agreement to work from Atlantic Quay in Glasgow, as it is closer to your home, but your contractual permanent workplace is St Andrew's House in Edinburgh. You cannot then claim expenses for travel to St Andrew's House, as this is your contractual permanent workplace, and nor can you claim expenses for the travel to Atlantic Quay.

HMRC rules are clear that you as an employee are responsible for any ordinary commuting costs and these cannot be reimbursed by the Scottish Government. The Civil Service Management Code also states departments and agencies must not reimburse the costs of home to office travel except in limited circumstances (for example, where you may have been asked to work late outside of normal working hours).

Dual workplace (having two contractual workplaces) and expenses
Expenses claimed for travel on official business are exempt for tax purposes. Where an employee attends a contractual workplace regularly, this workplace is not classed as travel on official business and so expenses cannot be claimed.

Where an employee attends two workplaces (a dual workplace) on a regular basis as attendance at both workplaces is a work requirement, expenses for travel to the second workplace are not exempt for tax purposes and so can't be claimed through Oracle Cloud. They can however be claimed via payroll. Attendance is deemed to be regular when it is:

1. Frequent (fortnightly or even less frequent travel is capable of being classed as ‘frequent’ by HMRC).
2. Follows a pattern.
3. Is for all or almost all the period of employment.

Caring and childcare when working from home.
Working from home can bring benefits to carers and those with school age children. It can enable colleagues to work around their caring role.

However, it's important that colleagues keep their caring role separate from their work on days when working from home and record their hours accordingly. For example, you 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.

Childcare costs for days you need to work in the office will not be met by the Scottish Government. Childcare expenses can only be paid in exceptional and unavoidable circumstances. For example, the provision of childcare if you're kept on duty for longer than anticipated or called out at short notice.

This is an extract from the Managing disruption to your work guidance that is in the scope of this request.

Working from home or another building

In adverse weather or when there is an exceptional disruption, for example severe transport disruption, it may be safer and more practical to work from home. You could also consider working in another Scottish Government building.

Working from home

When there is adverse weather, or an exceptional disruption, working from home should be the default action where possible. You should discuss working arrangements with your manager.

Other buildings

Another of our buildings may be:

- closer to home
- nearer to working transport connections
- unaffected by localised adverse weather

You must find out what touchdown facilities are available before travelling there. These operate on a first-come, first-served basis.

If you don't see details for your preferred location, contact the relevant building team for information.

ARTICLE

Resilient working

Being a resilient organisation means being able to achieve our aims through disruption, challenge and change. Minimising service impacts and being able to recover quickly are important.

We all have a role to play by being resilient ourselves. Looking after our mental and physical wellbeing is a key part of this but this guidance considers other factors which impact us. You can improve your personal resilience by preparing for the following:

Keeping in touch

Communication is key to minimising any disruption. You should prepare in advance for this by:

- signing up to Groupcall
- knowing how to get in touch with your manager and any colleagues you manage in an emergency
- planning round leave, cover and on-call arrangements so everyone knows who to get in touch with and when
- keeping your HR records up to date in Oracle Cloud

Winter

In winter, we are more likely to get severe weather such as snow or storms and it's important to prepare and plan for this. Advice changes depending on the weather.

Read our tips on this page for some steps you can take to be prepared and what to do if you're affected by winter weather.

Adverse weather

When there is adverse weather such as snow, ice, storms, wind, heavy rain or extreme heat, you should:

- keep up to date with the latest weather warnings, flood advice and road conditions
- tell your manager if you cannot work

- go to a Scottish Government building to work if you cannot work from home
- follow any travel advice from Police Scotland
- take extra care when cycling, walking or driving from/to work
- report any damage to the helpdesk on 0131 244 8500 (extension 48500) as soon as it is safe to do so
- in an emergency, call 999
- Follow guidance on Ready Scotland
- if you're thawing out frozen pipes, never apply a direct flame or attempt to thaw pipes by switching on your immersion heater or boiler
- avoid walking or driving through flood water to get to work

Travel disruption

The risk of disruption to roads and public transport is higher in winter. It's important to keep yourself informed, plan accordingly and prepare for disruption. To do this, you should:

- keep up to date with the latest weather warnings and road conditions,
- follow any travel advice from Police Scotland
- tell your manager about your travel plans and keep in contact
- don't travel if it isn't safe to do so
- work from home or a closer location to reduce risk
- if travelling by car from or to work have an emergency car kit with you - this could include an ice scraper, de-icer, a shovel, warm clothes, boots, food and a warm drink in a flask

Loss of power, water or gas

You are more likely to lose power, water or gas in the winter months. This can make working from home difficult. To overcome this, you can:

- prepare a home emergency kit and make sure to keep your work devices charged
- if you lose your broadband connection or can't work from home for another reason, go to a Scottish Government building
- if you are in a Scottish Government building, report building issues as soon as possible by calling the helpdesk on [REDACTED]

- keep your manager informed about any issues affecting your ability to work

Illnesses and accidents

Illnesses increase in winter and illnesses like colds, flu or coronavirus (COVID-19) can be spread at home, in public and in our workplaces. The likelihood of slips, trips and falls also increases with colder weather.

You should follow our guidance to prevent spreading illnesses. If you're a first aider, make sure you make yourself known and follow the procedures for the building you're in.

Security

Security incidents can happen at any time. Longer nights and lower staffing levels in our buildings during winter holidays may increase the risk of a range of criminal activities. This ranges from anti-social behaviour to cyber-crime.

Some areas may be busy (for example, city centres) and other areas may be quieter (for example, residential or more remote areas), both of which can offer a range of opportunities for criminality to take place. It's important to be vigilant to help prevent or reduce the risk of crime. You can do this by:

- refreshing your security knowledge
- familiarising yourself with the IT and information security guidance
- reporting security incidents as soon as possible
- reporting cyber security incidents

Working From Home

1. Working from home

This guidance contains advice for managers and colleagues who are working from home as part of a hybrid arrangement.

Important information:

- wellbeing remains an absolute priority and you'll find a range of resources to support your wellbeing including our Employee Assistance Service which is open 24/7, 365 days a year
- managers should discuss wellbeing during the monthly conversation process to make sure any concerns are identified and addressed
- you should try to create a comfortable and secure environment to ensure you're working from home safely
- equipment to work from home and support for any specific requirements or adjustments is available - find out more on page 4 of this guide

Ways of working from home

Working from home means working differently and it's important that managers and colleagues:

- support wellbeing through regular monthly conversations, wellbeing discussions, taking breaks and annual leave
- review and agree objectives to reflect current circumstances and priorities, including offline tasks or temporarily changing duties
- clock in and out as normal using the flexi system online
- adhere to our responsibilities to safeguard Scottish Government systems, devices and information and read and follow their security responsibilities, which are outlined in section six of this guide
- stay in touch in the normal manner

Wellbeing discussions

You and your manager will discuss health, safety and wellbeing on an ongoing basis to ensure appropriate support continues to be provided. Wellbeing should continue to be discussed as part of the monthly conversation process.

If you have concerns about an individual's wellbeing you should also discuss this with your local People Advice and Wellbeing team.

2. Staying connected and meetings when working at home

It's important to look after yourself and each other as well as staying connected with colleagues when working from home. This includes continuing good team meetings and monthly conversation practices. Several tools, available on SCOTS, can help you to keep in touch and collaborate - wherever colleagues are. These include:

- eRDM Connect which is a secure, private workspace where information can be shared outside of our organisation
- Microsoft Teams can be used for audio and video conferencing meetings
- Yammer is our internal social networking tool - you can search for people or groups, topics or files and use it to collaborate with colleagues, share information and ideas and get feedback
- find out about other audio conferencing options available and the security considerations that must take into account when on a conferencing meeting
- read more about hybrid meetings and watch guidance videos

It's important to keep up to date on what's happening across the organisation. The Saltire homepage should be your first port of call to check the latest news and advice, as well as guidance and access to our corporate tools.

3. Claiming costs associated with working at home

You should minimise costs incurred when working from home wherever possible. For example, use MS Teams to reduce the costs of calls on personal devices.

Where costs of phone calls are incurred, you can reclaim these using Oracle Cloud in the normal way. You'll need to provide documentation to support any claim.

You should check before claiming other costs associated with working from home. Colleagues are provided with homeworking equipment and so additional costs should not be incurred.

You can't reclaim the cost of broadband, heating and lighting.

Home insurance

You must take reasonable care of any official equipment supplied for homeworking purposes.

The Association of British Insurers (ABI) has advised that office-based workers who work from home (for example as part of hybrid working) do not need to contact their insurers. The exception to this is if you've adapted your property to have a home office or bought equipment that doesn't belong to the Scottish Government. You should check your policy documents or insurer's website in case you need to inform your insurer. If you're still unsure check with your insurer.

4. Comfortable and healthy working environment

Not everyone has a home office so it's important to find a spot that works and is somewhere you can be productive. If there's limited space to create separation from work and home life, it's good to tidy away work at the end of the day to help maintain a good work/life balance.

Think about lighting and noise, and choose somewhere conducive to your own way of working - don't forget about power sockets and Wi-Fi.

While working from home, it's vital to look after yourself. Try to get into a routine which includes connecting with colleagues and taking regular breaks like you would in the workplace.

Managers and colleagues should continue to discuss specific equipment and wellbeing requirements in their monthly conversations and carry out an online display screen equipment risk assessment.

Homeworking equipment

You can find more information about what homeworking equipment you can order and how to do this in the health and safety when working from home guidance.

Read guidance on buying IT accessories or new laptop/software requests.

5. Printing while working from home

If you need to print official documents regularly and are unable to come into a Scottish Government building to do so, you must use a SCOTS validated mobile printer. You can request a printer for home use via iFix. You should only order this in exceptional circumstances and will require director or chief executive level sign-off. Your directorate will need to cover the cost of the printer.

Think carefully about whether you really need a printer at home before making a request. You may be able to use an external monitor, or wait until you are next in a building to print documents.

Through our environmental policy and digital-first culture we've already reduced our number of printers, removing over 2,000 printers from the network. As we're working towards a paperless office, you may find your request for a SCOTS printer at home refused on these grounds, unless you have a real need to print at home.

If your request is approved by your director or chief executive, you'll receive details on how to order a printer using an ePC. You should order directly with one of the agreed suppliers. You may wish to order paper at the same time. The printer remains the property of the purchasing organisation (for example the Scottish Government or agency) at all times.

If you try to connect to the SCOTS network using your own printer at home, you could put information and assets at risk. As set out in our IT code of conduct, no unauthorised software or devices should be attached to government IT because it poses risks to the SCOTS system.

Technical support from iTECS is limited to connecting your device to your SCOTS laptop. Contact your business management team for all other queries such as paper jams or buying paper or toner cartridges.

Storing printed documents at home

Read about your security responsibilities when working from home on page 6 of this guide and working from home best practice. You're responsible for the safe storage of all information that could be seen to be (or perceived by others as) sensitive. You should not throw away printing and work notes. These must be stored safely and securely, until they can be destroyed when you return to your workplace.

You can no longer ask for documents to be printed in the office and sent to your home.

6. Home working security – your responsibilities

Obligations which we all have under the Civil Service Code and our terms and conditions continue to apply when working from home. It's important you're aware of, and put in place, appropriate measures to safeguard Scottish government systems, devices and information.

Safeguarding Scottish Government systems, devices and information

Your security responsibilities when working from home include:

- only using IT equipment and software, including regularly updated anti-virus software provided by the Scottish Government
- always locking your screen when you leave your work area, logging off when you've finished work and removing or securing the device if leaving it unattended for a period of time
- only allowing colleagues who are authorised to use government IT and our secure SCOTS network to access your device – you should not allow anyone else to use it
- ensuring official papers or work on your screen can't be overlooked
- making sure that nobody can overhear you during any sensitive work-related conversations
- making sure sensitive conversations are out of range of a home voice assistant (you can disable or mute your device when it's not being used)
- report any security concerns, breaches or incidents as soon as possible

If you need to organise any repairs to government equipment, you should log a call via iFix or call the IT service desk on 0131 244 8500.

For advice on buying privacy screens for your device, visit the 3M Website

You can then filter your results depending on the make and model of your device. Once found, copy the product code shown into amazon and purchase using an ePC.

OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE documents

If you have physical copies of OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE documents in your home, you must take steps to safeguard the information:

- ensure OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE documents are always stored safely in an area and kept out of sight from others
- return OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE waste to the office for disposal after your period of working at home is over

Take a look at our government security classifications and contact your information asset owner for advice if you have any questions.

SECRET documents

You should seek advice from information assurance about dealing with SECRET material at home. SECRET material should never be stored digitally on SCOTS devices. Security and business continuity can also give further advice on how to transport such documents from office to home (and vice versa), and storage methods. You must consider whether there's a clear business need for this.

Never take TOP SECRET information out of the Scottish Government estate under any circumstances. You should be aware of your responsibilities as a civil servant and other responsibilities you hold under national security vetting.

You should seek advice from security and business continuity if you believe there's a need to discuss information higher than OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE over the phone when working from home.

7. Returning equipment if leaving the Scottish Government

If you leave the Scottish Government and have equipment at home, the following Scottish Government standard equipment must be returned:

- docking stations
- laptops
- chairs
- foldable desks
- monitors

The following standard items are non-returnable, so you may keep these or dispose of them in an appropriate manner:

- mice
- keyboards
- laptop/monitor stands

Contact the homeworking equipment mailbox to arrange for your equipment to be collected. If you request to uplift items purchased from divisional budgets, for example monitors or folding desks, these items will be returned to the central distribution stock for reissue as required.

If you have received specialist equipment from occupational health and safety branch, workplace adjustments or People Advice and Wellbeing Advisers, contact the relevant team for advice on how to return these items.

If you're returning a laptop, contact iTECS via iFix to arrange a collection.

Mobile devices are bought and paid for by individual business areas. If they're still a supported device they can be reissued to staff as required. Read guidance on how to return mobile devices.

This process only applies to those working in Scottish Government core directorates. If you're working in an executive agency or other delivery body, you'll need to ask your own occupational health or HR department to agree collection arrangements.

Thank you for your request dated 12 September 2025 under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA).

Your request

You asked for the following information;

“Please provide any documents and correspondence, including emails, relating to guidance on home working policies for civil servants.

Please ensure these include internal changes and documents published and discussions with trade unions.”

Response to your request

I have interpreted your request “home working policies for civil servants” covering home working polices including hybrid working.

The Scottish Government has been trialling hybrid working since the majority of the corporate estate re-opened on 30 August 2021. This has been on a largely informal basis with directorates having flexibility to agree hybrid workstyles locally that best meet the business need and personal circumstances.

The Executive Team further committed to developing a flexible long-term model for hybrid working, reviewing the trial to set out a position on expectations. The Executive Team then confirmed in April 2023 that it had reached a settled position on hybrid working and noted it would be reviewed by April 2025.

Revised working in person hybrid working policy

The hybrid working arrangements for Scottish Government (SG) core staff that will apply from week commencing 27 October 2025.

Staff in roles compatible with hybrid working should aim to spend 40% of their contracted working time working in person at their contractual workplace, or (on an ad-hoc basis) at another agreed location, unless approval to depart from this target has been authorised due to an agreed adjustment or approved location exemption.

The 40% target can be spent in different ways including, but not limited to, meeting in teams, collaborating with colleagues, operating out in the field, participating at in-person events such as training/conferences or meeting with customers/stakeholders at their premises.

The 40% target is based on contracted hours (excluding periods of authorised absence or leave). Travel time on official business within contracted hours can count towards the 40% target.

For the majority of staff working a standard pattern, the 40% target will be calculated over a 4-week reference period. For those working alternative working patterns (shift working or other arrangements) the 40% should be calculated with reference to their specific working pattern.

The current SG target of 40% in person attendance will not change without formal consultation with the Council of Scottish Government Unions (CSGU).

The target is 40% working in-person. The target is not a mandate.

It is understood and accepted that this needs to be implemented in an appropriate way that recognises necessary variation between individuals.

Hybrid Working policy previously in place

“The Executive Team expects agreements to be 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. This may vary from week to week, depending on business need, and we recognise some roles will be more location-specific than others. For instance, some will have more interaction with colleagues in roles not suited to hybrid working. We must also meet the needs of colleagues who have adjustments in place under equality legislation, or where adaptations are agreed via the employee passport process. If colleagues wish to be office based all the time, this should be accommodated.”

As part of the hybrid working review completed, the Executive Team believes we need to further strengthen relationships with colleagues and stakeholders by increasing in-person working and engagement. These connections are considered vital for personal and professional development and to better serve Ministers and the people of Scotland. While hybrid working remains valuable, we believe the current balance needs adjustment to promote collaboration and create a stronger sense of community.

The updated policy was announced on 7 May 2025 and will take effect from October 2025. Before then, the formal consultation period with the Council of Scottish Government Unions (CSGU) was launched developing the policy, guidance and processes in partnership. The consultation concluded in late August 2025.

PDF documents covering internal changes and documents published

I have listed the various guidance and home working policies you have requested which are included as PDF documents.

- Apply for a flexible working pattern
- Working from home
- Health and when working from home
- Guidelines for managers dealing with flexible working requests
- Managing disruption to your work
- Resilient working
- Hybrid working policy
- Hybrid working guidance

Information and emails previously released

Some of the information you have requested regarding emails is available from Scottish Government publication page.

Scottish Government employees working from home queries: FOI release - gov.scot

Scottish Government hybrid working queries: FOI release - gov.scot

Working from home monitoring and policy: FOI release - gov.scot

Scottish Government hybrid working policy: FOI release - gov.scot

Evidence for Scottish Government hybrid working policy decision: FOI release - gov.scot

Scottish Government Executive Team correspondence regarding home and hybrid working: FOI release - gov.scot

Under section 25(1) of FOISA, we do not have to give you information which is already reasonably accessible to you. If, however, you do not have internet access to obtain this information from the website(s) listed, then please contact me again and I will send you a paper copy.

Emails relating to guidance on home working policies for civil servants

Part of you request is looking for emails relating to guidance on home working policies for civil servants. While our aim is to provide information whenever possible, in this instance the costs of locating, retrieving and providing the information requested would exceed the upper cost limit of £600. There is a large volume of information about hybrid working, with a particularly large number of redactions being required to protect staff identities. Under section 12 of FOISA public authorities are not required to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of

complying would exceed the upper cost limit, which is currently set at £600 by Regulations made under section 12.

You may, however, wish to consider reducing the scope of your request in order that the costs can be brought below £600. You have requested “emails relating to guidance on home working policies for civil servants” which is an extremely broad parameter to search.

Various emails have been released previously and are published on the Scottish Government website which include emails from the Executive Team regarding the updated hybrid policy. However to make sure you are provided with the exact information you may wish to narrow the scope of the request.

You may also find it helpful to look at the Scottish Information Commissioner’s ‘Tips for requesting information under FOI and the EIRs’ on his website at: http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/YourRights/Tipsforrequesters.aspx

Your right to request a review

If you are unhappy with this response to your FOI request, you may ask us to carry out an internal review of the response, by writing to Nicola Richards, Director of People, C/O FOI Unit, 1E.10, St Andrew’s House, Regent Road EDINBURGH EH1 3DG and/or Email C/O FOI@gov.scot

Your review request should explain why you are dissatisfied with this response and should be made within 40 working days from the date when you received this letter. We will complete the review in accordance with FOISA as soon as possible, and not later than 20 working days from the day following the date we receive your review request.

If you are not satisfied with the result of the review, you then have the right to appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner. More detailed information on your appeal rights is available on the Commissioner’s website at: Appeal to the Commissioner | Scottish Information Commissioner (itspublicknowledge.info).