

Meath County Council

Blended Working Policy & Procedure

June 2022

Document Information

Title	Blended Working Policy and Procedure		
Document Classification	HR Policy Document		
Checked by	Martin Murray Director of Services	Approved By	Jackie Maguire Chief Executive
Date	03/06/2022	Date	03/06/2022
Responsibility for Review	Human Resources Management and People Development	Next Review Date	03/06/2025
Related Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blended Working Framework (LGMA) (2022) • Right to Disconnect Policy (2022) • Acceptable IT Usage Policy (2022) 		

Document Control					
Issue no	Date	Description	Prepared by	Checked by:	Approved by:
1	03/06/2022	Blended Working Policy and Procedure	HR		

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Blended Working Policy and Procedure

1. Policy Statement

The implementation of blended working in Meath County Council will at its fundamental starting point, focus on the organisational needs of the local authority. At its core, the provision of public services and facilities by local government is by public facing service delivery. Meath County Council is committed to excellence in the delivery of our broad range of services and the quality of our customer service. In this context, Meath County Council will implement Blended Working while maintaining our commitment to the delivery of the highest standard of public services directly to citizens and local communities.

Meath County Council is committed to a blended working policy that maximises the opportunities for a blended working approach with attendance at the Council's onsite location, where required, to allow for face-to-face interaction and collaboration with colleagues and service users. Blended working will also support effective teamwork, sustain good working relationships, and maintain a sense of belonging.

As part of the Council's implementation of a blended working approach to the delivery of services, this Blended Working Policy and Procedure has been developed, in line with the Sectoral Blended Working Framework.

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to adapt to any changes required to meet the needs of the Council employees, and to incorporate any broader strategies and approaches to new ways of working.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Meath County Council.

3. Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this document is to outline Meath County Council's Blended Working Policy and Procedure including:

- Right to Request Blended Working
- Application Procedure for Blended Working
- Decision Processes
- Agreeing a Request for Blended Working
- Right to Refuse and Grounds for Refusal
- Right to Review
- Safety, Health and Welfare
- Location
- Office Accommodation.

4. Communication of Policy

Meath County Council will communicate its Blended Working Policy to employees and to newly recruited employees during their induction.

5. Right to Request Blended Working

This policy outlines the policy and procedure whereby employees can make a request for blended working.

Blended working must not be used as a substitute for annual leave or sick leave. Blended working is not a replacement for other flexible working arrangements to meet caring responsibilities. While, blended working may have benefits for persons with caring responsibilities, any caring responsibilities must take place outside of working time. In terms of work, there is no difference between working at a remote location and working in office/ workstation other than the location.

6. Attendance Patterns

Where a blended working application is received, each application and the appropriate office attendance will be considered on an individual basis. However, the application must also be assessed giving due consideration to the Council's wider organisational, functional and team requirements.

Where employees are already engaged in work sharing or similar policies, an application for blended working must be considered, in conjunction, with minimum office attendance requirements.

Specific days of workplace attendance and remote working will be determined by the senior management in each Department. A consistent approach to assessment must be taken across all areas of the Council and the initial approval will be fixed for a minimum period of six months. Any change to this will be the subject to approval and four weeks' notice.

The move to blended working will not, of itself, change existing hours of attendance. In line with the sectoral framework, it will remain a matter for each individual local authority to determine its hours of attendance, reflecting its' individual functional requirements. Meath County Council will operate a Blended Working attendance model of a minimum of 3 days attendance in the office and a maximum of 2 days working remotely per week. This model will be applied pro-rata for employees not working a 5-day week.

7. Flexitime Accrual

In the initial implementation of blended working, flexitime accrual will only be allowed for all blended working employees while in the office only i.e. those days where an employee is in attendance in the office.

In accordance with the Council's Flexi Policy, the period for when flexitime accrual can take place is 30 minutes prior to each staff member's official start time and ends at 6.00pm each evening.

Application to Request Blended Working

8. Application Process

When an employee wishes to request blended working, the employee is required to formally apply, outlining the full details of the application, initially to their line manager, using the Council's Blended Working Application Form (see Appendix I for outline Application Form). Requests will only be accepted via the Council's online Blended Working Application Form. A line manager will make a recommendation on an application to the Decision-Maker in the Department (the Senior Executive Officer or analogous officer).

Engagement should take place with an employee before a decision is made. It is anticipated that employees will have discussed the potential for Blended Working for their role within the team, department, and Council with their line manager through the PMDS process and/or other discussions. All employees are required to engage in the PMDS process.

Meath County Council will confirm to the applicant, in writing from the Decision-Maker, if agreeing to the request for Blended Working and the specific conditions that apply to the agreement will be set out (see Appendix V for draft agreement template). The Decision-Maker will also inform the HR Department of their decision. Each application for blended working, will be fixed, for a minimum period of six months and not to exceed 12 months. This will be subject to a quarterly interim review. Any change to this will be subject to approval and four weeks' notice.

9. Decision Process

Meath County Council will return a decision on a request for blended working within a reasonable time period and that will not exceed 12 weeks from receipt of the employee's application (via the online application form) to request remote working.

10. Eligibility Criteria

All of the following criteria must be satisfied for any blended working arrangement to be approved, none of which may be excluded from consideration.

(a) Business needs and role suitability

Supporting business needs in order to deliver efficient, high-quality services is of paramount importance. Productivity standards and performance levels will not be compromised to facilitate blended working. The purpose of this policy is to establish a balance between a more flexible, efficient and resilient workforce by reimagining roles and facilitating blended working where practical, while enabling onsite interaction, collaboration and support as required in order to sustain high levels of productivity and performance at an individual, team and organisational level.

The number of employees of Meath County Council, and/or the percentage of time, approved to work on a blended basis may be limited based on the assessed impact on business needs.

Meath County Council will consider the impact of the application on:

- the ability to meet the business needs of the Council
- the ability to maintain the required level of service quality.
- team performance and team collaboration.
- operational issues, or other issues related to the organisation as a whole.
- organisational costs; and
- the extent of blended working arrangements available in the Council

While Meath County Council is committed to facilitating blended working where practical, not all roles will be suitable for blended working. The Council has conducted a role suitability identification exercise, taking the following into consideration:

- requirements for customer-facing service delivery at local authority premises;
- performance of tasks that have a high degree of manual work requiring attendance at a physical work location;
- ongoing requirements to supervise and manage staff at physical work locations;
- requirements to access particular technologies/equipment/data accessible only on-site;
- performance of support tasks that must be provided on-site.;
- performance of tasks that are more efficiently carried out on-site;
- operational issues, or other issues related to the local authority as a whole.

(b) Employee Suitability

Each application will be considered on its own merits, noting that access to blended working should, as far as practical, be an option for all employees and that issues arising for individuals should be managed as appropriate and on an ongoing basis, whether in the workplace or remotely. In undertaking an assessment, the Council must ensure there is a consistency in approach across the organisation as a whole and that there is engagement with senior management in the Council to ensure that the basis for decision making is focused on service delivery at all times.

An assessment of individual suitability may include, but may not be limited to:

- confirmation that performance standards and delivery of results have been achieved using defined metrics/deliverables, as appropriate, and meets the requirement for Blended Working.
- satisfactory performance including PMDS/probation.
- satisfactory compliance with time and attendance policy and procedures.
- not subject to an ongoing disciplinary process or hold a live record of disciplinary action on file.

Probationary employees may be considered for blended working, where blended working is appropriate taking into account the general criteria, and specific further factors relevant in the context of probationers. For example, a line manager may require that a probationer attend the office during the probationary period:

- to assist with adapting to their new role and work environment.
- to facilitate ongoing engagement with line managers, and with team members.
- to facilitate team bonding and collaboration.

- to facilitate face-to-face meetings and training where required; and/or
- to assist with the assessment of the probationer's performance during the probationary period.

(c) Designated Workstation Requirements

All parties must ensure that they comply with all relevant health and safety obligations as set out in more detail in Appendix III.

The employee must:

- Complete the application, declaration, and assessment form (see Appendix III)
- Identify a single designated remote workstation which is suitable and meets the health and safety requirements as set out in this Blended Working Policy and Procedure.
- Agree to a risk assessment, conducted by the Council.
- Agree to make no subsequent changes to the workstation without authorisation from the Council.
- Confirm that they are able to connect to a work computer via their own reliable broadband connection (see Appendix II).
- Confirm that the workstation allows compliance with data security and applicable confidentiality standards.

With the exception of employees who reside in Northern Ireland remote working outside of the State will not be facilitated. It should be noted that in respect of employees residing in Northern Ireland, who are United Kingdom nationals, without also being a national of Ireland, then the United Kingdom may have taxing rights, should they choose to take them up. In this scenario, such employees may be exposed to double taxation.

11. Location

When engaged in blended working and working remotely, an employee must be based in a location that enables them to undertake the full functions of their role which will include immediate attendance at the Council's onsite work location, if required.

The Council's work premises will continue to be the primary workplace for all employees and will be the formal base location for all administrative purposes.

Attending the Council's work premises, will remain the default arrangement and all employees availing of blended working, will be required to attend the office on the specified full days per week and also as required, for example for meetings, training and key events, ICT failure/ issues, operational reasons (e.g. staff absences or vacancies).

Where there are ICT, broadband or other utility failures that prevent an employee from undertaking their role remotely, the employee is required to report these immediately to their line-manager, with a view to attending the office to work. Employees required to attend the office in such circumstances or for other operational reasons, on one of their designated working from home days, will not be entitled to another work from home day in lieu of attending the office.

12. Declining a Request for Blended Working

Meath County Council may, having given the application due consideration, may decline a request for remote working where satisfied, in its view, that the proposal requested is not suitable based on the criteria for assessment of applications.

Meath County Council will communicate the grounds for refusal, when returning a decision.

The following grounds for refusal may include (but are not limited to):

- Employee suitability criteria not met.
- Ability to meet the business needs of the organisation.
- Ability to maintain the required level of service quality.
- Team performance and team collaboration.
- Operational issues, or other issues related to the organisation as a whole.
- Organisational costs.
- The extent of blended working arrangements available in the organisation.

13. Right to Review

Where the application is refused, the applicant has a right to request a review. The steps in the review process are set out below.

Informal discussion

Before seeking a formal review, applicants should have an informal discussion with the Decision-Maker in their Department to discuss the reasons for refusal and to explore if there is an opportunity to resolve any issues identified. If the issues can be resolved, the Decision-Maker can re-assess the application and may amend their decision. If the issues cannot be resolved, the applicant can seek a formal review.

Formal review

The applicant's request for a formal review should set out the grounds of the review. The review will focus on whether the application process was appropriate and in line with this Blended Working Policy.

The request for a formal review must be made, in writing, within 10 working days of the decision to refuse the application.

The review will be undertaken by one of the Decision-Makers from another Department of the Council, nominated by the Director of Services for HR Management and People Development. This officer will not have been involved in the original decision-making process and will be designated as the Review Officer for the review. All records relating to the application and original decision should be made available to the Review Officer. The Review Officer will, determine the process for review and may give due consideration to any request for a meeting in a specific case, however their decision will be final on whether a meeting is necessary with the applicant, Line Manager or original Decision-Maker.

Outcome of formal review

The decision of the Review Officer should be communicated in writing to the applicant, Line Manager and Decision-Maker and to the HR Department. In general, this should occur within 10 working days of receipt of the formal request for a review. The Review Officer may:

- Affirm the decision to refuse the application; or
- Recommend that the original decision be reconsidered by the Decision-Maker taking into account any issues identified by the Review Officer;
- Make other recommendations related to blended working, where appropriate.

While the main purpose of the review process is to deal with a request for review of the decision to refuse an application, the Review Officer has discretion to consider reviews of other cases where blended working arrangements are deemed inappropriate or unsuitable after a trial period, or as a result of a change of circumstances. For the avoidance of doubt, the decision of the Review Officer is final.

14. Trial Period and Continuing Assessment of Suitability

Blended working arrangements are not an entitlement, or term of employment. Such arrangements are not guaranteed on a permanent basis. Rotating blended working opportunities among employees may be required in order to support employee mobility and career development.

A blended working arrangement should, in the first instance, be granted for a trial period (in general, no less than six months and no more than 12 months duration). The trial period is an opportunity for the employee and the line manager through regular contact, to evaluate the success, and ongoing suitability, of the arrangement.

After the trial period, the suitability of the arrangement should continue to be assessed, through regular feedback conversations. Where performance issues arise, the line manager should discuss the issues with the employee as soon as practical and give them the opportunity to rectify the issue. A record should be kept of such discussions and the agreed outcome.

A formal review of the blended working arrangements should also form part of the PMDS process. All employees are required to engage in the PMDS process. The line manager and the organisation will need to assess if the blended working arrangement continues to suit the business needs of the organisation.

Employees must be in a position to carry out all the responsibilities of their role when availing of remote blended working. Blended working must not be used as a substitute for annual leave or sick leave. While blended working may have benefits for persons with caring responsibilities, any caring responsibilities must take place outside of working time.

15. Termination of Blended Working Arrangements

Following review, existing blended working arrangements may be terminated by the employee or Decision-Maker on reasonable notice.

For example, a blended working arrangement may be terminated by the Decision-Maker due to business needs, team mobility, performance management purposes, poor broadband connectivity, health and safety risks, or where other eligibility criteria are no longer met. Arrangements may also be terminated due to the employee declaration no longer being honoured.

Where an existing blended working arrangement is being reviewed a formal engagement with the employee must be undertaken. The Decision-Maker must discuss the reason(s) behind any decision to terminate the blended working arrangement and confirm the decision in writing.

Alternatively, an employee's circumstances may change, including they being assigned other duties, requiring them to return to working in an office-based environment.

In most cases, reasonable notice will be one month. In exceptional cases, shorter or longer notice may be necessary at the discretion of management following discussions with the employee.

16. Safety, Health and Welfare

Under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, Meath County Council has a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of their employees. This applies regardless of the location where the work is being carried out, whether it is at a Council premises, a hub or shared workspace, or at the employee's home.

As part of the employee's application for Blended Working, an assessment is required to be carried out to confirm that the employee's workstation and work equipment are suitable for the work to be done. (Details of this process are outlined in Appendix III). In approving any application for blended working, the Decision-Maker must be satisfied that a home/hub work location, so far as is reasonably practicable, meets the safety, health and welfare obligations for their employees.

17. Provision of Equipment

Employees availing of blended working in the home should, as far as is reasonably practicable and in line with funding availability, be equipped with a mobile device (e.g. laptop), keyboard/mouse, monitor and such ancillary peripherals (e.g. mobile phone) as are locally agreed as essential for the execution of official duties.

In general, printers will not be provided for data protection reasons. All equipment, provided by the Council to support a blended working arrangement, remains the property of the local authority, should only be used for work purposes and in accordance with the Council's Acceptable IT Usage Policy. Employees will be expected to safeguard this equipment and return same immediately to the local authority should the blended working arrangement cease.

Employees will complete a self-assessment form (SF005) identifying any potential risks and confirming that their workstation meets relevant health and safety requirements. Following the health and safety assessment and provisional approval for blended working, Meath County Council will, where it is reasonable to do so and necessary for the employee's work, provide appropriate furniture (office chair) and equipment.

The equipment/resources required can be identified and recorded as part of the risk assessment process detailed in Appendix III. Such equipment, may include, if required (as per Health and Safety Authority Guidance):

- IT equipment, for example monitor, keyboard, mouse;
- Laptop should be connected to a separate monitor or stand and separate keyboard and mouse;
- A suitable desk or table to work from;
- Adjustable chair – that complies with BS EN 1335-1: 2020:
 - Chair seat should be height adjustable;
 - Chair back must be tilt adjustable;
 - Chair back must be height adjustable independent of the seat so as to give adequate lumbar support;
- A headset if dealing with frequent phone calls.

Tables/Desks will not be provided for home working. The minimum dimension requirements for tables/desks to meet Health and Safety requirements are: a minimum of 800mm length by 600mm width by 700mm – 740mm height.

Note: The requirements detailed for chairs and desks outlined above may be adjusted to meet specific individual access requirements of disabled staff.

Meath County Council reserves the right to undertake inspections of the workstation to ensure compliance with health and safety standards.

18. Data Security (Remote Working)

At all times, employees must be vigilant regarding data protection and confidentiality in the work they are undertaking. Employees, working remotely, are asked to familiarise themselves with guidance from the Data Protection Commissioner in respect of:

- (i) avoiding data breaches when working remotely; and
- (ii) tips for Video conferencing, <https://www.dataprotection.ie/en/news-media/latest-news>

The DPC's specific advice in relation to protecting personal data when working remotely is available from the following link: <https://www.dataprotection.ie/en/protecting-personal-data-when-working-remotely-0>

More specific guidance on working remotely has also been prepared by the Council's Data Protection Officer (June 2022). This is set out in Appendix 6 of this policy.

19. Personal Data Processing at off-site/remote locations

When working from home, special attention is required to keep data security, integrity and confidentiality in mind when processing personal data.

This includes the following:

- Make sure not to work on personal or confidential information in an environment where others can see or gain access to these data.
- Do not use wireless Internet connections such as open, unsecured Wi-Fi in public places.
- Only use a device that is equipped with the appropriate security features as determined by Meath County Council (e.g. firewall, antivirus software, etc).
- Do not print off personal or sensitive information and let it lie around the house or other places where other people can gain access to it.
- Keep hard copy documents secure when working at home, (e.g. locking paper files away when not in use).
- Use a shredder, where possible, when disposing of paper documents. If you do not have a shredder at home, you should store the documentation in a safe place until you can return to the Council office to use the onsite shredding facilities.
- Switch off any smart devices that could record personal data (e.g. in audio format).
- Be extra careful to keep Council credentials confidential, so that access to the Council's systems does not get compromised.
- If using the Council's provided VPN, employees need to log out of it when not actively using it.
- Activate a password protected screen saver if stepping away from your work area.
- Be vigilant that in non-standard situations and crisis the risks of scams and fraudulent emails increases

When a blended working arrangement is being determined, an assessment should be conducted by the Team/Department to determine whether or to what level the employee will be able to access data held by the Council whilst working remotely. This assessment may result in a blended working application being rejected.

However, where it is agreed that a remote worker be provided with access to data held by the Council in order to carry out a specific assigned duty, security measures will be required to ensure the security of the data being accessed.

To assist in good data protection practices, please also adhere to the advice in Sections 20 and 21.

20. Working with Digital Devices

It is advised that employees should:

- Ensure your computer, laptop, or device, is used in a safe location, for example where you can keep sight of it and minimise who else can view the screen, particularly if working with sensitive personal data.
- Take extra care that devices such as phones, laptops, or tablets, are not lost or misplaced. Immediately report any lost, stolen or damaged items to the MCC IT Helpdesk, in line with the Council's Acceptable IT Usage Policy.

- Lock your device if you have to leave it unattended for any reason (Ctrl+Alt+Delete).
- Make sure your devices are turned off, locked, or stored carefully when not in use.
- Make sure that any device has the necessary updates, such as operating system updates (like iOS or android) and software/antivirus updates.
- Council smartphones, tablets or laptops must be used in line with the Council's ICT Policy and employees should adhere to the Council's Information Security policies.
- Avoid using public WIFI providers.
- Avoid using non-Council email accounts for Council business.
- Use Digital Devices in an ethical and lawful manner as per the Council's policy on Electronic Communications and Acceptable Usage policy.

21. Working with Hard Copy/Paper Files

Only in exceptional circumstances and where it is strictly necessary in order for an employee to carry out their work should permission be given by line managers to remove any records/files from the security of the office. Hard copy files containing personal data, including but not exclusive to special category/sensitive data, should not be removed.

In the unlikely event of a data breach, an employee must contact their line manager and the Data Protection Officer immediately: dataprotection@meathcoco.ie

22. Office Accommodation

Blended workers will generally have no automatic right to a dedicated workstation or single occupancy office in their employer's work premises but will have a shared workspace available to them when required to attend.

23. Travel Expenses

Revenue rules regarding travel expenses continue to apply. An employee's base, for the purposes of travel and subsistence, continues to remain their office location. For avoidance of doubt, travel and subsistence will not be payable for attending the main work premises during a blended working arrangement.

Appendix I Draft Blended Working Application Form & Applicant Declaration

(a) Information for the Applicant

Assessment Process

Applications for blended working, will be via the Performance Management Development System (PMDS) which will be utilised to assess the suitability of a role, function, task, and applicant for blended working.

Before making an application for blended working, employees are required to discuss their application in detail with their Grade 6 and 7 line-manager, as appropriate. It is vital that this pre-application discussion occurs to assist with a prompt and comprehensive assessment of an application.

The employee will need to submit an online Blended Working Application Form to the line manager, who will make a recommendation on the application to the Decision-Maker.

Requests for blended working will be assessed and approved by the Decision-Maker (Senior Executive Officer or analogous officer in each Department) on a case-by-case basis and will be subject to the operational needs of the organisation. Decisions will consider the role and the employee's suitability for blended work, as well as the employee's agreement with the provisions in the local authority's blended working policy.

Prior to Application

- Employees are asked to read and familiarise themselves with the Council's Blended Working Policy and Procedure.
- Employees are asked to confirm that they have access to reliable high-speed broadband in the proposed blended working location(s) (see Appendix II).
- Employees are asked to confirm that they are aware that they will be required to complete health and safety training and assess the suitability of their blended working location, via the Health and Safety Risk Assessment (see Appendix III).

Post Application Submission

The employee may be asked to clarify certain items/issues.

Post Application Response

Before a decision is taken on an application, the employee must complete health and safety training and assess the suitability of their blended working location, via the Health and Safety Risk Assessment (SF005).

Line Manager Recommendation

The line manager will make a recommendation to the Decision-Maker on an application from one of their team members. This recommendation should come from the grade 6 or 7, as relevant.

Decision-Maker Decision in Principle

The Decision-Maker will make a decision (either to refuse or to approve in principle) and is required to communicate it to the employee.

The approval in principle means that applicants are approved subject to: completion of the Health and Safety assessments set out in Appendix III; verification of the reliability of the broadband connection; and possession of the required equipment.

Appeal Process

The employee has the right to request, a review of a decision, to refuse an application, within 10 days. The appeal process is set out in Section 13 of this policy.

Final Approval

The Decision-Maker will make a final approval once all requirements (on Health and Safety, broadband and equipment) have been met. A Blended Working Agreement will be signed setting out the date for commencement of the blended working pattern.

(b) Template Blended Working Application Form

Employee Name:		Date:	
Line Manager:		Job title and Grade:	
Section:		Department:	
Contact Details:	Email and Telephone		
Proposed remote working location:		Proposed Start Date:	
Describe your current working pattern (days/hours/times worked/location):			
Proposed number of days to be worked remotely:		Carbon Saver Calculator:	
Are you currently availing of any of the following flexible working policies?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Shorter Working Year Scheme▪ Work-sharing▪ Parental Leave Other (please give details):			Yes/No Yes/No Yes/No

<p>Does your application satisfy the Blended Working initial requirements i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agreement of feasibility of blended working approach with line manager in PDP; ▪ Position suitability ▪ Access to quality broadband <p>Employees are asked to confirm that they are aware that they will be required to complete health and safety training and assess the suitability of their blended working location via the Health and Safety Risk Assessment (SF005).</p> <p>Please Confirm</p>	<p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p> <p>Yes/No</p>
<p>Suitability of Position</p>	
<p>1. In a blended working arrangement for your role, will the local authority and customer service needs, continue to be delivered to the same level and capacity, as the existing on-site workplace environment?</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>
<p>2. Does your role, have responsibilities that can be, at any given time, conducted from a remote location, without affecting service quality or organisational operations?</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>
<p>3. Can the operational needs, of the local authority, be met regardless of your work location?</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>
<p>4. Can your role be undertaken off-site without disruption to the flow of work and communication (e.g., availability using remote technology such as shared servers, email, phone)?</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>
<p>5. Can full and effective participation in meetings be conducted, using remote technology (e.g., Microsoft Teams, phone)?</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>
<p>6. In carrying out your role, do you have the need to access physical files, specialist equipment, customer facing services, requirement to attend physical meetings, etc.?</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>
<p>7. In your role, do you have the need to access technologies/equipment accessible, only on-site?</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>
<p>8. In your role, do you need to provide customer-facing service delivery which requires attendance at the local authority office?</p>	<p>Yes/No</p>
<p>9. In your role, please outline the tasks that are more efficiently performed and carried out on-site.</p>	
<p>Please comment:</p>	
<p>Please outline any issues/barriers as per the responses above?</p>	

Describe your proposed new working pattern (days / hours / times worked):	
Outline the proposed blended working location(s):	
Explain the impact, of your proposed amended working pattern, on the local authority, as your employer and colleagues for example communications, productivity, line management and team working (please include pros and cons):	
Explain, how you believe any potential barriers, to your proposed new working pattern, could be overcome:	
State any specific requirements regarding Security, Data Protection and confidentiality:	
Please outline equipment requirements:	
I have considered the implications of the blended working arrangements and confirm they will not adversely affect the operational efficiency of the Section.	Yes/No

Line Manager's Recommendation	
Does the employee satisfy the Blended Working initial requirements i.e. position suitability, agreement of feasibility of blended working approach with employee in PDP, access to quality broadband, confirmation to complete Health and Safety training and assessment?	Yes/No
Does the employee satisfy the following criteria?	
▪ Demonstration of satisfactory performance (PMDS)?	Yes/No
▪ Demonstrates the ability to prioritise and manage time/workload effectively with minimal direction/oversight?	Yes/No
▪ Satisfactory compliance with time and attendance policy and procedures?	Yes/No
▪ Demonstrates delivery of results?	Yes/No
▪ In general, is not the subject of an ongoing disciplinary process or hold a live record of disciplinary action on file?	Yes/No
▪ Is the employee currently undertaking a probationary period?	Yes/No

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets health and safety requirements as detailed in Blended Working Policy Framework Appendix III (employee to complete training and assessment)? 	Yes/No
Any other comments	
Please outline equipment requirements and costs associated with the provision of equipment and workstation setup	
Potential barriers and proposed resolution – comments	
Is approval for this application of Blended Working recommended?	Yes/No
Reasons for Recommendation	
<p>If not approved, please select from the list below, the reason(s) for the decision:</p> <p>Does not meet the following requirement(s)</p> <p>Employee suitability criteria not met. Ability to meet the business needs of the organisation. Ability to maintain the required level of service quality. Team performance and team collaboration. Operational issues, or other issues related to the organisation as a whole. Organisational costs. The extent of blended working arrangements available in the organisation.</p>	

Decision:	Yes/No
I have discussed this application for blended working with the Line Manager and confirm that the arrangement is in accordance with the local authority's Blended Working Policy.	Yes/No
Application for Blended Working Approved	Yes/No

(c) Applicant Declaration

Blended Working - Applicant Declaration

I, _____ (insert name of applicant), confirm that:

- I have read, understand, and accept the Council's Blended Working Policy, including the appendices.
- I have completed the Blended Working Application Form and Health and Safety Assessment Form.
- I have discussed my request for blended working with my manager and I have completed the Application Form based upon that discussion. The information included in the Application Form is true and accurate and reflects the discussion with my manager.
- I am aware of my obligations as it relates to ensuring data confidentiality and I undertake to immediately inform my line manager of any data breach
- I have discussed and understand the expectations regarding my goals, role and performance indicators when working remotely and in the office.
- I will inform my line manager where there is a change in circumstances impacting eligibility criteria, including any change to my role, performance or location of the designated workstation.
- I have identified a single designated remote workstation and I understand this will need to meet all health and safety requirements as set out in the Blended Working Policy.
- I will cooperate with any risk assessment, or other employer requirements, to ensure health and safety at work, taking reasonable care of myself and other people who may be affected by the work I am doing.
- I will not make any changes to my workstation without authorisation from my manager.
- I will report any work-related incident to my line manager and the Council's H&S Section and participate in/comply with any subsequent investigations.
- My workstation allows compliance with data security and applicable confidentiality standards.
- I will continue to comply with all of my obligations as an employee of Meath County Council, including all legislative obligations, and remain bound by all relevant organisational policies and procedures (including those referred to in the Blended Working Policy).
- I agree that blended working is granted to me, in the first instance, on a trial basis, after which a decision will be made as to whether to continue the arrangement.
- I can connect to a work computer via my own reliable broadband connection and accept that my remote working arrangement can be ceased if I have insufficient broadband coverage to undertake my duties.
- I will be contactable by phone, email or other established method during regular work hours and be available for online conference calls.
- My employer's work premises/office/site location remains the primary place of work, my pattern of attendance may change, and I may be required to attend on any workday, as and when required in line with business needs.
- My working hours will not change, unless agreed with my manager.

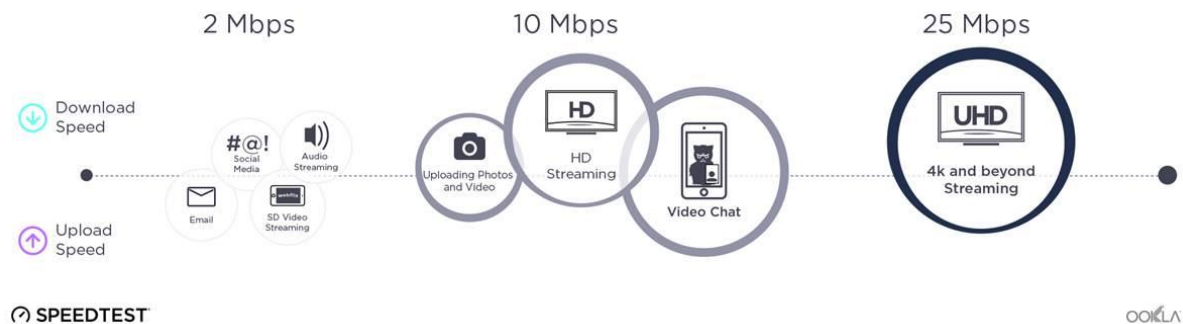
- My existing terms and conditions of employment continue to apply when I am availing of a blended working arrangement, whether I am working remotely or in the work premises/ office. I continue to be bound by the same standards and behaviours whether working in the office, or remotely.
- I will have no automatic right to a dedicated workstation when attending the office / work premises, unless access to specialist equipment or special provisions are required in the workplace.
- I will not use my home for in-person work related meetings.
- I will not work remotely outside of Ireland/Northern Ireland, except where my role requires it as part of my official duties, and I have received prior approval for same (see blended working policy framework for more details regarding taxation).
- I agree that blended working is not an entitlement, or term of employment. The arrangement may be terminated at any time, on reasonable notice.
- I will not use blended working as a substitute for annual leave or sick leave. I accept that while blended working may have benefits for persons with caring responsibilities, any caring responsibilities must take place outside of working time.
- I agree that future promotion/transfer/mobility opportunities will impact on blended working arrangements and a new application will have to be raised on assignment to new position; and
- I will return all Council equipment/property to the Department/Office upon ceasing the blended working arrangement, or upon request by the Council.

Employee Signature:

Date:

Appendix II Broadband Connection and Speed

A reliable broadband connection is vital for effective home working. The following chart shows suggested capacity for common data types. In general, Microsoft Teams requires 5Mbps and email requires 2Mbps.



A wired Router connection is preferable to a Wi-Fi connection for data intensive tasks like uploading large files.

Online speed tests may help identify any shortcomings and employees should contact their provider if broadband capacity does not meet requirements. If poor broadband capacity negatively affects business operations the employee may be requested to work from their normal work base.

As part of the application process, employees will be asked to confirm that they have access to reliable high-speed broadband in their proposed blended working location and the Council's IT Department may test this to confirm broadband quality.

Appendix III Safety, Health & Welfare

(a) Introduction

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 places a number of obligations on employers and employees. The employer has responsibility to ensure a safe place of work so far as is reasonably practicable.

An employee has a responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves and other people who may be affected by the work they are doing. These obligations apply to employers and employees, regardless of whether business is conducted at the employer's premises, the employee's home, or another location where the employee is approved to engage in blended working. The following key health and safety obligations apply:

Employers are required to:

- carry out a risk assessment by a competent person to include an assessment of equipment and ergonomics.
- consult with employees to ensure they are aware of any specific risks regarding working from home, that the work activity and the workstation are suitable, that equipment is provided to enable the work to be done, that there is an agreed arrangement between the employee and the line manager to maintain contact and to keep contact details readily accessible;
- take protective and preventative measures based on the assessment, which may include training, providing equipment and/or checking any identified risks have been mitigated.
- update the organisation's Safety Statement, to incorporate remote/blended working arrangements.
- document the procedures in place for incident reporting and investigation, while following the usual protocols in terms of notification, mitigation of risks and investigation.
- ensure that working hours are appropriately recorded in order to comply with the Organisation of Working Time Act and to be able to assess incidents that occur during the course of employment.
- promote a healthy work-life balance in line with the Council's Right to Disconnect policy; and
- rescind or pause blended working arrangements where it is deemed that health and safety requirements are not being met while working remotely.

Employees working remotely have a responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves and other people who may be affected by the work they are doing.

Employees are required to:

- co-operate with their employer and follow their instructions.
- comply with health and safety measures, and follow procedures, set by their employer.
- attend any training, or undergo such assessments, as may reasonably be required by their employer relating to safety, health and welfare at work;
- take reasonable care for their own safety;
- protect themselves from harm during the course of their work;
- take care of any equipment provided;

- report any defect in the equipment, place of work or systems of work, which might endanger their safety, health and welfare; and
- report any injury arising from the work activity to their employer immediately and in accordance with Council policy and procedures.

(b) Incident Reporting and Investigation

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act defines “accident” as meaning “*an accident arising out of or in the course of employment which, in the case of a person carrying out work, results in personal injury*”.

All incidents and near misses no matter how minor must be reported as soon as reasonable. The Council’s Accident and Incident Report Form (see Appendix IV) and can be found on the intranet: <http://intranet/Sections/HealthSafety/PoliciesProceduresandForms/Forms/>

Meath County Council implements SMS/PP/E3 Non-Conformity and Incident Reporting and Investigation and SMS/PP/A2 Action Management.

Line Managers shall be responsible for ensuring that all reports are completed and forwarded in a timely manner to the Safety Section. Actions identified to support corrective or continual improvement are managed through the Action Management System and are communicated to relevant employees and interested parties as relevant.

Contact the safety section: safety&health@meathcoco.ie

(c) Health & Safety Process for Blended Working

Each employee’s blended working environment will be different whether it is the individual, the type of work to be carried out, workstation location or equipment required. Employers are required, to ensure a risk assessment of an employee’s workstation, is carried out.

Stage 1	Display Screen Equipment (DSE) and Workstation Awareness Training is completed
Stage 2	Employee completes DSE and Workstation Assessment Form As part of this process, the employee also identifies required IT equipment/resources
Stage 3	Completed DSE and Workstation Assessments are reviewed by the Council and one-to-one assessments are undertaken on the basis of priority needs Additional corrective / preventative actions, as required, are processed.

Stage 1: Display Screen Equipment and Workstation Assessment Awareness Training

Where no objections are raised by the line manger in advance of a formal decision, the applicant completes the online DSE and Workstation Assessment Awareness Training.

The applicant should also be provided with the '*Guidance on a Workstation Set-up*' (included in Appendix III) to ensure the employee is made aware of the risks associated with working remotely and to ensure the employee is provided with instruction, on setting up the workspace and using the equipment correctly.

Stage 2: Employee completes the DSE and Workstation Assessment Form

The DSE and Workstation Self-Assessment form (SF005) is sent to the applicant to confirm that their proposed remote workspace is suitable (template form included in Appendix III). IT equipment/resources required will be identified as part of this process.

This form is completed by the employee and returned to the Line Manager as part of the Blended Working application. Employees will be asked to submit a photograph of their workstation along with the assessment form. This will then be submitted to the Council's Health and Safety section, as the designated competent persons, for review. (A competent person is someone with sufficient training, experience and knowledge who can carry out the Display Screen Equipment Assessment of an employee's workstation).

Stage 3: Completed DSE and Workstation Assessment Forms are reviewed and, on a priority needs basis, a one-to-one assessment is carried out by the Council's Safety Section (competent ergonomic assessor).

The self-assessment form (SF005) completed by the applicant will be reviewed by the competent ergonomic assessor and an assessment of the designated workstation will be conducted. This competent assessor will review any potential risks highlighted by the self-assessment form.

Note: The assessment can be done online, for example, through the use of video calls ideally with a smartphone so that the employee, can move freely around the specific work location, so as to help the assessor identify and direct the employee, to areas that need to be addressed.

Additional corrective / preventative actions are processed.

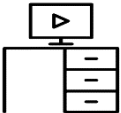






The Safety Section will record any specific issues identified at an employee's workspace and agree on corrective/continual improvement actions with the employee. If risks are identified, the applicant has the opportunity to address these risks (e.g. through training, advice, equipment, etc). Once any actions have been actioned and where the designated workstation meets the required health and safety standard then the assessment can be signed off by the assessor and the employee.






Where risks cannot be mitigated and / or the designated workstation fails to meet the required health and safety standards, the blended working arrangement will not be approved.

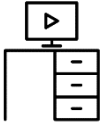

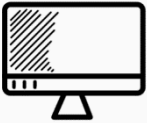
The Council reserves the right to inspect the workstation to ensure compliance with health and safety standards.





(d) Guidance on Workstation Set up



The following gives guidance to employees on how to set up your remote workstation:

Workspace Arrangements	
 <p>Sufficient Work Space</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comfortable space to change position and vary movements • Sufficient space to allow for flexible equipment arrangements
 <p>Good Housekeeping</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the work area organised and tidy. • Wipe down the desk surface, keyboard, mouse, and any other high-touch hotspots frequently. • Manage cables and route them away from any areas where there is frequent footfall and prevent trip / fall. • Dispose of rubbish regularly and ensure sensitive work material is disposed of in line with Council Procedures.
 <p>Safe Access and Egress</p>	<p>Keep access and egress routes clear</p>
 <p>Adequate Lighting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighting is a factor that needs to be considered in the work environment. When setting up a workspace, consider whether: • Sufficient natural light is available along with artificial light to enable viewing and reading of documents. • The location of a laptop/monitor is placed to reduce glare which can change throughout the day due to external factors and from the use of indoor lighting.
 <p>Comfortable Temperature</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sedentary working environment temperature should be at a minimum temperature of 17.5°C. • Where temporary heaters are used, care needs to be taken to prevent fire or burns from contact with hot surfaces. When working from home, it is the employee's responsibility to ensure that portable heating equipment is in good condition and suitable for the purpose.
 <p>Ventilation</p>	<p>Use natural ventilation for example opening a window to regulate temperature and allow air to circulate.</p>
 <p>Comfortable noise levels</p>	<p>Quiet and distraction free space</p>




 <p>Safe electrics and cables</p>  <p>Safe equipment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrical equipment should be maintained in good working order and be free of any obvious damage. • Employee to regularly visually inspect equipment. • I.T. equipment e.g., phones, laptops should not be left unattended while charging for long periods. • Defective I.T. equipment should be taken out of use immediately and as appropriate reported to the line manager / I.T. • Household electrical supply and I.T. equipment provided by the employee e.g., lighting, heaters should also be checked by the employee on a regular basis. • All circuits supplying socket outlets are protected by a RCD (Residual Current Device) and the operation of the RCD is checked and tested regularly; • Only use the charger and ac adaptors/cables that come with the laptop/ mobile device • Avoid overloading of sockets <p>Note: If there are any concerns about the electrical installation, immediately contact a registered electrical contractor to ensure the safety of the installation.</p>
 <p>Fire Safety and Emergency Arrangements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimising the risk of fire should be managed as part of the day-to-day operation. • Regularly test the smoke alarm / carbon monoxide by pushing and holding the test button until it activates. • Dispose of rubbish regularly. • Keep electrical sockets, plugs and cords in good condition and do not overload sockets. • Keep suitable firefighting equipment available e.g. fire blankets and suitable fire extinguishers. • If a fire occurs in your home GET OUT, STAY OUT & CALL FOR HELP (999 or 112) <p>Note: fire detection and firefighting equipment is the responsibility of the homeowner.</p>
 <p>Report work related near misses and incidents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All work-related incident should be reported via the incident report system to the line manager
 <p>Arrangements for regular communications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay in communication with the line manager and work colleagues: • Have an agreed arrangement with the line manager to maintain contact. • Keep details of the line manager and colleagues readily accessible. • Discuss issues with the line manager e.g., if you feel the workload is getting too much.


	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arranging IT support in the event of technical problems where relevant • Check in on colleagues e.g., virtual lunches, tea breaks for work and non-work, informal and formal communication
Workstation Arrangements	
 <p>Work desk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comfortable space to change position and vary movements • Sufficient space to allow for flexible equipment arrangements • Space in front of the keyboard is sufficient to support hands and arms • Sources of glare, distracting reflections controlled • Access to the desk should be unobstructed.
 <p>Chair</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work chair should be stable and allow the user easy freedom of movement and a comfortable position. • The seat shall be adjustable in height • The seat back shall be adjustable in both height and tilt and provide lower back support. <p>Check the condition of the chair and adjust the seat so that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can sit upright and all the way back in the chair. • You are facing the work area with shoulders relaxed and head naturally balanced. • The desk surface underneath forearms, hands, wrists, and forearms are parallel to the floor. • Your thighs are fully supported on the chair and parallel to the floor. • Your thighs, knees and back of legs are clear of surfaces. • In setting the height of your chair, your forearms should be approximately horizontal, and your eyes should be approximately at the same height as the top of the screen. • Feet should be flat on the floor, thighs parallel to the floor and lower legs approximately vertical – if not a footrest is required.
 <p>Display Screen / Monitor</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characters on screen should be well defined and clearly formed (adequate size and spacing). • Screen images well defined and formed with no flickering / instability • Screen can swivel easily and freely, and height is adjustable to user • Docking station / separate monitor / laptop rise / stand available for laptop users • Screen position is approx. at arm's length, directly in front of user and the top of the screen is at or slightly below eye level • The brightness and contrast controls on the screen suit lighting conditions in the room <p>Adjust your monitor so that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The screen position is approximately at arm's length and aligned directly in front of you, to avoid twisting of torso. • The top of the screen is at or slightly below eye level.

 <p>Keyboard and Mouse</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keyboard with matt surface and characters are clearly defined • Keyboard is tiltable and separate from the screen • Mouse moves smoothly • Space in front of the keyboard is sufficient to support hands and arms. • Position the mouse within easy reach, so it can be used with a straight wrist. Rest fingers lightly on the mouse buttons and maintain a soft touch. • Keyboard and mouse close to the use with a neutral wrist position • Keep wrists straight when typing and maintain a soft touch on the keys. • Laptop/PC should be connected to an external mouse, the mouse should move smoothly – if required use a mouse mat.
 <p>Laptop</p>	<p>Laptop must be set up using a docking station / separate monitor / laptop riser / stand with a separate keyboard and mouse. Working from a Laptop</p> <p>The same arrangement (as above) is required when setting up your laptop. In addition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The laptop must be set up using a docking station / separate monitor / laptop riser / stand, separate full-sized keyboard, and mouse. Align the laptop centrally with your body, to avoid twisting. • The height and position of the screen should be angled so that you are sitting comfortably, and reflection is minimised.
 <p>Headset</p>	<p>Utilise a headset when operating a keyboard or mouse and dealing with frequent phone calls.</p>
 <p>Eye Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid working with sunlight directly on the screen. • Adjust screen brightness and keep the screen clean. • Utilise antiglare screen filters / screen protectors as required. • Employees are advised to have their eyes tested every 2 years or sooner if advised by a medical professional. Refer to Council Policy. • Give your eyes a break using the 20-20-20 rule - during any screen work – for every 20 minutes focusing on the screen, look away for 20 seconds at something 20 feet away.

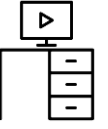

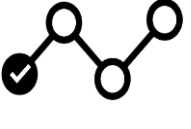


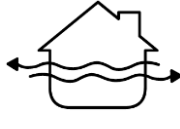
















 <p>Posture and position breaks Stretch</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take short periodic breaks or changes of routine away from the workstation. • Do not sit in the same position at a computer workstation for long periods of time and make sure you change your posture as often as possible. • Change posture frequently and stand / move at least every 30 minutes; Make small changes like standing during phone calls and varying your activities. • Take short periodic breaks or change activity to away from the computer workstation. • Do some simple stretches throughout the day. • If possible, take a short walk during your lunch break.
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DSE User Information

	<p>When seated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit upright and all the way back in the chair • Sit facing work area • Keep shoulders relaxed and head naturally balanced • Maintain neutral back position • Thighs fully supported on the chair and parallel to the floor • Feet flat on the floor, use footrest if needed
	<p>Adjust monitor so that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The screen is at arm's length away • The top of the screen is at or slightly below eye level • Avoid twisting the upper body • Position the keyboard and mouse next to each other and near enough so that elbows are close to the body.
<p>Other Hints and Tips: Position the items that you use most frequently in a semi-circle around you. You should reduce the need for stretching as much as possible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The primary work zone is where your keyboard and mouse should be. This means that you don't need to move your upper arm to perform the task. ▪ The secondary work zone is where materials and tools used less frequently are placed. Here everything can be reached within the 	

<p>envelop defined by an outstretched arm.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The reference zone is where infrequently used items are stored and may require additional bodily movement to access them, including standing up if you are seated. 	
Photograph	
<p>When you have received the necessary equipment to organise your remote workstation as outlined above, a photograph should be taken of you sitting at your workstation to confirm that the correct ergonomic set up is in place.</p>	
<p>Photograph</p> <p>Side view profile of you sitting at your desk.</p>	 <p>The illustration shows a person with dark hair, wearing a red long-sleeved shirt and blue trousers, sitting on an orange office chair. They are positioned at a desk, viewed from the side. Their feet are flat on the floor, and their knees are at a 90-degree angle. Their arms are extended forward, resting on the desk surface. A computer monitor is positioned on the desk, directly in front of them, at eye level. The background is a solid yellow color.</p>

(e) DSE and Workstation Self-Assessment Form (SF005)

DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT AND WORKSTATION ASSESSMENT FORM									
Employee Name:				Line Manager:				Date:	
Department / Section:								Assessor:	
Key computer use:									
DSE Awareness Training Completed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>								
Work Location: (Specify location as indicated)	Designated desk <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Location</i>	Hot desk <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Location</i>	Hub / Co-working space <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Location</i>	Working from home <input type="checkbox"/>					
Workspace Arrangements									
 Sufficient work space	 Good housekeeping	 Safe access and egress	 Adequate lighting	 Comfortable temperature	 Ventilation				
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
 Comfortable noise levels	 Safe electrics and cables	 Safe equipment	 Fire safety and Emergency arrangements	 Report work related near misses and incidents	 Arrangements for regular communications				
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Workstation									
	 Comfortable space to change position and vary movements	 Sufficient surface to allow for flexible equipment arrangements	 Space in front of the keyboard is sufficient to support hands & arms	 Sources of glare, distracting reflections controlled					
Work desk / surface	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	 Work chair stable and allows freedom of movement	 Seat adjustable in height	 Seat back adjustable in both height and tilt / world task chair in use <input type="checkbox"/>	 Footrest available if required					
Chair	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

	 <p>Screen images well defined and formed with no flickering / instability</p>	 <p>Screen can swivel easily and freely and height is adjustable to user</p>	 <p>Docking station / separate monitor / laptop riser / stand is available for laptop users</p>	 <p>Screen position is approx. at arm's length, directly in front of user and the top of the screen is at or slightly below eye level</p>	
Display screen / monitor	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/a	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
	 <p>Keyboard with matt surface and characters are clearly defined</p>	 <p>Keyboard is tiltable and separate from the screen</p>	 <p>Mouse moves smoothly</p>	 <p>Keyboard and mouse close to the user with a neutral wrist position</p>	
Keyboard and Mouse	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
 <p>DSE User Information</p>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div data-bbox="914 821 1258 1062">  </div> <div data-bbox="1299 795 1644 1129"> <p>When seated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sit upright and all the way back in the chair <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sit facing work area <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keep shoulders relaxed and head naturally balanced <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maintain neutral back position <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thighs fully supported on the chair and parallel to the floor, <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Feet flat on the floor, use footrest if needed </div> <div data-bbox="1685 800 2030 1035">  </div> <div data-bbox="2071 795 2546 1129"> <p>Adjust monitor so that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The screen is at arm's length away <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The top of the screen is at or slightly below eye level <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Avoid twisting the upper body <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Position the keyboard and mouse next to each other and near enough so that elbows are close to the body. </div> </div>				
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eye test every 2 years <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20 – 20 – 20 Rule <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Every 20 minutes; - Focus on something 20 feet away; - For 20 seconds. 			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Take breaks and change posture frequently. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stand/move at least every 30 minutes. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Change activity away from the computer workstation.	 <p>Don't forget to stretch!</p>
Attach photograph of your workstation set-up <input type="checkbox"/>					
<p>Photograph 1: Side view profile of you sitting at your desk.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>					
<p>Comments:</p>					

Action Required		Responsible Person	Action Date
Employee Signature		Date	

Appendix IV Incident Report Form

This form must be filled out by the Line Manager and sent to the Health and Safety Section as soon as possible.

Type of Incident (Select one only)	Accident	<input type="checkbox"/>	IR3	<input type="checkbox"/>	Near Miss	<input type="checkbox"/>	Violence & Aggression	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Non-conformity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Property Damage	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vehicle Incident	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Incident Details	Incident Location								
	Date of Incident				Time of Incident				
	Weather Conditions		N/a <input type="checkbox"/>		(Detail)				
Details of Property / Equipment Damaged (include serial / registration number/s)									
N/a <input type="checkbox"/>		(Detail)							
Details of Injured Person									
N/a <input type="checkbox"/>	Injured Party Details:	Employee	<input type="checkbox"/>	Contractor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Member of Public			<input type="checkbox"/>
		Name		Name		Name			
		Section		Section		Contact details where available			
		Occupation		Occupation					
		Gender: Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>		Nationality: Irish <input type="checkbox"/> Other EU <input type="checkbox"/> Non EU <input type="checkbox"/>					
Age: 0 – 24 <input type="checkbox"/>		25 – 34 <input type="checkbox"/>		35 – 44 <input type="checkbox"/>		45 – 54 <input type="checkbox"/>		55+ <input type="checkbox"/>	
Medical Treatment	N/a	<input type="checkbox"/>	First Responder		<input type="checkbox"/>	Doctor		<input type="checkbox"/>	
			Name			Name			
Type of Injury			Precise part of body injured						
Did the injured party cease work?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		If Yes, insert date and time:						
Expected absence from work	0 – 3 days <input type="checkbox"/>		4 – 6 days <input type="checkbox"/>		7 – 13 days <input type="checkbox"/>		14 – 20 days <input type="checkbox"/>		
1-3 months <input type="checkbox"/>		3 months + <input type="checkbox"/>							
Incident description Give an account of the sequence of events (relevant external factors) leading up to and including when the incident occurred and the immediate aftermath. Include details of any plant, equipment, PPCE, etc. in use at the time of the incident. Use an additional sheet as required.									
Witness to Incident	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		If YES, complete SF019b Witness Statement Form and forward to the Safety Section						
Immediate Causes The immediate cause of an incident is the final failure in a sequence of failures. Give details of the immediate cause(s) determined. (An example of an immediate cause of an eye injury is for example, an operative not wearing eye protection).									
Immediate Corrective Actions Give details of the corrective actions put in place; also give details of how the site was made safe immediately after the accident if applicable. Outline timelines of corrective actions yet to be put in place.									
Action	Date		Responsible Person		Status				
Report completed by Line Manager									
Name:			Section:			Date:			
Safety Section USE ONLY		Date received:		AIR Reference No.					

Appendix V Draft Template Blended Working Agreement

Employee Name:		Date:	
Line Manager:		Job title and Grade:	
Section:		Department:	
Contact Details:	Email and Telephone		
Agreed remote working location:		Agreed Start Date and End Date:	
Agreed number of days to be worked remotely:		Carbon Saver Calculator:	

Dates for Reviews of Blended Working:	
Details of any equipment to be provided by Meath County Council:	
Employee Signature:	
Line Manager Signature:	

Appendix VI MCC Data Protection Guidance on Working Remotely

What you must do:

- Requests for remote working must be approved by the Senior Executive Officer (or equivalent) for your business unit, in line with the Council's Blended Working Policy and Procedure.
- Ensure that you are using :
A MCC provided managed device (that is a laptop, tablet or other mobile device) and you are set up and authorised for remote access.
- Take precautions to safeguard the security of any computer equipment on which you do MCC business and keep your passwords secure and secret.
- Position yourself so that your work cannot be overlooked by others not authorised to see the information.
- Lock laptop screens or shut them down completely when they are not in use.
- Keep laptops and confidential or sensitive information with you at all times.
- Never allow a non-authorised individual access to your device or MCC information
- Notify Data Protection Unit immediately if you suspect that there has been a security breach or data loss – dataprotection@meathcoco.ie

You should not:

- Use privately owned computing equipment to store or process Council data.
- Use a Council device that has not been authorised for remote access.
- Allow family members or others to use your Council laptop for any purpose whatsoever.
- Leave laptops unattended in cars even if they are locked

Lost or stolen devices:

- In the event that your device is lost or stolen, you must report the incident to IT immediately.
- You are also required to simultaneously report the loss/theft as a potential Data Breach using the attached Breach Assessment & Reporting Notification Form to: dataprotection@meathcoco.ie

Emails:

- Use work email accounts only for work related emails
- Before sending an email, ensure you're sending it to the correct recipient, particularly for email with attachments involving large amounts of personal data or sensitive personal data , always check email address again before sending.

Paper Records:

- In the interest of data protection, security and confidentiality, you are strictly forbidden to remove any paper files/records that contain personal data, from Meath County Council's offices while working remotely.
- Hard copy files or other documents containing personal data should not be removed from the security of the office.
- Where access to such paper documentation is required, it should be from the office base.
- All printing requirements must be undertaken from the office base.

Cloud and Network Access:

- Only use Meath County Council's IT approved remote access networks. Data should not be stored on any cloud platform that has not been expressly approved by MCC.
- Do not store data locally on devices. Data should be stored in the application or on the shared drives provided and only available remotely when connected via VPN.