

Flexible Working and Work/Life Balance Policy

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Section 1 – Flexible working procedure

Introduction

1. The County Council has long-established commitment to flexible working arrangements and other policies/information/advice to help ensure staff achieve a healthy work/life balance.
2. Managers who agree to requests for amendments to working arrangements must ensure that service requirements are fully considered and customer satisfaction is not compromised.
3. Fixed hours of working can result in a 'clock-watching' mentality and reduce the flexibility to respond to peaks/troughs. By having a more flexible approach to working it means that individual employee's needs can often be accommodated, say if they choose to stay on a little later to finish a piece of work, or leave early so that they can return to work refreshed to complete the task the next day.
4. The nature of the services we deliver necessitates that employees in many directorates need to work outside of standard office hours and in different locations.
5. These issues, together with the Council's commitment to the better use of its property and new ways of working, means that guidelines about flexible working and work/life balance need to be integrated and be applied and managed in a consistent way across the organization.
6. Work/life balance is about being aware of the different demands on an employee's time and energy and devising ways of working that meet both the County Council's, the team's and the employee's needs.
7. Flexible working means working in the most appropriate place, at the best time, and in the best way, to get the work done. It aims to reduce the constraints under which individuals operate. This can relate to when, where and how they work, providing that any change to working practices does not have a negative effect on the service being provided. Where it does impact negatively, management has the right to stipulate essential core hours to be worked

Policy

8. Oxfordshire County Council believes that people work more effectively when they are able to strike a healthy balance between their work responsibilities and the other aspects of their lives. There are a range of measures and guidance to support employees in achieving this balance. Eligibility for each option must be agreed with line managers and have the support of the Head of Service.

Options and support available

9. The following options may help in achieving an effective work/life balance. Each employee must discuss their particular needs with their manager to reach an

agreement. In all cases the operation of the service must be maintained and not every option is available in every directorate.

10. **Flexitime** – see separate policy - the ability to vary start/end times and have variable length lunch-breaks with a minimum of 30 minutes. Excess hours accumulated under the scheme may be accounted for by taking up to 2 half days or 1 full day off per calendar month, subject to service requirements.

It is important to remember that staff are contracted to work a specified number of hours to carry out their job requirements. Where individuals are regularly working sufficient hours in excess of this to build up the maximum allowable flexitime, it should be as a result of service requirements rather than personal choice. Managers are encouraged to regularly monitor working patterns to ensure this is the case. The primary function of the flexitime arrangements is to facilitate minor variations to working time and not the creation of additional leave days. For this reason, flexitime should not normally be booked more than one month in advance or without having built up the relevant hours.

11. **Flexiplace** – see Section 4 – there are 4 options under the Flexiplace scheme
- i. home-based, which means working from home rather than being field based
 - ii. fully-flexible e.g. 2-3 days per week (averaged out over a month) that are worked at home or another County Council/partner location
 - iii. partly flexible i.e. mostly based in one location (not home) but occasional working in another County Council/partner location or home
 - iv. office based – this doesn't preclude occasional home-working or working from a partner organization
12. **9-day Fortnight** – in some parts, but not all of the County Council, there may be scope to work contracted hours in a fixed pattern of nine days instead of ten (e.g. not working alternate Tuesdays).
13. **Job Sharing** - job sharing can be considered for most jobs.
14. **Reduced Working Hours** - managers will consider proposals to reduce hours of work, taking account of operational needs and those of employees.
15. **Annualised Hours and Term Time Only Working** - peaks and troughs in workload mean that some teams can offer flexibility in the hours that staff are employed throughout the year. Where this meets both operational and individual needs annualised hours or term time only contracts may be possible.
16. **Unpaid leave** - a period of unpaid leave, for example to spend time with family, take a special holiday, career break or undertake a course of study, for up to 1 year, may be available. This must be subject to the agreement of the Head of Service who will take into account service requirements.
17. **Emergency Leave Scheme** – arrangements for taking time off to deal with emergencies - see separate policy.
18. **Special Leave** – arrangements for leave for e.g. duties associated with being a school governor or a member of the Territorial Army – see separate policy.

19. **Support for working carers** – identifies sources of support for those with caring responsibilities including Carers Planned Leave – see separate policy.
20. **Occupational Health Services** – provides support for someone returning from a period of ill-health. Can also provide access to counselling services (Social & Community Services staff have their own Staff Support Service).
21. **Parental Leave** - allows up to 13 weeks unpaid leave while children are aged under 5 (or up to 18 for disabled children).
22. **Maternity/Paternity/Adoption Schemes** - these schemes provide families with time off around the birth of a baby or arrival of an adopted child into the family.

For information about childcare contact the Children's Information Service on 08452 26 26 36 or visit www.oxoncis.org.uk

For information about childcare vouchers and how you can save by buying vouchers direct from salary before tax and national insurance deductions, contact **Childcare-Plus - freephone number 0800 161 3042** (or see the section on the intranet under about us>discounts and benefits). Childcare vouchers are received by the employee (either mothers or fathers) as part of their pay. Most staff will save approximately the equivalent of a month's childcare costs each year.

23. **Applying to work flexibly** See Section 9 – there is a legal right for parents with children aged 16 or under or disabled children aged 18 or under and for carers of adults to ask for a flexible working arrangement. A Carer is a person who provides or intends to provide care on a regular basis for a relative, partner, or friend who needs support due to physical or mental illness, learning disability physical disability, or frailty.

It is important to remember that whilst the employer has a duty to consider such requests, it may not be possible for all such requests to be approved. The process requires that you formally submit your request for flexible working arrangements in writing, have a meeting with your manager to discuss the issue and then receive his/her decision in writing. An application for flexible working can only be made once every 12 months but there is a right of appeal through the Raising Concerns at Work process if you feel the matter has not been fairly managed.

Responsibilities of employees

24. With due consideration to the needs of their service, employees wanting to work flexibly should:

- a) consider how to maintain their work/life balance by thinking through the implications of flexible working on their work and the impact on their colleagues
- b) ensure that contact arrangements will work effectively (e.g. use of in/out/white-boards, electronic diaries, phone numbers for each location they will be working from, mobile phone number etc)
- c) attend team meetings and one-to-one/supervision meetings with their manager
- d) carry out a health and safety risk assessment when they are working from a variety of locations and raise any issue of concern with their line manager.
- e) ensure the safety of Council equipment and information
- f) comply with relevant policies (e.g. Officer's Code of Conduct, Use of ICT, Data Protection, Health and Safety etc.)
- g) record their working time, taking regular rest breaks and holidays
- h) raise any concerns about their work/life balance or their flexible working arrangement with their line manager in the first instance
- i) recognize that home-working isn't a substitute for childcare.

Responsibilities of managers

26. To make sure that flexible arrangements don't adversely affect service delivery it is important that managers should:

- a) consider employee's requests and ensure that the needs of service users are met
- b) carry out a cost/benefit analysis (note: a business case for those employees fully based at home/fully flexible must have the support of the Head of Service)
- c) carry out a health and safety risk assessment for any employees that are fully home-based and ensure that action is taken to address the issues identified
- d) refer to the New Ways of Working Corporate Policy and Office Standards document
- e) discuss with employees when working hours are excessive (i.e. close to, or over 48 hours per week being worked on a regular basis), or too few, and/or worked at times outside of agreed hours. The causes must be investigated and an action plan agreed to mitigate the effects
- f) document the agreed arrangements in conjunction with HR using the forms in the appendices and ensure a copy of any agreement is added to the individual's personnel file
- g) establish effective systems for performance management to accommodate flexible working patterns and ensure that employees do not become isolated
- h) review arrangement on a regular basis, if circumstances change there may be a requirement or a request to return to standard working arrangements
- i) ensure arrangements for team communications and learning and development activities are built into flexible working agreements
- j) ensure fairness and consistency in application so particular groups are not put to a disadvantage e.g. employees without childcare responsibilities should not always be expected to cover early/late working requirements
- k) enlist the support of HR in discussions between themselves and their employees if required and to ensure that contractual changes are made if necessary.

Health and Safety

27. It is vital that Health and Safety issues are discussed when considering flexible working options. Managers have a duty to ensure that risk assessments are carried out. It may be more practical for the individual employee to carry out their own self risk assessment if they are working from a variety of locations. Managers must follow up on any areas of concern or issues that need clarification.
28. For more details see Health & Safety Procedure for flexiplace working, which includes relevant risk assessment documents. Health and Safety Advisors in Shared Services can also provide advice and guidance.
29. It is essential that if someone is working outside of normal office hours, travelling or working from a number of locations that their personal safety is not compromised.
30. At a minimum employees and their managers need to consider:
 - a) what the work involves (lifting, storage, visits)
 - b) personal issues (are they capable of working on their own, any medical conditions to consider, first aid provision, feeling isolated from the rest of the team)
 - c) where they will work (designated office space within their own home, locations across the County, will other people be in the house/other locations)
 - d) fire safety
 - e) data protection/security of information and its disposal
 - f) equipment needed (both ICT and furniture)
 - g) electrical testing
 - h) lone working and security issues
 - i) use of mobile phones (n.b. not whilst driving)
31. Under the Working Time Regulations no-one should work more than 48 hours a week averaged over a 17 week period unless derogations are in place for specific work groups. There must be at least a 30 minute unpaid break if working consecutively for 6 hours or more. For young workers (aged 16-18) the break must be 30 minutes after more than 4.5 hours work. An average of 11 hours consecutive rest between each working day should also be taken, and a 24 hour break for every seven days worked. Annual leave entitlement must always be planned and taken.
32. Managers must refer employees to Occupational Health if they believe their health is being affected by working long hours.

Appeal Process

33. If a manager and employee cannot come to an agreement about a flexible working arrangement then they should discuss this with the Employment Advisory Service. If an employee wishes to return to a non-flexible working arrangement or a manager has concerns about the effectiveness of a flexible working arrangement then this should also be discussed with the Employment Advisory Service.

34. If the employee believes that the arrangements are being applied unreasonably then they may take action under the Raising Concerns at Work policy.

Monitoring

35. Monitoring of the uptake of flexible working will be undertaken by HR Advisors and HR Business Partners as appropriate.

Review

36. This policy has been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council's comprehensive equality scheme and will be reviewed in due course to ensure that it continues to meet its aims.

Head of Human Resources
August 2008 (Amended May 2012)

Other related policies:

- Confidentiality Statement
- Data protection policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Managing personal data guidance
- Monitoring sickness absence
- Working time regulations
- Flexitime scheme
- New Ways of Working
- Office Standards
- One to One Policy
- Use of ICT Policy

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These include other languages, large print, Braille, audio cassette, computer
disk or email. Please contact (01865) 815399.**

Section 2 - Clear Desk & Screen Guidance

Oxfordshire County Council is committed to a clear desk and screen standard for work areas in office buildings as part of the move towards creating more flexible working environments. The reasons for adopting this approach include the need to:

1. maintain the security of systems which handle sensitive and confidential information
2. create a climate of openness and space sharing to encourage efficient use of resources
3. reduce accidents, spills and anxiety caused by a disorganised workspace

The primary purpose of this guidance is therefore to ensure sensitive papers and documents are not exposed to unauthorised persons/desk sharers. This guidance should be read in conjunction with:

- *Confidentiality Statement*
- *Data Protection Act*
- *Use of ICT Policy*

The principles of this guidance need to be applied at the end of working day and at other times when the working areas are not occupied. It is recognised that in order to comply with the Clear Desk & Screen Guidance staff will be provided with appropriate filing and storage space.

Line Managers must ensure that all staff are aware that they have an obligation to safeguard and ensure the correct handling of confidential information. It is important that all staff understand that a breach of confidentiality could be a matter for disciplinary action.

1. Physical location & security

- Contents of in-trays should be locked away at cease work.
- PC's should be logged out when unattended during the working day.
- Confidential information should not be kept in desk drawers/pedestals.

2. Procedures for handling information

2.1 Fax Machines, Printers & Photocopiers.

- Ensure all printing, photocopying and faxes are collected promptly or sent to a multi-functional device into which a code is entered to enable printing
- Do not arrange for any faxes to be sent to you in your absence unless these will be received into your email system and thus remain secure until your return.

2.2 Telephones & Voicemail.

- When taking telephone messages for others when desk sharing – put the message in the relevant in-tray, do not leave on the desk.
- Keep voicemail messages up to date. If away for any length of time, ensure that an alternative contact is given in the message.

3. Storage, archiving and destruction of information

- Desks should be cleared of all documents & papers at the end of each working day and placed in storage provided.
- File paperwork regularly.
- Notice boards need to be kept clear of confidential information and, if desk sharing, personal items should be cleared away.
- Files should be either logged out or filed back correctly – do not leave any files on desks.
- Confidential information must not be kept on open shelving.

Related policies and procedures

- Confidentiality statement
- Data protection policy
- New ways of working
- Office standards
- Use of ICT policy

Section 3 – Flexiplace scheme

Introduction

1. Oxfordshire County Council encourages working at home or other locations where this is appropriate.
2. Such arrangements can:
 - reduce unnecessary travel and hence environmental damage;
 - result in work being carried out more efficiently;
 - provide better service delivery
 - help employees to balance their work and family commitments more effectively;
 - help employees to work at times when they are at their most effective
 - enable employees with disabilities to enter or remain in employment where this would otherwise be difficult
 - enable employees returning from sickness absence or adapting to a temporary disability to contribute as much as they can.

Initiating Flexiplace Arrangements

3. Flexiplace agreements should be entered into on a voluntary basis between an employee or a group of employees and their manager. It is recognised that some employees may be unable to work at home because, for example, their accommodation or other household circumstances make it impractical. Where a proposal involves a group of employees, UNISON (or the appropriate Trade Union) should be involved through the normal directorate consultative arrangements. Employees should be able to return to conventional working arrangements if they wish, by agreement with their manager. This may in part need to be determined by overall team arrangements and operational requirements.
4. In considering which aspects of a job are appropriate for carrying out at home or another location, managers must consider three aspects – the job, the person and the environment/location. Managers should also take into account the following:
 - there should be no reductions in the level and quality of service
 - there should be clear objectives and measurable outputs (e.g. the production of reports)
 - it must be possible to do the work with minimal/reduced face-to-face contact or direct supervision
 - working at home or another location should be carried out at times when the employee does not need to be accessible in person or available for meetings at short notice
 - appropriate arrangements must be made for the employee to supervise any other staff for whom s/he is responsible
 - there should be no increase in workload for colleagues as a result of an employee working at home or another location
 - it must be safe for the work to be carried out at home or other location

- the safety and security of Council equipment/property/information must be ensured
- arrangements should be made to protect confidential information in line with Data Protection policies and any directorate record management protocols
- appropriate arrangements must be in place for recording working time
- arrangements must be in place for effective communication with the workplace to be maintained (see also section on equipment)
- an agreed base must be designated for each employee (this will usually be the main office where their manager/team is located).

Flexiplace options

5. There are 4 options under the Flexiplace scheme
 - a. **Home-based** – this involves an employee in a mobile occupation (i.e. one which entails visiting sites/clients etc.) using their home rather than an office as the base from which journeys are undertaken or an employee whose work has traditionally been done in an office or other workplace that can as easily be done from home. This option **MUST** be set up in a way which ensures good contact arrangements are maintained with the manager/team
 - b. **Fully flexible** - regularly working from home or another County Council/partner location for 2-3 days per week (averaged out over a month). The contractual base will be a designated office/work location.
 - c. **Partly flexible** - mostly based in one office/location but occasionally working at home or in another County Council/partner location (e.g. using a free desk when a meeting ends in an office to save travelling back to main base or working at a location near to home before going on to another location, again to prevent travel to base which is further away)
 - d. **Office based** – this option doesn't preclude occasional home-working or working from a partner organisation (e.g. preparing for an appraisal, work on a report, carry out a short piece of project work)

Contracts

6. In case a) above the contract of employment should reflect that someone's base is their home and in addition a flexible working agreement should be filled in and placed on the individual's personal file. In cases b) and c) above a flexible working agreement should be filled in and placed on the individual's personal file (see section 5 of the Flexible working/work-life balance policy).
7. In case d) above there should be prior agreement from the manager about the arrangement and contact details agreed.

Time Recording

8. Working time should be recorded whenever it is carried out. In case a) above, travelling time is counted as working time (i.e. excluding the first/last journey to/from home).
9. Employees working under one of the options of the flexiplace scheme must still complete their contractually agreed hours. Extra time worked should be agreed in advance with their manager and dealt with under existing flexitime/TOIL/overtime arrangements (see Section 3).

Equipment

10. Equipment needed to enable an employee to work flexibly will usually need to be purchased from the normal directorate equipment budget (also see paragraphs 26-30 re Health and Safety and ICT Service level agreement). Detailed advice on ICT equipment can be obtained from directorate ICT managers. Please also refer to the Use of ICT policy.
11. ICT support can often be delivered over the phone. If the problem cannot be resolved then equipment will need to be brought in for investigation and repair. ICT staff will visit office/home locations within reasonable travelling distance if issues cannot be resolved over the phone or equipment cannot be brought in, see section 5 for more details.
12. If an employee has their home as their permanent base, then it may be necessary to have office furniture provided if they don't have their own that is suitable. Lockable storage may need to be provided too, particularly for confidential material. It may also be necessary to install a phone line. A declaration will need to be signed to say that it will only be used for business purposes and the contract will be between the supplier and the County Council. Managers should check the bills to ensure that personal calls are not being made (see Section 8 of the Flexible working/work-life balance policy for declaration form).
13. If someone is found to be making personal calls using a business line then they may be liable for Tax/NI and disciplinary action may also be taken.
14. If a mobile phone is required for business use again the employee must sign a declaration that they will only make limited personal use. See Section 8.
15. If Broadband installation in the employee's home is a business requirement then again a declaration will need to be made that states that the employee will only use it for business purposes and any personal use will be insignificant or incidental. Again the contract should be between the County Council and the provider (see Sections 7 and 8 of the Flexible working/work-life balance policy for the equipment and declaration forms).
16. Staff being set to to work from home who already have broadband will not receive any compensation for this expense as it is one they had already incurred and thus the tax implications are not relevant. It should be noted

that ICT service desk will NOT support wireless internet connections or personal computers used at home.

17. If someone is found to be making substantial use of a Council supplied Broadband facility for personal use then they may be liable for Tax/NI and disciplinary action may also be taken.
18. Any necessary office consumables should be ordered through the usual channels and collected by the employee.
19. An inventory of council equipment issued to an employee working flexibly should be recorded and placed on the employee's personal file. See Section 4.

Insurance

20. Employees who have agreed a flexible working arrangement with their manager are covered by the County Council's insurance arrangements for employer's liability and personal accident as if they were at work.
21. Advice on the insurance position for equipment can be obtained from the County Council's insurance officer on 01865 815518.

Mortgage/letting arrangements, Council tax, home insurance and Capital Gains Tax

22. Individuals must check for themselves with their lender/agent and on any implications for Council Tax and business rates if they are spending any of their time working at/from home.
23. Individuals must also check for themselves if their home insurance policy is affected if they spend some/most of their time working from home.
24. Individuals should contact their tax office if they make building alterations and devote an entire room to their employment, as they could be liable for Capital Gains Tax if they sell their home.

Team meetings/Training

25. Managers should ensure that team meetings and any training sessions are arranged so that someone working at home or another location can participate fully.

Health and Safety

26. Most of the regulations made under the Health & Safety at Work Act apply to employees working at home as well as to employees working at County Council premises. A self risk assessment (including a work-station assessment under Display Screen Equipment (DSE) regulations) must be carried out by employees working from a variety of locations and electrical equipment supplied by the County Council should be regularly tested.

27. If an employee is fully based from home then the manager should carry out the risk assessment or arrange for it to be carried out by another appropriate person.
28. Managers should ensure that any actions required as a result of the self risk assessment are carried out promptly in consultation with directorate Health and Safety Advisers.
29. A copy of the self risk assessment and agreed action plan should be sent to HR to be kept on the individual's personal file.
30. The recommendations set out in the Health and Safety Executive publication 'Homeworking: Guidance for Employers and Employees on Health and Safety' should be followed, and both the employee and their manager should read this – it is available at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indq226.pdf>

Working at Home Allowance

31. Only under flexiplace options a) and b) where individuals are working from home will an allowance be payable to employees. This is currently £50.00 per month and is intended to compensate the employee for increased energy costs at home, and for household wear and tear. The allowance attracts tax and national insurance deductions (apart from the first £3 per week). For those working fully flexibly or part-time the allowance may be pro-rata to the proportion of the agreed time working at home.

When an employee leaves the County Council

32. When an employee leaves it is the responsibility of their manager to ensure that all equipment is returned and contracts with service providers cancelled.

Travelling arrangements - reimbursement for work journeys

33. When an employee is working under option a) i.e. home-based (either because this is what the Council requires, or the employee chooses to do so), the Council must deduct tax and National Insurance from any claim for travel between home and the former or nominal workplace.
34. If the Council requires you to work from home, you can claim all journeys from home to other sites as normal business mileage.
35. If you have opted to work from home under Flexiplace, you can only claim the lower of mileage from nominal work base to site and home to site.
36. There are special arrangements for Home Support Assistants, paying mileage from first client to last client each day. The Council makes some exceptions for emergency and return calls.

Reviews and directorate arrangements

37. Managers should schedule in regular reviews with employees working flexibly and review their working arrangements during the appraisal process.
38. This scheme may be supplemented by more detailed guidelines where appropriate within individual directorates.

Termination of a flexiplace option

39. If an employee wishes to terminate a flexible working option then they should discuss the practicalities with their manager. If they cannot reach agreement then they should involve the Employment Advisory Service. Equipment should be returned and any contracts with providers terminated.
40. If a manager has concerns that a flexible working option is resulting in a loss of performance or having a bad effect on an employee's health then they should discuss this with the employee. If the flexible working arrangement is terminated then the manager should contact the Employment Advisory Service.

Section 4 – ICT support for home based workers

Full Support

Employees using an Oxfordshire County Council funded internet connection (line and router) and supplied equipment will be entitled to full support from the ICT Service Desk including a home visit if that becomes necessary. This means that the business manager for your directorate has accepted and supported a business case for you to work from home either on a full time or occasional basis.

Best endeavours

You may be using Oxfordshire County Council supplied equipment but a business case has not been agreed for you to work from home; for convenience or other reasons you have decided to do so and connection to the internet, MyMail or MyApps will be supported on best endeavours. This means that priority will be given to those entitled to full support and the Service Desk will do all that they can to help you as long as it does not impact on their full support work load. If you are using Oxfordshire County Council supplied equipment support may include you bringing the equipment to a County Council site for further diagnosis and resolution.

Setting up for home working – fully supported

In some instances, directorates will agree to fund a home business broadband line which is separate from your personal broadband line. ICT Services will only act on a request which has been endorsed by a directorate business manager. The recommended product is BT Business broadband. Once a properly authorised request has been received ICT Services will liaise with BT for them to install the business broadband line in your home. The line installation and quarterly maintenance will be billed to your directorate.

How to apply for this service

To apply for this service you will need to raise a request with the ICT Service Desk (ict.servicedesk@oxfordshire.gov.uk or 0845 052 1000) and supply the following information:

- Emails from your line manager and directorate business manager authorising you to request an OCC funded broadband line
- An invoice address for BT's installation and quarterly billing
- The site address for the BT installation including the full and accurate post code
- The inventory (asset) number of your OCC PC or laptop
- If appropriate, a request for access to person or shared documents stored on the OCC network (not via Document Manager) via Netmotion. This carries an additional cost, see below.
- Request to use the line for voice if approved by your business manager. This carries additional variable charges that must be agreed by your business manager

For full time working from home, ICT Services will make arrangements to attend your home to set up your laptop so that you are able to access the network. If you are fully authorised to work form home and have been set up to do so and require Service Desk support you should log a call in the same manner as if you were at work in the office.

Setting up for home working – Best endeavours support

The following services can be accessed with your work PC or laptop via your personal internet connection:

- Email (Mymail - <https://mymail.oxfordshire.gov.uk>)
- A growing number of applications ([MyApps](#))
- Document Manager (MyDocs)

However, Oxfordshire County Council laptops and PCs are not normally configured for use with domestic broadband or for use in public or private locations such as railway stations or hotels. To use your work PC or laptop to access the above services via internet from home, you need to complete the following steps.

1. Set up your own home router/modem to work with your Oxfordshire County Council laptop. If you use a modem or a wireless router you will need to install the modem/router software on your work laptop. You will need to contact the ICT Service and ask to be allowed temporary administrative rights to install the software. These rights will be removed once the installation has been completed. This will not be necessary if you have a four port router into which you can directly plug your laptop.
2. Alter the internet browser (proxy) setting on your laptop to allow access to the internet. Please follow the instructions **How to remove the proxy settings** under ICT Support >Self-help pages > Intranet and web

If you wish to access personal or shared documents stored on the Oxfordshire County Council network) i.e. documents that are **not** stored in Document Manager) you will need additional chargeable software installed on your work laptop or PC. This software is called Netmotion and the current cost is £189.00. To request Netmotion you will need to raise a request with the ICT Service Desk and provide the following information:

- Emails from your line manger and directorate business manager authorising you to work form home using your personal broadband connection;
- The inventory (asset) number of your OCC laptop;
- The name of the broadband supplier;
- The make and model of the ethernet router;
- The cost centre code, general ledger code and the cost centre manager's name;

Your work laptop will then need to be reconfigured to work with your personal broadband. You may need to bring your laptop to a County Council office location for the work to be carried out.

Section 5 - Flexible working agreement

This agreement details the flexible working arrangements agreed between

_____ and _____
(Line manager) (Employee)

Working arrangements will take effect from _____ and will be in accordance with the County Council's policy on flexible working and work-life balance.

A review of these working arrangements will take place on _____ or sooner if operational effectiveness or quality of service drops, or if there are other changes which require a different working pattern. In these cases the provisions of the scheme can be withdrawn at any time.

All equipment provided by Oxfordshire County Council will be used for work purposes only, and any personal use will be **incidental or insignificant**.

Particular arrangements that will apply in this case are

Signed _____ Signed _____
(Line manager) (Employee)

Date _____

Section 6 – Equipment form to accompany a flexible working agreement

- i) To be completed by the line manager on induction or when a flexible working arrangement is set up
- ii) Keep on employee's file until employment is terminated or flexible working option ends
- iii) Complete during exit interview or when flexible working option ends (confirm items returned)
- iv) Return all documentation to directorate HR team.

Employee Name:

Post title:

Line Manager name:

Item	Issued		Return/ transfer		R/T	Authorised by
	Date	Signed by	Date	Signed by		
Mobile Phone (Inventory/ Serial number)						
Pager (Inventory/ Serial number)						
Keys:						
Front Door Car Park Room Key Filing Cabinet Desk Key						
Card Key						
Car Pass						
ID Card (s)						
Palm pilot (Inventory/ Serial number)						
Bus Pass (Issue number)						
Uniform						
Printer (Inventory/ Serial number)						

PC (Inventory/ Serial number)						
Additional Items (include Inventory/ Serial number)						

Please ensure that this form is held on the employee's personnel file by sending to Pay and Employment Information Service as soon as possible.

NOTE:

When the individual gives notice of their intention to leave the authority, the inventory must be collected back in by the line manager and signed below as confirmation of receipt of all items. Failure to carry out this activity and/or return all County Council property could result in formal action being taken as necessary.

Comments:

Signature.....

Print Name.....

Date.....
(Member of Staff leaving)

Signature.....

Print Name.....

Date.....
(Manager undertaking Exit Interview)

Section 7 - Declaration forms

A - Terms & conditions of mobile phone issue and use

Your line manager has highlighted a need for you to be provided with a mobile phone. Once your request has been authorised you must read and sign this document to confirm acceptance of the terms and conditions laid out by Oxfordshire County Council. Personal use of a business mobile phone must be kept to a minimum otherwise there are tax and NI implications.

Private use of mobile phones

If you do make occasional use of your mobile for personal calls, you **must** reimburse the County Council on a regular basis, including the VAT. Please give the money to your office manager/finance assistant/team administrator, as appropriate to your office.

If you need to make an emergency call to advise of your delay the County Council will pay for this call.

Use of Personal Mobile Phones

Where a personal mobile phone is used for business calls, any reimbursement for calls made must be backed up by an itemised statement of numbers called and cost. Where itemised statements are not provided, a list of calls made must be kept as evidence of additional expenditure and submitted with the claim.

Where a mobile phone contract is for an inclusive limit on calls/texts which is exceeded due to business calls, no reimbursement will be made unless there is evidence of additional expenditure.

Mobile Phones in Cars

Please note that the use of a mobile phone whilst driving a car is strictly prohibited. The phone must only be used when the car is stationary and the engine switched off.

Periods of Absence

During lengthy periods of absence other than annual leave or short term sickness absence you should return your mobile phone to your line manager.

Return of Mobile Phone

On leaving the Directorate or moving from one team to another this mobile phone must be returned to your line manager and they are responsible for re-allocation. Under no circumstances should this phone be passed onto another member of staff (with the exception of your line manager).

Security of phone

You should use a pin-number to maintain the security of your phone and take every care to keep safe. Should you lose your phone or if it is stolen you should inform (please insert here.....)

Team mobiles are the responsibility of the line manager.

Misuse

Whilst this phone is signed out in your name it is **your** responsibility to ensure that all due care and attention is used to ensure that the phone is not abused in any way.

Should the phone not be returned to your line manager or is passed on and the procedures not followed then disciplinary action may be taken and the full cost of the phone plus calls and rental will be your responsibility.

Undertaking

I understand that by signing this form I am agreeing to the terms and conditions laid down by Oxfordshire County Council.

I understand that I must not:

- Call inappropriate numbers
- Make personal calls without paying for them
- Pass the phone to another member of staff

Please note that unless you agree to these terms and conditions a mobile will not be ordered. A copy of this form must be sent to your directorate HR team before the phone can be ordered.

Signature (Name).....
(Mobile Phone Holder)

Date Division of Service

Signature (Name)
(Line Manager)

Date Division of Service

Line Manager – send to Pay and Employment Information team to place a copy on their personal file. Record date of issue (and return) on equipment record form).

Section 7 – declaration forms continued

B - Terms & conditions of broadband issue and use

Your line manager has highlighted a need for you to be provided with broadband. Once your request has been authorised you must read and sign this document to confirm acceptance of the terms and conditions laid out by Oxfordshire County Council.

Personal use of broadband must be incidental and insignificant otherwise there are tax and NI implications. Where individuals have their own broadband account it will be deemed that personal use is significant and no reimbursement will be made. Payment will only be made where the employee has been required to obtain home broadband for operational reasons and the account will be invoiced to Oxfordshire County Council.

Misuse

Whilst you have broadband it is **your** responsibility to ensure that there is no misuse of it in accordance with The Use of Information and Communication Technology policy.

Undertaking

I understand that by signing this form I am agreeing to the terms and conditions laid down by Oxfordshire County Council.

I confirm that any private use is incidental and insignificant.

Please note that unless you agree to these terms and conditions broadband will not be ordered. A copy of this form must be sent to your directorate HR team before broadband can be ordered.

Signature

(Name)

(Broadband user)

DateDivision of Service

Signature

(Name)

(Line Manager)

DateDivision of Service

Line Manager – send to Pay & Employment Information team to place a copy on their personal file. Record date of issue (and termination of contract with the provider when necessary) on equipment record form.

Section 8 – Manager’s checklist for staff working flexibly

ITEMS TO CHECK	DATE COMPLETED
1) Employee expresses interest in working flexibly	
2) Hold informal discussion and ensure employee has read the flexible working/work life balance policy and any necessary related policies. Discuss requirements for equipment and consider the impact on the job, the person and the location.	
3) Arrange follow up meeting after of completed application allowing time to get answers to points 4-8.	
4) After consideration of application decide if:- a) Agreement in principle subject to cost analysis b) Rejection – what grounds.	
5) Before speaking to employee, if 4b discuss issue with HR Adviser in EAS to clarify next steps and take advice If 4a, follow steps 6-8 <u>before</u> speaking to employee.	
6) Carry out full cost analysis, including discussions with directorate staff.	
7) Discuss all financial and other implications with appropriate manager including the impact on other employees.	
8) Draw up planned timetable with approximate date when amendments to contract can commence. Order necessary equipment.	
9) Inform employee of outcome to application.	
10) Agree points on hours being worked, changes to duties, reporting lines, nominated base, base from where he/she will collect or order stationery mail etc. Set the approximate date for equipment to be set up in employees home. How long the flexible working arrangement will last for.	
11) Agree review date.	

12) Agree the notice period to end the amendment to contract on either side.	
13) Agree start date of amendment to contract flexible working arrangement with employee.	
14) Inform HR Adviser of start date plus all points agreed in 10)	
15) Arrange with HR Adviser to receive Working from Home Allowance if taking up options a) or b) in Flexible Working Policy.	
16) Ask employee to carry out a self-assessment for hours at their flexible working location	
17) List all equipment for audit that is in employee's possession home.	
18) Advise Health and Safety officer of any electrical equipment that needs annual check.	
19) Advise all other relevant parties about change in working location and/or need to collect mail/order stationery etc.	
20) Change directorate records and advise others on strictly "need to know" basis of new contact address or telephone number.	
21) Inform ICT re: servicing of equipment and Administration re: payment of invoices and bills for telephone connection/rental/bills.	
22) Check that employee has advised mortgage landlord/insurers etc.	

Remember: It is important to note that whilst the right to apply for flexible working does not give any guarantee that the request will be granted, in the interest of fair treatment for all staff, managers must be clear in their conversations and communication with the member of staff the reason for any refusal as the employee has the right to appeal against your decision to a more senior manager.

The priority in all cases has to be the maintenance of effective and efficient public services. However, wherever possible managers are encouraged to think widely about how best to support any member of staff with particular needs for an amended work pattern before coming to their decision.

Section 9 - Applying to work flexibly

This scheme explains how employees can apply to the County Council to work flexibly as a result of their childcare or caring responsibilities. Sympathetic consideration will also be given to employees with health issues who would benefit from working flexibly.

What is flexible working?

Under this scheme employees applying to work flexibly may request:

- A change to the hours they work
- A change to the times they work
- To work from home.

This may include requests for working patterns such as guaranteed hours, compressed hours, flexitime, flexi place, job sharing, shift working, staggered hours and term time working.

Who is eligible to apply?

Employees with children under the age of 16 (or with disabilities, under the age of 18) or who have caring responsibilities for relatives, partners or friends who need support due to illness, disability or frailty are eligible to apply, provided they:

- have 26 weeks or more continuous local government service at the time they apply, and
- have responsibility for the child's upbringing or providing unpaid care
- have not made a request to work flexibly in the last twelve months.

Sympathetic consideration will also be given to applications from

- employees with children over the age of 16, or
- employees with personal health issues

Except in exceptional circumstances, employees must not have made another application to work flexibly in the previous 12 months.

How to apply

An application form for requesting to work flexibly can be found in section 10 which you need to complete, and pass to the Employment Advisory Service in Shared Services. If your request is agreed you will receive confirmation in writing from your line manager. The Flexible working Agreement form can be found in Section 5.

Meeting to discuss the request

As soon as possible and in any event within 28 days of receiving the application, a meeting will be arranged with you by your line manager to discuss the request and how it might be accommodated. It will also provide an opportunity to consider other working patterns should it be difficult to accommodate the desired work pattern.

You are entitled to bring a colleague or trade union representative to the meeting.

Decision

Within 14 days of the meeting you will be advised by your manager, in writing, as to the outcome of the application. The decision will be either

- to agree to a new work pattern together with an effective date for the change, (and whether a trial period has been agreed) or
- to provide clear business grounds for not being able to agree to the request and the reasons why the grounds apply in the circumstances.

Occasionally it may be necessary to carry out further investigation following the meeting before a final decision can be made. In these circumstances you will be advised of this and will be given a date by which the final decision will be given.

Right of appeal

Employees have the right to appeal against the decision in writing to the next level of management, copied to the Employment Advisory Service within 14 days of being notified of the decision. The appeal will be dealt with under the Oxfordshire County Council Raising Concerns at Work Procedure.

Future changes

It is important to note that once a change of pattern has been agreed and implemented there is no legal right to revert back to your former work pattern should your childcare situation or caring responsibilities change. It is therefore important that you have considered carefully all the implications for you of your proposed change before applying.

However, you may make a subsequent request to change your work pattern after 12 months had elapsed, which would be considered under the terms of this procedure.

Grounds for refusal

Oxfordshire County Council may refuse the application only if one or more of the following grounds apply:

- The burden of additional costs
- The detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand
- Inability to recruit additional staff
- Detrimental impact on quality
- Detrimental impact on performance
- Insufficiency of work during the periods the employee is proposing to work
- Planned structural changes
- Other reasons that Oxfordshire County Council must specify

Extension of time limits

An extension to the time limits set out in this scheme may be agreed between you and Oxfordshire County Council, provided that it is recorded in writing (Extension of

Time Limit letter which specifies what time limit the extension relates to, the date on which the extension is to end) and copied to you.

This is likely to happen where, at the meeting to discuss your request, further time is needed to consider an alternative pattern.

Withdrawal of application

Oxfordshire County Council will treat an application as withdrawn where the employee

- Has notified Oxfordshire County Council that s/he is withdrawing the application
- Failed to attend a meeting under this scheme more than once without good reason
- Without reasonable cause refused to provide the information required in order to reach a decision about the application

The withdrawal of the application will be confirmed in writing by Oxfordshire County Council unless the employee has already given written notice of the withdrawal of his/her application.

Section 10 – Flexible working application form

Name:

Payroll Number:

Directorate:

Manager:

To the employer

I would like to apply to work a flexible working pattern that is different to my current working pattern under my right provided by law. I confirm I meet the eligible criteria as follows:

- I have worked continuously as an employee of Oxfordshire County Council for the last 26 weeks.
- I have not made a request to work flexibly under this right during the past 12 months.

Please give a brief outline of the reason you are requesting to work flexibly:

Describe your current working pattern (days/hours/times worked):

Describe the working pattern you would like to work in future (days/hours/times worked):

I would like this working pattern to commence from:

Signed **Date**

**Please send completed forms to your manager and also send a copy to
Employment Advisory Service.**