

## Agile Working Policy

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### 1. DEFINITION

- 1.1 Agile working is a more dynamic way to define how, where and/or when someone works by reviewing existing working practices and utilising new technologies to create a more responsive, productive and efficient work force based on more balanced, motivated and engaged employees.
- 1.2 Agile working incorporates both time and place flexibility as well as focussing on performance and outcomes to further develop the results orientated culture we have at Devonshires, recognising that this is not always best facilitated by traditional office hours and set ups.
- 1.3 The advent of the Covid19 pandemic led to an abrupt and necessary shift to agile working by the entire firm. This policy aims to formalise our approach based on the various differing roles of our employees and continuing business needs.
- 1.4 The wording herein recognises that at present most of our employees are already working in an agile way but that that pattern may need to be adapted or changed going forward subject to business need.

### 2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 We are committed to providing equality of opportunity in employment and to developing work practices and policies that support work-life balance. We recognise that, in addition to helping balance work and personal lives, agile working can attract new employees, raise staff morale, reduce absenteeism and improve our use and retention of staff as well as increase our productivity and reduce our office costs.

- 2.2 Agile working seeks to strike a balance between employees work commitments, the current restrictions in place due to the pandemic, the amount of office accommodation required and the importance of supporting our employees and our business whilst continuing to deliver a first-rate service for our clients.
- 2.3 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and as such, it may be amended at any time.

### **3. SCOPE AND PURPOSE OF THE POLICY**

- 3.1 This policy applies to all employees. It does not apply to agency workers, consultants, self-employed contractors or Equity Partners.
- 3.2 Whether or not agile working is possible will be dependent on the specific job role undertaken and the impact on clients (both internal and external) of deviating from the standard office hours and location.
- 3.3 All agile working is subject to performance and business need.
- 3.4 As we become a more agile workforce, hot-desking will most likely apply to all or most of our employees. Hot-desking means that employees will continue to have access to and use of desk space and IT equipment, however the same desk and/or equipment may be used at other times and by other employees. Most employees will no longer have a permanent workstation.

### **4. FORMS OF AGILE WORKING**

Agile working can incorporate a number of changes to standard working arrangements including:

- (a) Part-time work
- (b) Working in transit
- (c) Working from home
- (d) Job- sharing

- (e) Non-standard working hours
- (f) A mixture of all of the above

## **5. AGILE WORKING CRITERIA**

5.1 The following criteria will be taken into account, when considering the level of agile working to be afforded:

- (a) the effect on ability to meet client demand (\*clients can be both external and internal)
- (b) ability to organise work amongst the team
- (c) likely impact on work quality and performance
- (d) any planned structural changes to teams and/or departments
- (e) possible impact on rotas currently in place for teams and/or departments
- (f) whether the job can only be carried out in an office environment
- (g) performance related issues (performance must be expected to at least be maintained if not improved by the move to a more agile work pattern).

## **6. AGILE WORKING PROCEDURE FOR AGREEMENT**

6.1 Each job role will be considered individually by the line manager, Head of Department and appropriate HR representative taking into account the potential impact of agile working on clients (whether internal or external), work colleagues and accommodation needs.

6.2 This process will determine what level of agile working is appropriate for each role to allow employees working in those specific roles every opportunity to deliver the role to its optimum level of performance and to meet business needs.

6.3 Line managers, Heads of department and/or HR will discuss with employees their current agile working pattern and the working pattern the Firm would ideally like them to adopt going forward taking into account the criteria set out above.

- 6.4 Employees who are not able to deliver the proposed working pattern put forward in 6.3 above, and are not able to revert to their contractual working pattern (if different) should speak to their line manager in the first instance.
- 6.5 All working patterns agreed are subject to review and are dependent on business needs, as such they may be amended from time to time with appropriate notice and discussion.

## **7. AGILE WORK IN PRACTICE**

- 7.1 It is likely that most of our employees will continue with some form of agile working, subject to the criteria set out above, going forward.
- 7.2 Employees' who are able because of their role to work effectively from a variety of locations, are as a general rule unlikely to have a fixed desk location allocated in any of the Firm's offices. Instead, they will be provided with a hot desk, usually in their principal place of work (as defined under their contract of employment) but also at other offices when required (subject to business need and booking arrangements).
- 7.3 This means that in some locations (principally the London office,) there will be fewer desks than there are employees and so there will be a requirement to share desks' and IT equipment and to book desk space when coming into the office.
- 7.4 To book space employees' should in the first instance, liaise with the secretary nominated to deal with this in their practice area or if in support liaise with their line manager. In time it is anticipated an online solution will be available.
- 7.5 To support the above the Firm requires all employees whether working in an agile way or not, to adopt a "clear desk" policy and ensure that no work or personal items are left on any desk after use.
- 7.6 Employees' who have an agile working pattern will be required to clear the desk they have been using at the end of their working day, and secure any

work-related or personal material remaining in the office, in the lockers provided.

7.7 When working from home or in a location other than one of the Firm's offices, employees' should:

- (a) continue this practice and place all work-related papers in a secure setting at the end of the working day;
- (b) ensure telephone and video calls are taken in a room away from other people so that employee screens and discussions remain confidential;
- (c) ensure that PC's, laptops, mobile phones and other devices which are used for work purposes are locked when employees' are away from those devices;
- (d) avoid printing documents on personal printers where possible, and where it is necessary to do so, take care to ensure that no confidential information is left on those printers or elsewhere in the remote environment;
- (e) never print, scan or fax confidential documents using a public printer;
- (f) avoid sending client-related post to employees' home addresses as much as reasonably possible;
- (g) not use personal shredders or bins to dispose of the Firm's confidential information and client papers; and
- (h) ensure that all the Firm's confidential information and client papers are returned to the office as soon as is reasonably practicable, in order that these documents can be archived or destroyed securely as appropriate.

7.8 Each department within the London office has been assigned a "zone" area of desks and where possible employees' will be able to book a desk in the appropriate zone prior to coming into the office.

7.9 When this is not possible due to excess demand on a particular day then the employee will be assigned to a "zone" as close to their own "zone" as possible.

7.10 In the unlikely event that there are no available desks then employees who need to come into the office on that particular day will be permitted to work from other areas e.g., meeting rooms until a desk becomes available.

- 7.11 All desks will be cleaned thoroughly between users and each user provided with their own anti-bacterial wipes for additional cleaning, plus gloves and face mask for protection if they wish to use them.
- 7.12 The employee's principal place of work as defined by their contract of employment will still apply in respect of claiming work related travel expenses.
- 7.13 The decision to adopt an agile working pattern remains subject to the criteria set out above and to approval from the employee's line manager, Head of Department and HR,

## **8. CORE WORKING HOURS**

- 8.1 Whilst flexibility around working hours is germane to agile working, the Firm requires that any full-day working pattern must incorporate as a minimum the core hours of 1000 to 1400 on the individual's working day.

## **9. LINE MANAGER, HR & HEAD OF DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 9.1 To determine in discussion whether or not a particular role is suitable for agile working and if so, which working pattern will most effectively meet our business needs taking into account the criteria set out above.
- 9.2 Ensuring employees' are treated consistently and fairly both within teams and departments and across the Firm.
- 9.3 Line managers' will in particular be responsible for ensuring regular communication is in place with the agile worker, including one to one and team meetings, performance reviews and regular updates to ensure that performance continues to be outcome and results driven.
- 9.4 In relation to performance it is important that line managers' agree with employees' measurable outcomes and key indicators of effective working practices in their roles. These should cover e.g., the issues of productivity, quality of work and delivery to deadlines. Whilst these issues would ordinarily

be formally reviewed at annual appraisal, regular informal reviews and updates are key to measuring the effectiveness of agile working practices and maintaining morale and motivation of those working remotely.

9.5 In relation to training and career development, these opportunities should remain unchanged irrespective of the employee's working pattern. It will be the responsibility of the line manager and head of department to ensure that regardless of working pattern all employees' receive appropriate training for their role and are advised and encouraged to participate in training and know how sessions as they arise.

9.6 Each team or department will be responsible for creating and maintaining their own rotas as to when employees are working. This will allow them to manage workloads and shared tasks in the most appropriate way.

## **10. RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYEES**

10.1 Employees who have adopted an agile working pattern must plan and agree work with their line manager and ensure the rest of the team and clients are able to contact them in the usual way throughout their working day.

10.2 They must keep their outlook calendar up to date and ensure all team members and other relevant parties are able to access it.

10.3 They must keep their Softphone "status" up to date to reflect whether they are working in the office or remotely.

10.4 Hours of work should be agreed with their line manager in advance; employees working from home will continue to have the right to privacy out of hours and must be able to separate their home and working lives.

10.5 Employees who wish to vary their agreed working pattern must discuss any request with their line manager and HR with a view to reaching an agreement that meets the criteria set out above. All changes agreed whether temporary or permanent will continue to be subject to review and business need.

- 10.6 Requests to increase or reduce hours of work, move to a job-share etc. should be dealt with in the usual way and employees should refer to the Firm's existing Flexible Working Policy for the procedure to follow.
- 10.7 Employees must be willing to engage fully in team meetings and one to one meetings with their line manager (whether in person or online) and be prepared to discuss and review their working arrangements and performance to ensure that arrangements in place continue to be effective or where improvements can be made these are discussed and actioned as appropriate.

## **11. HEALTH & SAFETY**

- 11.1 Employees who have adopted an agile working pattern are still covered by the same Health & Safety legislation and as such it is incumbent upon the Firm to ensure we have met our obligations in this area.
- 11.2 The Facilities Manager (or one of her team) will ensure that all agile workers receive an appropriate Agile Display Screen Equipment assessment.
- 11.3 Employees who are working remotely on a regular basis should have an appropriate desk, chair and suitable lighting. The workstation assessment carried out through the agile DSE assessment will ensure this appropriate set up and if necessary the Firm will loan any reasonable equipment to employees' where a need is identified to ensure safe working.
- 11.4 Employees who have an agile working pattern will still be required to take rest breaks during their working day. The Firm, requires all employees to take a minimum of thirty minutes (unpaid) break in any working day longer than six hours and ideally to take a one hour (unpaid break) in a working day of 7.5 hours' duration. These breaks should take place during the working day and not at the beginning or end of the day.
- 11.5 Employees are required to be mindful of their own Health & Safety and to carry out workstation assessments that are supplied to them online and to take appropriate breaks.



11.6 Employees' must also be mindful of their responsibilities under the Firm's various Compliance policies, Data Protection and its commitment to ISO27001. In particular all confidential documents must be saved into the appropriate place in the DMS, physical documents locked away at the end of each working day and screens (including mobile phone screens) locked when the employee is away from their device irrespective of its location.

11.7 Employees working in transit must be particularly mindful of the above.

## 12. INTERNET SPECIFICATION

12.1 IT have assessed that as an absolute minimum home internet specification of 5 Mbps (megabits per second) for **both** download and upload, is necessary for functional access to our systems at an acceptable speed when working remotely. A home internet specification of 8-12 Mbps will provide better performance allowing for other home usage which may be going on throughout the day. Even then it is likely that certain systems will be slower than in the office. Individual differences between equipment and other technical factors mean this is not a guarantee. Residential internet speeds fluctuate throughout the course of a day. Please note: few residential internet service providers guarantee a minimum speed and most only advertise the download speed. It may be necessary to organise a much faster connection than the speed above, to ensure you are not dropping below 5MB. In general; the faster the internet the better, for home workers and wired connections are always better than wireless.

12.2 Employees' can test their home internet speed using the attached link: <http://www.broadbandspeedchecker.co.uk/> or <https://www.speedtest.net>. It is important to check this at regular intervals if you are having connection issues of any kind and before reporting problems, as residential internet speeds vary constantly throughout the day.

12.3 Employees' whose internet speed falls below the recommended minimum should discuss with their line manager in the first instance to discuss next steps. Where remote working is essential on a permanent basis the Firm may

reimburse all or part of the cost of upgrading this specification. Each case will be agreed on its own merits based on individual circumstances and business need.

### **13. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

- 13.1 To facilitate agile working relevant employees will be supplied with a laptop and headset by the IT department.
- 13.2 Further equipment including screens, keyboard and mouse may be supplied on request and each request will be dealt with on its own merits subject to availability and business need.
- 13.3 The soft phone system will permit calls to be taken over the internet to increase agility and move away from reliance on desk or mobile phones.
- 13.4 The IT kit will be loaned to the employee and must be returned on leaving the firm.
- 13.5 All items of equipment issued to employees will be covered by the Firm's insurance policies.
- 13.6 Employees have a duty of care to take all reasonable steps to safeguard equipment from loss or damage. Valuable items such as laptops should not be left unattended e.g., in vehicles. Failure to keep information and kit secure will be considered a very serious matter and may result in disciplinary action being taken.
- 13.7 The Firm reserves the right in cases of repeated loss or careless damage to valuable items to require employees' to reimburse the cost of replacement
- 13.8 Any loss or damage to IT kit must be reported to IT immediately. Where employees' believe equipment has been stolen rather than lost, they should report it to the police and obtain a crime reference number as this is required for any insurance claim the Firm may wish to make.



#### **14. SICKNESS ABSENCE**

- 14.1 Employees' working remotely are expected to continue to follow the Firm's sickness absence reporting procedure in exactly the same way as if they were in the office.