Flexible Futures Guidance 2022

Herefordshire Council

Flexible FUTURES

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Overview

Vision:

Herefordshire Council will be a modern, vibrant workplace where creativity and collaboration is actively encouraged, and staff feel engaged and empowered.

Outline:

Herefordshire Council encourages a culture for its employees to feel empowered to work wherever and whenever is most appropriate for the delivery of services whilst meeting customer needs. We want to have an environment looking at an outcomes based approach, focusing on what we are achieving, not when and where we are working.

Flexible Futures has three main workstreams which shape this programme;
o People
o Workspace
o Technology

This guidance pulls together protocols within each workstream for ease of access to a wealth of information. This guidance is supported by a formal policy which can be found on the intranet.

There are links throughout this document for quick access; to access, right click on the text in blue and underlined and select 'open link'.

Our Culture at Herefordshire Council

Our **values** are what we represent as a council and our **behaviours** are how we act to get things done here to reach our potential

PEOPLE:
Treating people fairly, with compassion, respect and dignity

EXCELLENCE:
Striving for excellence, and the appropriate quality of service, care and life in Herefordshire

OPENENESS:
Being open, transparent and accountable.

PARTNERSHIP:
Working in partnership and with all our diverse communities

LISTENING:
Actively listening to, understanding and taking into account people's views and needs

ENVIRONMENT:
Protecting and promoting our outstanding natural environment and heritage for the benefit of all

PEOPLE FOCUS
Developing and implementing processes that work for our businesses and residents

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY
Taking personal responsibility for our own development and for our personal performance

FOCUS ON OUTCOMES
Focusing on what we are achieving not where and when we are working

TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE
Our decision making is seen as transparent and shows clear accountability

BUSTING BOUNDARIES
Working together across the organisation to deliver the best possible outcomes for residents

PERFORMANCE BALANCE
Holding one another to account for what we do and how we do it, balancing support and challenge

VALUING DIFFERENCE
Treating one another with respect – recognising and valuing differences

FIXING THINGS
Looking to continuously improve and making changes as a result

Coffee Connections

Coffee Connections is an initiative that connects colleagues from across the Council. It aims to bring people together, to share our skills, knowledge and experiences at work, and make Herefordshire Council 'a place to thrive'.

With many people working remotely or new to the organisation it can be easy to feel more disconnected from each other. Feedback from the latest employee survey and focus groups showed that employees are keen for more opportunities to stay connected and to meet new people.

How does it work?

- **Register** – Access the platform via the intranet and register
- **Connect** – After a couple of weeks you will be randomly paired with a colleague. You will receive an email to let you know who you have been connected with.
- **Meet** – You get in touch and arrange to meet for a Coffee Connection at a mutually suitable time. This could be 15-30 minutes, face to face, via Teams or perhaps even a walk..
- **Repeat** – Let us know how it went. What did you learn from each other? You'll be matched with a new person 6 weeks later or so.

To sign up to Coffee Connections, you can find the intranet page.

For any help or support please contact the Learning & Organisational Development Team at: L&OD@herefordshire.gov.uk

People

The people workstream of flexible futures empowers our people to work whenever and wherever is most appropriate to deliver their services and meet customer needs.

In this section you will find guidance on:

- Our Worker Styles
- Tips to manage your wellbeing
- Tips for managers in managing their team's wellbeing
- Tips to manage online meetings
- Our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and other support
- Learning & Development
- Health & Safety
- Expenses & travel options

Our worker styles

FLEXIBLE WORKERS

Can work from any location to meet the Council's needs which can include a mixture of home, office or other suitable work location.

WORKSPACE

There is no dedicated desk, but will have the availability to book desks at their base at Plough Lane or one of the MAOs when required for work or collaborating with teams.

ICT KIT

Flexible workers will be issued with a laptop and headset. An additional monitor and mobile phone can be requested by a line manager.

TYPICAL ROLES

Typical roles would be HR, finance, project managers and social workers.

FIXED WORKERS

Will work predominately from a fixed work location as they need to be in a specific location to perform their role or provide a service to the public.

WORKSPACE

There will be a fixed workspace in a fixed location and will only be required to make their workspace available for others to use if they are job sharing.

ICT KIT

Fixed workers will be issued with a laptop, headset and an additional keyboard monitor.

TYPICAL ROLES

Typical roles would be customer service advisors and librarians.

FIELD WORKERS

Will work predominately remotely, including in the community, to deliver a role or service. They may not have a fixed office or desk, but will still be able to book desks and meeting rooms when needed.

WORKSPACE

There is no dedicated workspace, but will have access to spaces for collaboration and professional interaction, either at Plough Lane or one of the MAO's.

ICT KIT

The nature of the role will inform the level of kit required.

TYPICAL ROLES

Typical roles would be highways and transport roles.

Managing your wellbeing

Employees are encouraged to look after their wellbeing, whichever worker style you fall in to.

Here are some tips to make the most of flexible working:

Foster relationships Have non work related chats with colleagues. You can even join our Coffee Connections to meet new colleagues

Get the ICT KIT you need i.e. connections, storage

Have a routine get dressed as you would for the office

Write a list - set achievable tasks for the day to stay focused

Be clear in your communication Virtually we dont have social cues on body language, be clear and consise

Set a designated workspace - Seperate your work space from your living space

Self Wellbeing

Take breaks Schedule time in your diary for lunch

Ask for support when you need it your team and manager will be on hand to help

Make remote working work for you Change your space, listen to music, whatever works for you

Keep Conversation Stay in touch with team chats

Managing your teams wellbeing

Managers also play a key role in supporting and encouraging employees' wellbeing.

Here are some tips to assist you managing your own well being while working flexibly, and managing team members.

The bigger picture
Remind the team on the bigger picture and how their work fits into it. Review short and long term goals regularly

Agree ways of working
Make sure your team are clear on how you will work together and keep each other informed

Listen closely and read between the lines

Make sure your team have the support and kit they need
Including any training required, and maintain a virtual open door

Expectations and trust
Be clear on mutual expectations and trust your team to deliver

Team Wellbeing

Share information And encourage your team to do the same
Opportunities to pick up on information are more limited

Help foster relationships and wellbeing
Encourage social conversation to increase rapport - promote our Coffee Connections to network with colleagues in other departments

Huddle
Keep connected as a team and check in with each other

Keep it regular
Hold regular one to ones for a sense of structure

Tailor feedback and communication
People can feel isolated or anxious so take this into account

Managing by outcomes

By working in a flexible way managers and teams may not have as much face-to-face collaboration as we had in the past.

Working in this way requires trust and confidence in a teams ability to achieve the agreed outcomes. Here is some guidance for managers to help them through this new way of working.

SMART objectives:

Specific	How is the outcome being defined and how? What does a successful outcome look like?
Measurable	How can the outcome be measured? If the outcome is not quantifiable, how do we know it has been achieved?
Achievable	Is this a realistic outcome? Might other teams need to be involved? Are there other factors that could impact the outcome?
Relevant	Is this outcome related to the work of the service? How does this link with our corporate delivery plan?
Time	Objectives should have a deadline If the onjective will take a long time to complete, consider delivery milestones and how often will this be reviewed?

Further resources....

Our manager resource hub has been created to help you fulfil your role as a manager as effectively as possible by bringing together key policies, support and development in on place.

Please select the links below for some further guidance available for staff and managers:

Workforce and organisation development strategy

Your responsibilities as a member of staff at Herefordshire council

Your responsibilities as a manager at Herefordshire council

Managing online meetings

With the increase of virtual online meetings it is important to keep ourselves and team members engaged and to avoid burnout by MS Teams; however it is important that remote meetings keep the same structure and etiquette as face to face meetings.

Here are some tips to help guide virtual meetings more effectively.

Arranging a meeting...

- **Schedule meetings during appropriate times**, with greater emphasis on flexible working, there is a greater need to find a time to suit all

- **Check attendee availability beforehand**

- **Stick to a time limit** - Don't make habit of letting meetings over-run, respect a stop time.

- **Invite the right peopl**e, don't invite team members if they don't need to be there

- **Share an agenda** and any relevant notes beforehand

During a meeting...

- **Turn on your camera** - embrace video calling, it is an important part of feeling connected.

- **Try not to multi-task** - Even if you can, stay focused on the discussion

- **Use headsets** - Especially if you are in Plough Lane or an MAO, limit the amount of people around you who can hear the discussion.

- **Establish guidelines** - Agree a way for everyone to participate, using the 'hands up' function or chat

- **Turn off you microphone** if you are not speaking, turn off your mic to reduce background noise

Other wellbeing support....

Employees have access to a range of support for any personal or professional problems that could be affecting their home of work life.

Headspace App

All members of staff now have free access to Headspace, the meditation and mindfulness app.

The Headspace app provides access to a range of support, meditation and mindfulness videos, stories and exercises on a range of subjects, to help people stress less, focus more, and sleep soundly.

To get this free perk, go to our [intranet page](#) where you will find more information on what Headspace can provide for you and instructions on how to join.

Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA)

As part of our commitment to supporting our staff, we have trained individuals to take on Mental Health First Aider (MHFA) roles. MHFAs are people who are trained to act as the first point of call and are there to guide people who may be struggling with their mental health by having a friendly and non-judgemental chat.

They will provide you with a safe space to start a confidential conversation about your mental health and signpost you to appropriate professional support.

Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAs)

Contact us for in the moment support or to arrange a wellbeing chat...

Our central MHFA phone line:
01432 383 688

Directly via phone, email or Teams

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

Supporting your mental health and wellbeing with our dedicated Employee Assistance Programme:

- 24 / 7 confidential telephone support
- Up to 6 counselling sessions per issue
- Self-help workbooks and audiobooks
- My Mind Pal app
- Debt Advice
- Domestic Abuse app
- Brain and spine helpline

Call **0800 023 9324 24/7**, 365 days a year. You can also access the EAP information through The Orchard Vivup platform.

Further advice & useful links

Thrive at Home is a useful guide created by West Midlands Combined Authority which provides practical advice for employees and managers on maintaining physical and mental health when working flexibly.

Talk Community is a local website listing sources of local and national mental health support.

Please visit our wellbeing at work intranet page for even more resources available to support you.

Learning & Development

Our aim is to develop out engaged and agile workforce so that it is resilient in the future.

To support this commitment all employees have access to a range of learning and development opportunities throughout the year.

Mandatory Training

All employees are required to complete the council's mandatory training.

The programme of training runs annually with different modules each year.

All mandatory training should be completed by 30th June.

More information on the modules and the guidance surrounding mandatory training can be found on the intranet E-Learning portal.

How to access our training

All of our training can be accessed via the Hoople Training Icon on your desktop.
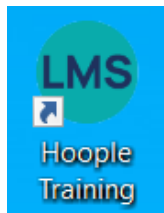
Other training

A variety of other online learning sessions and workshops are available on a library of topics including:

- Wellbeing
- Essential Skills
- Management & Leadership

The offer of training will be updated so it is advised to keep your eyes peeled on what is coming up.

To access our training calendar on Learning & OD workshops, please visit the L&OD 'Whats on' page on the intranet.

Further support...

For any help or support please contact the Learning & Organisational Development Team at: L&OD@herefordshire.gov.uk

Health & Safety

 Employees have a responsibility on a day-to-day basis for their own and others health and safety while they are carrying out work activities. Whichever location a council employee uses to work, they should familiarise themselves with arrangements for managing health and safety and exercise reasonable care for their own health and safety, and that of others, at all times.

Electrical Safety

The use of electrical equipment carries a potential risk of electric shock, fire and associated injuries. This rick increases when the equipment is regularly transported.
Employees are required to carry out visual checks to ensure that the equipment remains safe to use, and always use for its intended purpose.

Ensure that the equipment is disconnected from the power supply and check for the following:

- Damage to power leads including fraying, cuts or heavy scuffing. Coloured wires visible or exposed.
- Tape or other material applied to join or repair leads.
- Damage to the plug i.e. bent pins, missing screws.
- Damage to the outer cover of equipment itself, including lose parts or cracked casing
- Any signs of overheating
- Trapped cables under furniture or flowing, or trailing walkways and work areas
- Damage to, or overloading extension cables.Prevent coiled cables.

If you find any of the above, or other defects you MUST:

- Switch off the power immediately
- Contact your manager or repair or replacement of the item

DSE / Remote Working Assessment

Display Screen Equipment regulations apply to anyone who regularly uses a computer for continuous periods of one hour or more per day.

The law applies to all DSE users regardless of where you work, and you will need to complete a workstation assessment or remote workers assessment to establish what equipment you require to undertake your role.

At Plough Lane we have installed Freeflex ergonomically functional chairs, which can be adjusted by height, depth, backrest and height adjustment, and tilt tension. They have adjustable arm height and width functionality.

Lone Working

Some employees are considered lone workers, this could be if you work alone, operate from a remote location, work outside of normal hours or undertake lone visits to sites.

If you are a lone worker, your manager must complete a risk assessment and reduce the potential risk as far as reasonably practicable. Your manager must inform you of the outcome of this assessment.

Accidents & Work related incidents

In the event of any work-related accident, incident or illness, council employees have a duty to report these in accordance with the Council's Reporting Accidents Procedure.

If an employee has a concern relating to any health and safety aspect of their work they must inform their manager without delay.

Further support...

For any help or support you may need in respect of Health & Safety, please visit our intranet page or you can contact our Health & Safety Advisers:

Kazimierz Sztostak; kazimierz.szostak@herefordshire.gov.uk

Evelina Perminiene: Evelina.Perminiene@herefordshire.gov.uk

Expenses & travel options

In accordance with the council's commitment to sustainable transport and its local travel plan, employees are encouraged to use public transport (for which approved costs will be reimbursed), car sharing and alternative methods of travel, other than by car, wherever possible.

Employees will be reimbursed reasonable excess expenditure incurred.

Travel Expenses

The council's Travel and Subsistence Guidance states that:

- Only essential business journeys should be undertaken. Employees should explore alternatives where ever possible, for example teleconferencing.
- Employees have a contracted place of work, which will be used in relation to mileage claims
- The council will not pay for normal home to work base journeys, such mileage will be deducted from a claim.
- Travel must be by the most cost effective means.
- Employees should schedule the most efficient route for undertaking any business mileage.
- Business mileage is claimed through Business World and can be claimed weekly.

Pool Cars

Pool cars are available for council employees to use for site visits, travel to meetings, transporting equipment and so on.

Pool cars are currently based at Plough Lane and Town Hall, and employees from other offices may use these cars as well.

Before using a pool car for the first time, you must complete the 'Driving @ Work Arrangement Document' – your manager will need to support you with this.

It is recommended that you book a car in advance, which you can do on the intranet.

Facilities management - Pool cars (herefordshire.gov.uk)

For more information on Pool Cars, please contact Facilities Management on:
facilitiesmanagement@herefordshire.gov.uk / 01432 261540

Workplace

The workplace workstream helps us create an energised and innovative collaboration environment, local to where it is needed.

In this section you will find guidance on:

- Working in a council building
- Our Council Offices
- Clear desk / chair peice

Working in a council building

When working at Plough Lane or one of our MOA's, here are some guidelines for employees to consider when working together to create a vibrant working environment which can be appreciated by everyone.

We must always wear our ID badge and ensure our visitors are always accompanied

We are mindful of the volume and purpose of our conversations and will use a breakout area or meeting room where required

Add a little bit of body text

We are considerate and respectful of others and different worker styles

We all have a responsibility to reduce paper waste and storage

We ensure that data protection and confidentiality is maintained at all times

We will clear kitchenettes after use

We return all furniture to its original position after use.

We will utilise the canteen and Atrium and breakout space when eating

We will make sure all areas are left clean and clear for others

Our council buildings

Our workplaces creates an innovative and energised environment for staff for meetings, training and to collaborate with their teams and colleagues.

Plough Lane

Plough Lane is our main council setting and has been reconfigured to accommodate a more collaborative space to work, with allocated zones and and meeting spaces equipped with new technology.

There are 'quiet zones' and meeting pods allocated on each floor; with meeting rooms across the building equipped with video conferencing facilities to promote flexibility and accessibility.

Plough Lane offers space in the Atrium to create a welcoming, vibrant and social space for staff and Members.

Plough Lane also has a cafe that produces fresh food daily from local produce, and a new menu each week.

Bromyard office


Friar Street

HARC office
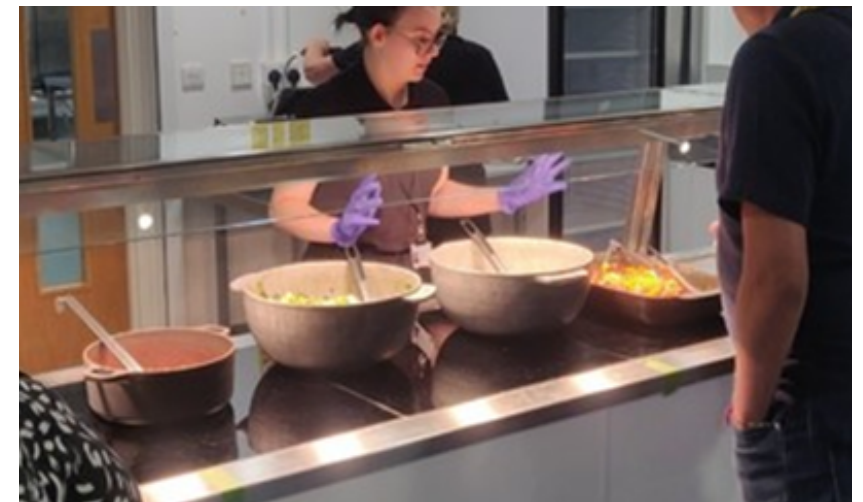
Multi Agency Offices (MAOs)

There are currently six alternative offices around the county where staff can work offering a variety of facilities including IT and telephony, printing, meeting rooms and Wi-Fi access.

Below are the list of offices, however, you must book a workstation in advance.

- Bromyard Office
- Friar Street
- HARC Office
- Kington Office
- Ledbury Office
- Leominster MAO

Kington office

Ledbury office

The Old Chapel, Ross-on-Wye
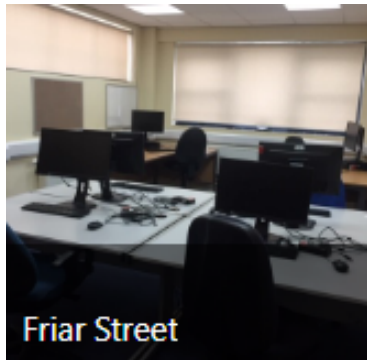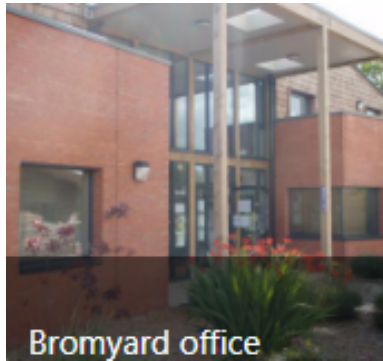
Clear Desk & Information Security

With flexible working comes a greater need for employees to be stringent regarding information security, and in doing so the council operates a clear corporate clear desk principle.

The council has provided IT tools to ensure that documents do not need to be printed, this supports information security, cost and environment considerations. Documents should only be printed if absolutely necessary.

Employees are required to operate a clear desk and ensure that all information is held securely at all times, and are responsible to ensure that records or data are not left on desks or in meeting rooms.

To aid flexibility and hot-desking, no personal items should be left on desks.

Employees should ensure that:

- No personal items are left on any bookable desks
- Nothing should be left lying on printers, photocopiers or fax machines
- All items sensitive to the council, customers or containing personally identifiable information will be stored securely when the area is unattended.
- No sensitive information is viewable by those unauthorised to view it
- All sensitive information is disposed of in the confidential waste bins.
- Calendars are transparent for colleagues to see - so don't list any client details in appointments

Technology

By providing our employees with streamlined, digital processes and the implementation of appropriate technology we enable our staff to work flexibly and deliver an exemplary service.

in this section you will find guidance on:

- How to book a desk or meeting room
- Available equipment
- How to use conferencing facilities
- Useful contacts

Booking a desk

To embrace flexible ways of working; we use the Cloudbooking app as a user-friendly booking solution to book a room or desk by using your laptop or mobile app.

Log in to your account

To log in to your account, double click the icon found on your desktop, entering your network email and password

Download the mobile app

When you have logged in to the desktop app you will be able to access the mobile app. search for 'CBMobile' to install

CBMobile - Cloudbooking
Smarter Workplaces
Cloudbooking
Designed for iPad
★★★★★ 5.0 • 1 Rating
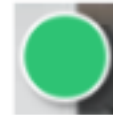Free
View in Mac App Store ↗

Make a booking

By choosing 'My bookings' on the left hand menu , this will allow you to book whichever desk / room you require

When you are looking to book some space, the system will show you each floor where desks are available. Each pin is colour coded to show you the status of the desk:

Blue are your **own** bookings

Green are **available** to book

Red are **booked** by others

Yellow are unavailable due to COVID restrictions

Black are **private** bookings

Grey have **restrictions applied** and can only be booked by authorised users

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Important! Make sure you check in....

When you arrive to your desk or room it is important you confirm this on Cloudbooking or you will lose your booking.

You can do this by:

- **The desktop application**:- Go to the list of 'today's bookings' and select the appropriate option and choose 'Check in'

- **The CB mobile app**:- Tap on the relevant booking and choose the 'check-in' button

- **The QR codes**:- By using your camera and holding this up to the QR code, it will open your CB mobile app, and simply choose the 'check-in' button

Please remember ...

If you finish your booking earlier than expected please update the system by following the same process as above, but choosing 'curtail'

Available equipment

In our commitment to streamlining and digitising our processes we provide the appropriate technology to fully enable flexible working and exemplary service delivery.

Kit issued as standard:

Flexible worker: laptop, headset. An additional monitor and mobile phone can be requested by your line manager.

Fixed worker: Fixed workers will be issued with a laptop, headset and an additional keyboard monitor.

Field worker: The nature of the role will inform the level of kit required

Desktop equipment as standard:

Each desk will have a monitor, keyboard, mouse and power supply for your cables

Video conferencing equipment:

Video conferencing equipment is available within the meeting rooms at Plough Lane; each room includes a screen, camera, speakers and microphones.

This equipment can be used with Microsoft Teams, Webex and Zoom meetings

To use this equipment, you need to invite the video conferencing sysrtem to the meeting as an attendee.
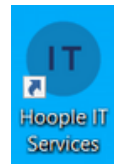
All rooms are called **HC_PL_(room/directorate)_VC_Cloud eg HC_PL_Hereford_VC_Cloud**

Hoople IT Services

Our ICT services are provided by Hoople IT.

If you have any issues with the kit supplied, you can report an issue by either;

Using the desktop app

Or contacting the IT service desk on 01432 260160.

Please ensure you have your asset number to hand, this is the HC number on your Property of sticker.