

# HYBRID WORKING POLICY

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This policy sets out East Coast Community Healthcare CIC's ("ECCH") approach to hybrid working, which is a form of working which allows employees to split their time between attending the workplace and working remotely (usually but not necessarily, from home). Hybrid working is an important element of both our:

- strategy for adapting to, and thriving in, the new working environment, in this digital age; and
- commitment to supporting a positive work-life balance for our employees whilst meeting the needs of the service, it's users and the wider organisation.

ECCH recognises that providing employees with the ability to work in a hybrid manner may allow for more effective and efficient ways of working. Often this remote working environment will be a home-based office, enabling staff working in this way to reduce time spent travelling to the office and better balance work and personal responsibilities.

Whilst hybrid working does primarily focus on issues relating to working from different locations, it also seeks to benefit from the use of technology to change working practices and to work differently with the aim of increasing the effectiveness of the service and by doing so, delivering benefits to service users.

Whilst there are barriers around clinical working and available space it is important to bear in mind that a key barrier to hybrid working is culture and mind set. Research shows that employees are seeking roles with autonomy and hybrid working enhances our ability to recruit and retain staff. ECCH actively encourages enabling employees to work in a hybrid manner, where appropriate in line with the requirements of the job role, the expectation is that this requires mutual trust and responsibility. The primary focus must be on meeting the needs of the service within boundaries which are agreed between management and staff. The adoption of digital platforms supports a largescale shift to an agile way of working with the capability to fully adopt a hybrid approach to working into the future and by implementing our Hybrid Working Policy, this further demonstrates our commitment to hybrid working.

It is important to recognise that hybrid working may not work well for everyone and there may be certain roles or tasks that require staff to be co-located (i.e. working in the same physical location as colleagues) so that work can be carried out effectively. It is also important to note that some be individuals prefer not to work remotely for personal or work-based reasons. Employees and roles will therefore need to be assessed on an individual basis to determine eligibility as further outlined below.

## 2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the key principles and practical guidance in relation to hybrid working for both managers and employees. This policy aims to provide specific guidance on hybrid working, including:

- Explaining the approach to agreeing hybrid working arrangements and the individual criteria necessary for being able to work in a hybrid way, including conditions around the remote working environment.

- Setting out the expectations of individuals in terms of performance and conduct when working remotely.
- Outlining the steps that need to be taken to ensure the mental and physical health and safety of employees working remotely are identified and managed.

### **3. SCOPE**

This policy and procedure relates to all employees of ECCH who undertake a role considered suitable for hybrid working. Whilst hybrid working may incorporate an element of home working, all home working is subject to management approval and is dependent upon the role and nature of its responsibilities.

### **4. RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **4.1 ECCH Employees**

Are responsible for the implementation of this policy and following the requirements of the policy. They should be aware of their responsibility to adhere to this policy and the principles which underpin hybrid working.

#### **4.2 Chief Executive of ECCH**

Overall responsibility for the enforcement of this policy lies with the Chief Executive of ECCH.

#### **4.3 ECCH Managers**

Are responsible for ensuring that hybrid working members of staff are provided with appropriate support, equipment and training to carry out their duties. They should ensure that regular communication is maintained with all individuals, including regular wellbeing check-ins and that teams and individuals remain connected, avoiding feelings of isolation which is proportionate to their pattern of work. They are responsible for ensuring that the effectiveness of hybrid working is monitored through regular reviews such as appraisals, supervision and 1 to 1's.

### **5. POLICY STATEMENT**

There is no expectation that staff must work in a hybrid way. Where roles do have tasks that can be performed in a remote working environment, each individual has a choice as to whether or not they would like to work this way. If needed and where possible, an appropriate dedicated workspace should be made available for staff who prefer to work entirely from their ECCH workspace, whether this is a continuation of their existing arrangements or the consequence of ending a hybrid working arrangement. Whilst this Policy aims to enable as many staff as possible to work in this way if they so wish, some roles will have tasks and responsibilities that can only be performed on ECCH premises.

Managers are best placed to identify the most appropriate level of hybrid working for their staff in terms of the split between working on ECCH's premises and working remotely, with an emphasis on ensuring such arrangements are productive and beneficial both on an organisational and individual level. This may be in conjunction with advice from Occupational Health, HR, or an

employee's medical professional. Decisions about the level of hybrid working and who can work in this way must be taken in a fair and consistent way to meet the aim of this Policy.

This Policy is intended to complement and not replace ECCH's Flexible Working Policy, which provides the procedure for individuals exercising their statutory right to request flexible working, which may include other forms of working arrangements such as amended working hours.

## 6. PROCEDURE/IMPLEMENTATION

### 6.1 Approval

Hybrid working arrangements must be agreed with line managers.

Before being considered for hybrid working, roles must meet the following criteria:

- The role does not exclusively require face to face contact/a physical presence at work.
- Employees can meet the full expectations and objectives of their role whilst hybrid working, and it must not adversely impact the provision of services;
- Appropriate technology, equipment and workspace is in place, or can be provided.
- Where hybrid working is agreed for an employee, this does not act as a contractual change and the organisation has the right to alter the arrangement due to service needs.
- Managers should remain mindful that where display screen equipment (DSE) is used for one hour or more continuously, in a working period, that a DSE assessment is required for both time spent at home and in a workspace. Please see DSE policy for further information and guidance.

Whilst hybrid working is not suitable for all roles, such as those where their main function is to deliver care via direct patient contact, ECCH supports increased flexibility for all roles and encourages managers to think creatively and discuss with all staff ways that all roles including clinical roles, can become more flexible.

Should an individual wish to request other types of flexible working in addition to or instead of hybrid working, this should be undertaken using ECCH's Flexible Working Policy.

Hybrid working arrangements may be withdrawn where:

- There has been an identifiable negative operational impact as a result of hybrid working, for example reduction in productivity or a negative impact on team working;
- The individual is failing to meet the obligations set out in the principles and parameters for hybrid working as set out within this policy;
- The individual is not meeting acceptable performance standards;
- The arrangements are having a detrimental effect on the individual's health and wellbeing.

Hybrid working arrangements will also be considered as part of a flexible working request and/or as a reasonable adjustment for an employee with a disability.

## 6.2 Communication

- Managers should adapt to both the needs of the individual and the team in their methods of communication to avoid hybrid working employees feeling detached or isolated.
- Whilst MS Teams can be adopted to supplement and replace some traditional face to face meetings, it is essential that time is built in to enable face to face meetings and communication to take place at an appropriate level. Flexibility will be required to enable practical implementation.
- Managers and employees need to be mindful that certain training, supervision, and other meetings will need to be held face to face.
- Both managers and employees must be willing to engage in joint problem solving and troubleshooting to ensure that the hybrid working arrangements work effectively. Both parties are responsible for maintaining good working relationships and reviewing arrangements on a regular basis.

## 6.3 Equipment

All employees identified as hybrid workers will be provided with appropriate IT equipment to enable them to fulfil their role. Items such as desks and chairs can be provided for home working as an identified need and as agreed with the line manager. NB: Where ECCH provide specialist equipment, it is usual for this to be provided at the main location, unless it is an essential requirement identified following a DSE / Health & Safety Assessment. Employees are responsible for ensuring that they have a suitable and confidential workspace when working from home which includes ensuring their working environment is DSE compliant.

## 6.4 Data Protection

Employees who are working remotely are responsible for keeping information associated with our organisation secure at all times. Specifically, remote workers have a duty to:

- practise good computer security, including using a unique password for their work laptop (together with any other work devices);
- ensure that work-related information is safeguarded when working in public spaces.

## 6.5 Arrangements While Working Remotely

It is important that staff manage their time effectively and do not use hybrid working as a means to work excessive hours (due to less travel for example). Staff should be mindful to ensure they are not 'overworking'; "Downtime" from work is essential. To help maintain your wellbeing, please make sure that you take adequate rest breaks:

- Take time for lunch each day.
- Even if you are busy, it is essential that you find the time to take a break of at least 20 minutes during each working day that lasts more than six hours; this is a legal requirement however ECCH policy is to take a break of at least 30-minutes unless a specific agreement is in place.
- It is also important and encouraged to take regular screen breaks to support health and wellbeing, this should include some movement activity.

- Ensure the time period between stopping work one day and beginning the next is not less than 11 hours.

Please be as clear as possible with your line manager about your hours of work for days on which you are working remotely. Making use of tools such as shared calendars and out-of-office messaging can help colleagues to be aware of your availability on these days.

## 6.6 Attendance and Wellbeing

Where an employee feels unwell and not able to work, ECCH Attendance and Wellbeing Policy and reporting procedures should be followed.

The on-going wellbeing of employees should be monitored through regular review of hybrid working arrangements by managers and hours of work must be agreed in advance allowing employees the right to privacy out of hours, enabling employees to separate work and non-work time.

Working remotely can bring a number of wellbeing related challenges, including:

- The ability of employers to ensure workers have a safe working environment, where risks are reduced so far as is reasonably practicable.
- The potential for a poor homeworking environment or ergonomics, contributing to musculoskeletal issues, (Like back or neck problems for example).
- Digital presenteeism (workers feeling like they must be always available online).
- Work-life balance difficulties such as working longer hours or blurred boundaries between work and home.
- Isolation from colleagues;
- Consideration should also be given to lone working and how contact will be maintained.

## 6.7 Health and Safety

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 states that an employer shall ensure, so far as it is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees. This extends to employees who work in a hybrid way and who may work from home.

Employees should liaise with their line manager to ensure that their remote working set-up is appropriate, and that work is being carried out in a safe manner. However, employees must also take responsibility for their own health and safety and that of anyone else who is affected by their work (for example other members of the household when working from home).

Employees must notify their line manager if:

- they feel any discomfort due to working remotely (such as back pain); or
- they believe that there are any work-related health and safety hazards;
- any work-related accidents occur in their home.



## 6.8 Hybrid Working Environment

- Employees who work remotely are subject to the same rules, procedures and expected standard of conduct and performance as all other employees. Contractual obligations, duties and responsibilities remain in place, as do ECCH policies.
- Whilst working remotely, employees must be available and working during their normal hours of work, as set out in their contract of employment.
- Employees may work full days remotely or they may agree to split part of their day between remote working and office based and this should be agreed with their line manager; employees are encouraged to utilise the use of outlook/MS calendars.
- Hybrid working can take place in a number of environments, which may include 'hot-desk' areas provided by ECCH. Desks which are designated as a hot desk should not contain any personal belongings and should be cleared when vacated after each period of work, so they can be available to use by other employees.
- Many meetings are likely to meet in a hybrid manner, with some meetings wholly virtual and others wholly in person. It will be for each manager/chair and team to determine how and when meetings should be undertaken and for these arrangements to be shared and widely known within the team and participants.
- All employees will be assigned to a work base; travel to and from their base will not be classed as working time.

The number of days per week each employee spends attending the office compared with working remotely will vary, depending on:

- their individual circumstances;
- the nature of their role;
- what is happening within their role and team at any particular time;
- the needs of our organisation, including capacity available at work locations; and
- the need for flexibility to ensure the service needs can be met.

Based on these criteria, it is the role of each department manager to agree with the members of their team the arrangement that works best for that team/department.

## 7. MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Human Resources Department will be responsible for monitoring the overall effectiveness of the Hybrid Working Policy and will keep the policy under review in consultation with the HR Policy Group. This policy will be reviewed periodically and improved in the light of operational practice and experience.

Any new statutory provisions affecting this policy will automatically take precedence. This will be communicated to all employees and the policy will be updated accordingly.

## 8. RELATED DOCUMENTS

ECCH policies and procedures:



- Flexible Working Policy
- Attendance and Wellbeing Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Information Governance Policy
- Performance Management Policy
- DSE Policy
- Occupational Health Policy
- Lone Working Policy

## 9. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

In reviewing this policy, the HR Policy Group considered, as a minimum, the following questions:

- Are the aims of this policy clear?
- Are responsibilities clearly identified?
- Has the policy been reviewed to ascertain any potential discrimination?
- Are there any specific groups impacted upon?
- Is this impact positive or negative?
- Could any impact constitute unlawful discrimination?
- Are communication proposals adequate?
- Does training need to be given? If so, is this planned?

Adverse impact has been considered for age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation.

Blank version of the full Equality & Diversity Impact assessment can be found here:

[http://eccho/Home/FormsGuidance.aspx?udt\\_575\\_param\\_index=E&udt\\_575\\_param\\_page=2](http://eccho/Home/FormsGuidance.aspx?udt_575_param_index=E&udt_575_param_page=2)

## 10. DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version Date	Version No.	Author/ Reviewer	Comments

### DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

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