

Hybrid Working Policy

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1. Introduction

The Integrated Care Board (ICB) is committed to providing an effective, flexible and modern working environment that enables employees to deliver high quality services whilst supporting wellbeing, inclusion and work-life balance.

Hybrid working describes arrangements where employees work across a range of suitable locations, including ICB offices, other NHS or partner organisation premises, home, or other approved work locations. Hybrid working supports effective service delivery through appropriate use of technology while maintaining collaboration, engagement and organisational culture.

The policy recognises that work is an activity rather than solely a place and seeks to balance individual flexibility with organisational requirements

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide a consistent framework for agreeing, managing and reviewing hybrid working arrangements.
- Support effective service delivery while enabling flexibility where appropriate.
- Promote wellbeing, engagement and inclusion.
- Ensure compliance with health and safety, information governance and employment requirements.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities for managers and employees.
- Set out the principles that underpin hybrid working arrangements within the ICB.

This policy complements but does not replace the Flexible Working Policy.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all ICB employees.

It covers hybrid working arrangements where employees undertake their duties across a combination of approved work locations.

This policy does not replace formal flexible working arrangements and is not intended for requests involving changes to contracted hours, working patterns or other contractual arrangements.

Not all roles will be suitable for hybrid working. Suitability will be determined based on service requirements, operational needs and role responsibilities.

4. Definitions

Term	Definition
Hybrid Working	Working across more than one approved location, including home, ICB offices, patients homes, NHS premises or partner organisations.
Home Working	Working from an employee's home as part of an agreed hybrid working arrangement.

Office First	A work profile where the majority of working time is spent in an office environment.
Remote First	A work profile where work is not location dependent and employees work across multiple locations, attending offices when required.
Hybrid Working Personal Plan	A documented agreement between an employee and manager outlining hybrid working arrangements.
Hub Office	Hub office location is the assigned to an employee for contractual and travel expense purposes.
Spoke Office	Spoke office location is a range of offices where staff can work from

5. Duties and Responsibilities

Integrated Care Board

- The ICB is responsible for ensuring that hybrid working arrangements support service delivery while complying with statutory, regulatory and governance requirements.

Chief Executive

- The Chief Executive has overall accountability for the implementation of this policy and ensuring compliance with relevant legislation.

People Team

- Providing advice and guidance on the application of the policy.
- Supporting managers and employees.
- Promoting consistent implementation across the organisation.
- Monitoring effectiveness and equality impacts.

Line Managers

- Applying the policy fairly and consistently.
- Considering suitability of hybrid working arrangements.
- Agreeing and reviewing Hybrid Working Personal Plans.
- Maintaining effective communication and performance management.
- Ensuring appropriate equipment and support are available.
- Should not disadvantage employees because of race, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or any other protected characteristic or other potential at risk group.
- Must have due regard to the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty and the organisation's responsibilities to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

All Staff

- Complying with this policy.
- Maintaining effective communication with managers and colleagues.
- Delivering agreed work objectives regardless of work location.
- Following information governance and security requirements.
- Taking reasonable care of their own health and safety.
- Participating in reviews of hybrid working arrangements.

6. Subject Matter of Policy

6.1 Principles of Hybrid Working

Hybrid working is intended to support effective service delivery, employee wellbeing and organisational resilience.

The following principles apply:

- Service delivery must not be adversely affected.
- Arrangements must support collaboration and team effectiveness.
- Employees remain accountable for outputs and performance.
- Arrangements should be fair, consistent and inclusive.

Employees working under a hybrid working arrangement are expected to ensure that suitable arrangements are in place to allow them to undertake their role effectively during agreed working hours, whether working from home or another approved location.

While the organisation recognises that employees may have caring responsibilities, hybrid working (in this case working from home) is not intended to replace regular childcare, dependent care, or other caring arrangements where these would impact an employee's ability to perform their duties, attend meetings, remain contactable, or meet the requirements of their role.

Employees who have caring responsibilities should refer to the ICB's Family Leave, which outlines the support available and may help inform discussions with their line manager regarding any adjustments or flexible working arrangements they may require.

The ICB requires employees working in hybrid arrangements to spend a minimum of 40% of their working time away from home and within an office base or approved work location.

This would normally equate to minimum of two days per week for full-time employees and will be pro-rated for part-time staff.

6.2 Determining Suitability

Managers and employees should consider:

- Service and operational requirements.
- Individual health, wellbeing and reasonable adjustment needs.
- Level of support required to enable hybrid working.
- Impact on performance and development.
- Individual circumstances balanced against organisational need.

6.3 Hybrid Working Personal Plans

Hybrid working arrangements should be agreed through discussion between managers and employees and documented within a Hybrid Working Personal Plan.

Arrangements should be reviewed regularly and updated where circumstances change.

6.4 Management of Hybrid Working Arrangements

Reviews

Hybrid working arrangements should be reviewed routinely through one-to-one meetings and any formal agreements reviewed annually.

Communication

Employees must remain contactable during agreed working hours and maintain effective communication using appropriate communication tools including Microsoft Teams.

Working Hours

Hybrid working does not constitute flexitime.

Employees must work agreed hours and comply with Working Time Regulations and relevant ICB policies.

6.5 Geographic and Commute Considerations

Where an employee's routine commute to their Office Hub or spoke presents significant travel challenges, managers may review office attendance requirements in consultation with the People Directorate.

As a guide, managers may wish to consider situations where a routine round-trip commute typically exceeds 2.5 to 3 hours. However, this should not be regarded as a fixed threshold, and individual circumstances will be considered.

Any concession will be considered based upon:

- Operational impact and mitigations possible to support remote working.
- Employee performance and output in relation to the potential impact of reduced time with colleagues and in the office.
- Organisational requirements and parity with other colleagues.
- The health, wellbeing and individual circumstances of the employee.
- Reasonable adjustments where applicable¹

Employees granted concessions remain contractually required to attend key meetings, team events and business-critical activities when required, with appropriate notice.

Managers and employees will need to complete the Geographic and Commute Considerations Agreement to ensure that there is a record of these arrangements in place, both in manager records and in the employee's personal file (Appendix 3).

Sickness Absence

The ICB cares for the welfare and wellbeing of all colleagues, particularly when colleagues are less visible. The ICB's Attendance Management Policy applies to all employees. Home working must not be used as an alternative to sickness absence.

¹ Reasonable adjustment are practical changes made by employers or service providers to remove or reduce disadvantages faced by disabled people

Equipment

The employee and their line manager will discuss and agree the equipment required to enable effective working. Where equipment is provided by the ICB, it remains the property of the organisation and must be returned on termination of employment or during extended periods of absence, such as maternity, adoption or other long-term leave. ICB equipment must not be used by unauthorised individuals, as this constitutes a breach of Information Governance requirements.

Where employees use personally adapted equipment, this will remain their property and may be used and transported between work locations as required, where this is possible. Where specialist equipment is required to enable an employee to work safely both from home and from an ICB workplace, and if is impractical for the employ to transport any equipment from home, the ICB will consider the most appropriate and reasonable solution, taking account of the employee's needs, the recommendations of Occupational Health, operational requirements and associated costs.

The ICB will not normally meet costs associated with hybrid working arrangements or the home environment, including furniture, broadband or internet access, utilities and other household expenses. However, reasonable adjustments and specialist equipment identified through Occupational Health will be considered in line with the ICB's statutory duties and relevant policies.

Designated Hub Office and Expenses

ICB employees' office location will be assigned to them and will be allocated as the ICB Hub Office location closest to their home address. The assigned ICB office location will be used in relation to mileage claims.

Employees should claim for any additional miles travelled in excess of their usual home-to-base mileage, in line with section 17 of the NHS Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook. Employees should manage travel and limit it where alternatives such as Microsoft Teams are available.

The ICB is not responsible for costs associated with the hybrid working therefore, ICB colleagues will not be entitled to claim expenses relating to household costs such as heating, lighting or power incurred through home working.

6.6 Managing Risks Associated with Hybrid Working

Health and Safety

The ICB remains committed to meeting its duties under health and safety legislation.

The Display Screen Equipment checklist should be reviewed annually or when major changes are made to equipment, furniture, the work environment or software; when users change workstations; when work tasks change considerably; or when controls may be causing other problems.

Employees need to ensure that they have undertaken a Display Screen Equipment checklist for their remote office set up, and in office set up. If the self-assessment or workstation checklist identifies risks, the line manager may need to seek further advice from the Health and Safety/Risk Manager or Occupational Health.

When working away from the office, employees may be lone workers depending on the working location. Employees should diarise their location for health and safety purposes.

Employees working remotely must:

- Complete required self-assessments.
- Complete Display Screen Equipment assessments.
- Report accidents, incidents and hazards.
- Comply with health and safety requirements.

Managers must respond sensitively where home working arrangements may present wellbeing or safety concerns and provide appropriate support and signposting.

The ICB is committed to supporting the health, safety and wellbeing of new, expectant and breastfeeding employees and fulfilling its responsibilities under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations.

The organisation's New, Expectant and Breastfeeding Employees Risk Assessment must be completed by the employee's line manager and should consider any risks associated with hybrid working arrangements, including the home-working environment, travel requirements and working patterns.

Where risks are identified, the line manager will work with the employee, Health and Safety Lead and the People team s to implement and regularly review any adjustments required.

Security and Information Governance

Employees must:

- Protect confidential information.
- Ensure secure use of systems and equipment.
- Prevent unauthorised access to information.
- Follow Information Governance policies and procedures.
- Working at Other Locations

When working from NHS, partner or public locations, employees remain responsible for maintaining confidentiality and complying with local health and safety requirements.

Working remotely at other office locations or public spaces

When working from office locations other than the designated hub or spoke, ICB policies and procedures still apply. The host organisation is responsible for the health and safety of the building, but employees remain responsible for their own health and safety and must follow local requirements such as signing in and out and fire evacuation procedures.

If work is carried out from a public space, colleagues must ensure they can maintain confidentiality and meet Information Governance requirements.

Working Time Regulations

Working Time Regulations must be considered in respect of hybrid working. Working hours must not be detrimental to health and wellbeing and must comply with the Working Time Regulations.

- Maximum weekly working time must not exceed 48 hours per 7-day period, averaged over a 17-week period.
- A rest break of at least 20 minutes should be taken when working more than 6 hours per day.
- An average of 11 consecutive hours' rest must be taken between each working day.
- A 24-hour break must be taken for every 7 days' work.
- Annual leave must be planned, authorised and taken.

Insurance and Legal Requirements

Employees are responsible for:

- Informing household insurers where appropriate.
- Ensuring tenancy, lease or mortgage conditions allow home working.
- Seeking independent advice regarding tax implications.
- Understanding any local authority implications relating to home working.

6.7 Concerns and Appeals

Employees who believe they have been treated unfairly under this policy may raise concerns through the Grievance and Disputes Policy.

Advice is available through the People Directorate and recognised Trade Union representatives.

7. Training and Implementation

Advice can be sought from the People team on the implementation and interpretation of this policy. The ICB is committed to delivering training and awareness sessions for employees and managers, including managing and working remotely.

The ICB will support implementation through:

- Publication of the policy on the intranet.
- Briefings and awareness sessions.
- Guidance for managers and employees.
- Advice from the People Directorate.

Employees are expected to comply with the requirements of this policy and any agreed Hybrid Working Personal Plan. Where concerns arise regarding compliance, these will normally be addressed through discussion, support, and management review in the first instance. However, serious or repeated breaches or noncompliance of this policy may be investigated and, where appropriate, managed in accordance with the ICB's Disciplinary Policy.

8. Monitoring

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through:

- Employee and manager feedback.
- Review of hybrid working travel concession arrangements.
- Monitoring of reasonable adjustment requests.
- Complaints, concerns and appeals.

Monitoring outcomes will be reviewed through appropriate People governance arrangements and reported to relevant committees as required.

9. Review, Ratification and Archiving

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner where legislative, regulatory, organisational or operational changes require review.

Following review, the policy will be submitted through appropriate governance arrangements for approval and ratification.

Superseded versions will be archived in accordance with the ICB records management requirements.

10. Dissemination and Publication

Dissemination of the final policy is the responsibility of the author. They must ensure the policy is uploaded on the intranet via the Communications Team. The Communications team is responsible to issue an organisation-wide notification of the existence of the Policy.

Heads of Departments/Managers are responsible for ensuring that all staff (including bank, agency, contracted and volunteers) have access to and are made aware of policies that apply to them.

All staff will be able to access copies of policies via the policy section of the ICB intranet.

11. References and Associated Documents

Associated documents include:

- Flexible Working Policy
- Attendance Management Policy
- Performance Management Policy
- Grievance and Disputes Policy
- Display Screen Equipment Policy
- Accident and Incident Reporting Procedure
- Domestic Abuse and Sexual Safety Policy
- Information Governance Staff Code of Conduct
- Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Family Leave Policy,

Legislation and guidance include:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992
- NHS People Plan
- NHS Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook

12. Impact Assessments

Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)

This proposal has been through an Equality Impact Initial Assessment process and no identifiable or potential adverse impact against any protected characteristics or inclusion health group have been identified or mitigating actions/reasonable adjustments have been taken. In the event of any new data, information or reporting, identifying any adverse or potential adverse impact, this assessment will be reviewed, and a full impact assessment will be carried out where it is deemed necessary to do so. Accessible and inclusive Information and equality monitoring (where it is practical to do so) have been considered or implemented.

Data Protection Impact Assessment

The policy requires compliance with all Information Governance and data protection requirements. A DPIA will be completed where hybrid working arrangements introduce any significant processing risks.