



## Hybrid Working Policy

### Document Version Control

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## **Introduction**

SEStran recognises that not all roles require to be worked the traditional 9am – 5pm. Flexibility in working hours and locations improves work life balance, which in turn improves performance and ultimately should provide a better service to our customers and stakeholders.

Using the right technology allows you to work from any location. The concept of hybrid working is wider than just location and can bring flexibility in working hours/patterns, reduce commuting costs and allow for a better work/life balance.

Not all jobs will lend themselves to hybrid working due to the nature of the services being delivered. This policy applies to staff who work in posts that historically were predominantly office based.

This policy will be subject to ongoing review.

## **Workstyles and where you can work from**

All employees who were historically predominantly office based will be considered to be either a hybrid/flexible worker or an office based worker.

If you are a hybrid/flexible worker your working base will remain as the SEStran offices although you may work from another location, as directed by SEStran, or your home, using appropriate technology supplied by SEStran. Please be aware of your surroundings when working out with SEStran premises as not all work tasks will be appropriate to be undertaken in another location.

### **Workstyle Descriptions:**

#### **Hybrid/Flexible Worker**

Predominantly working from home, other locations could include meetings in partnership council offices or stakeholder offices. There will be the need to attend the SEStran office on a weekly basis to catch up with paperwork and to maintain contact/relationships with team members. The amount of time spent working from home/office/other locations will vary depending on job tasks and also personal circumstances i.e. available space at home. Out with any government issued advice on working from home, only in exceptional circumstances, and for a prescribed period, will working from home for all working hours be considered, this would be in consultation with your line manager and subject to approval by the Partnership Director.

#### **Office Based**

All working time spent in the office

Fully office based as the tasks of the job are unable to be undertaken in any other mobile/flexible way.

#### **Tax Relief when working from home**

Any employee working from home can claim tax relief. This is something that you need to claim as an individual and is not processed by SEStran. To find out more information and whether you are eligible please visit the Government website:

<https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/working-at-home>

### **Appropriate Insurance when working from home**

Any employee working from home should ensure that their Home Insurance provider is aware that they are working from home for a percentage of their working week. SEStran equipment is insured by SEStran and your home should not be used for meetings, therefore there should be no impact on your premiums.

### **Attending meetings**

Where possible, you should use technology to engage/communicate and avoid mileage, travel time or expenses. Where a meeting is required you should use MS Teams or other approved application.

It is acknowledged that for some meetings, and for some individuals/groups, the preference may be to meet face to face and consideration needs to be given to doing so, where considered appropriate, for example; interviews, line management support/good conversations, team meetings.

### **Reasonable working locations**

If working within public areas or space, consideration must always be given to confidentiality and data protection and security of data or discussions. Not all roles/tasks will lend themselves to working in public areas/spaces, for example a café.

### **When can you work?**

Hours of work and working patterns will be worked within the parameters of the Flexible Working Policy (Link to policy in Useful Links section]. For some posts hours can change and won't be worked in the same pattern every week. Agreeing hours with your manager will:

- ensure that managers know when their team members are working and contactable
- assist when planning staffing if there is an element of office cover required from the overall team
- assist when approving leave requests from team members
- help reduce risk of lone working
- ensure work can be allocated/managed and outputs can be monitored
- support health and wellbeing including when you can be contacted.

You **must** also update your electronic diary to ensure it is clear when you are due to work, when you are in meetings, and any other commitments you may have during the normal working week. You can add your lunch break into your diary to ensure you are not disturbed.

Your out of office email message should detail your working pattern if it's not the traditional Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm. During non-working times, when working from home, please put your laptop away to ensure you have a separation between work and home life.

### **Office Based**

Working hours are within the building opening hours and as agreed with your line manager.

## **What Equipment is provided?**

Your manager will ensure you have appropriate equipment to undertake your role in a hybrid/flexible manner. This can include: a laptop, monitor, keyboard, mouse and headphones. It may also include a mobile telephone although 'teams' calls should normally be used. Printers will not be provided for use at home as we are working more digitally than ever before, however if you do need to print you will need to attend the office to do so.

Prior to being provided with any electronic equipment it is essential that you have read and understood the Acceptable Use Policy.

SEStran IT equipment is solely for the use of SEStran employees only. You must not connect any privately owned equipment to the SEStran network or IT equipment.

It is your responsibility to ensure the equipment is kept safe and charging of equipment is your responsibility. You must bring the equipment to the office when requested for PAT checking.

If you are a permanent employee and a hybrid/flexible worker, you can purchase a desk and chair to support working from home and reclaim this through staff expenses (£100 maximum allowance). Where appropriate a replacement desk/chair can be provided every 5 years or earlier in specific circumstances on a case by case basis. Temporary employees and casuals should discuss any requirements with their line manager in the first instance.

Some workers may require specific equipment to support the working arrangement. Specific needs will be considered on an individual basis, and with guidance from Occupational Health.

Paper diaries should be avoided, instead, you should use outlook to record meetings etc. Your outlook diary will be open for colleagues to view and you must allow full access to your diary for your manager, this is to support lone working, safety, availability and workload.

You should carry out a home working risk assessment when you begin using new equipment. Where you are using standard workstation equipment this self-assessment does not need to be repeated every time you require to work within the office. You should only complete another self assessment if you experience issues using your workstation equipment or there is a change to the equipment provided. You need to make sure you tell your manager immediately of any issues you are experiencing. Reasonable adjustments will be made where appropriate.

## **Working in the Office**

### **Desks**

Designated desks will be available for use by hybrid/flexible and office based workers as required.

For arrangements to be successful, appropriate behaviours and principles must be in place. As a minimum, the following list of behaviours and principles support good mobile and flexible working arrangements.

- Clear desk policy applies to all categories. You should leave any desk you use clean and tidy after you use it and leave it how you would want to find the desk.
- Teams may be given a designated bank of desks. Where possible, you should sit within your designated bank of desks when at your working base location
- A locker or personal storage facility will be provided at your working base location
- Eating at desks should be avoided where possible
- Use the wipes available to clean desks and equipment after use.
- Heating/lighting – everyone needs to recognise the different needs and wants of colleagues and be tolerant of others

## **Terms and Conditions**

Terms and conditions of employment are not altered when working in a hybrid/flexible manner. You will still have the SEStran office noted as your base location.

Some workers may have fixed working hours, others will have more flexibility. The working hours of the post will not alter, however the working pattern may become more flexible, as hours can be worked at a time that suits the employee (subject to line manager/Partnership Director approval). Your line manager should know your working hours so they know when they can or can't contact you. You should also update your online diary so your colleagues know too. If you choose to work during unsocial hours, no enhancements are payable, as this is a personal choice.

If you are currently eligible for the Flexitime scheme this will continue.

Travel expenses cannot be claimed for travel between your home and base location.

Employees in all categories can apply to work more flexibly through part-time work, job-sharing or compressed hours. (Refer to the Flexible Working Policy under Useful Links)

Normal Calling in Sick procedures apply to hybrid/flexible workers. Working from home is not to be used as an alternative to childcare or care for dependents and requests for carers leave should follow normal procedures.

Time recording should be completed using the relevant system, where appropriate.

Arrangements should be reviewed regularly to ensure there are no issues that require to be addressed

Arrangements are subject to change to meet service delivery requirements, employee wellbeing and the needs of customers, which will always take priority.

## **Outputs**

It is essential that you agree outputs with your manager. This means that you must agree the tasks and actions that need to be completed within an agreed timescale. Subject to exigencies of service it is up to you to determine when your tasks will be done within the timescales set.

- You need to agree with your manager when you will be available or in the office
- Clear expectations, standards and timescales for each piece of work is essential and must be agreed on a regular basis to ensure productivity is maintained

### **GDPR/Data Protection**

You must ensure that any confidential information, either paperwork or electronic files are kept secure. For example, if working from home any confidential information should not be accessible to family members or visitors to the house. Similarly if working from another location, please ensure any time you leave your work station that you lock your screen and secure any confidential paperwork.

Confidential waste should be returned to the SEStran office as soon as practically possible for destruction and not disposed of with household rubbish or in other locations e.g. cafés.

### **Communication**

Managing a team working flexibly brings challenges. In moving to a more flexible way of working there needs to be an acceptance that an immediate response will not always be possible as individuals may work different patterns to suit their circumstances/work commitments. Hybrid and flexible working requires an element of trust between you and your manager. Communication between you and your manager is key to success.

- Effective communication is critical and it is important that this takes place on at least a weekly basis
- There needs to be an agreed process/mechanism of monitoring performance and assessing output
- You are expected to attend team meetings, 1-1s, and other appointments as necessary in connection with the duties of your post
- More frequent 1-1's may be required to ensure good communication and productivity.

### **Health and Safety**

You should work with your manager to ensure your safety at all times. It is important that managers ensure that:

- Emergency contact information is kept up to date
- Working patterns are agreed
- Lone working arrangements and wellbeing are considered and adequate arrangements and support are in place.
- Any necessary risk assessments are in place and reviewed as required
- A [workstation self-assessment](#) is completed by employees
- Diaries must be open to all of your team and your manager at all times to ensure availability and location is known whilst working.
- Regular contact including 1-1's and team meetings are in place to ensure ongoing support

## Useful Links

HSE Toolbox – Guidance for Home Workers

[https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/home.htm?utm\\_source=hse.gov.uk&utm\\_medium=refferal&utm\\_campaign=coronavirus&utm\\_term=home\\_workers&utm\\_content=home-page-popular](https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/home.htm?utm_source=hse.gov.uk&utm_medium=refferal&utm_campaign=coronavirus&utm_term=home_workers&utm_content=home-page-popular)

Flexible Working Policy

<https://sestran.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/SEStran-Flexible-Working-Policy-Procedure.pdf>

Home Working Policy

<https://sestran.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/SEStran-Home-Working-Policy-FINAL-Aug-2021.pdf>

Portable Devices User Agreement Form

<https://sestran.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Portable-Devices-User-Agreement-Form.pdf>