

# Young People and Children's Scrutiny Committee Ways of Working Overview



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July 2021

# Overview and Context

- In response to the COVID19 pandemic, children's and education services had to **quickly respond to the impact to ensure the safety of the workforce, and children and young people's supporting an approach to working in an agile manner whilst delivering "business as usual but differently" including safe face to face visits/work with children and young people.**
- The Directorate establishment three ways of working: **1) on-site 2) working from home 3) back-up (available to work on site if needed)**. These ways of working have positively impacted the Directorate as reported by staff and evidenced by workforce intelligence and performance data
- Providing that service delivery can be maintained, flexible working, when used effectively, delivers benefits to both employer and employees including:

**Employer benefits:** Improved productivity and overall efficiency, Reduced absenteeism, Effective use of office space with associated reduction in costs, Lower carbon footprint due to reduced fuel and travel costs.

**Employee benefits:** Increased job satisfaction, A better work-life balance, enabling people to better manage their personal commitments with work easier, Allows employees to fulfil their caring responsibilities and be confident that support is available to work in different ways if needed, Improved productivity, Improved morale and motivation **contributing to better service to children young people and their families .**

**Project Objective:** Ensure that our frontline staff have the practical tools to support our priorities and facilitate collaboration.

# what have we done ?

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To support this new way of working and ensure that **our staff have the right skills, behaviours, knowledge and tools** to effectively and efficiently undertake their roles, we have ;

- Developed a task and fish group of stakeholders and enablers informed by extensive consultation to deliver the project objectives based on the experiences of staff delivering business as usual but differently during COVID
- An organisational development plan for the Service which is a **programme of activity**, training, engagement, and communications to ensure the ongoing oversight of organisational development in line with our wider organisation's vision and priorities.
- A set of directorate specific working principles **underpinned** by the Council's flexible working policies and the vision for Future Ways of Working to support the directorate to **effectively** develop and sustain flexible ways of working.
- The purchase of furniture and IT equipment to support a new way of working; with this to form **part of a small-scale modernised office from which to inform roll out of across the estate**

# Developing the principles to support the work

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- Following an extensive period of consultation with our workforce, a set of directorate specific working principles **underpinned** by the Council's flexible working policies and the vision for Future Ways of Working have been developed. They are **intended to provide a clear understanding and expectations** for all employees, support **business objectives** and **create a work environment** that supports both the directorates and employees' needs.
- The principles recognise the importance of securing best outcomes for children through reforming our working practices:
  - Ensuring children, young people and families remain safe, happy, healthy and successful
  - Communication between employees and line managers
  - Outcomes for children and families over presence in the office
  - Arrangements are not one size fits all (what works for social workers may not work for school admissions).
- Feedback on the principles has been overwhelmingly **positive**, with colleagues recognising that they reflect and build upon the ways we have been working over the past year, and how they set the foundation for **embedding this way of working for the future**.

# HR and OD – Our Flexible Working Principles

- **Business and children and young people comes first**

Everyone should be entitled to make a case for working flexibly, but there will be situations where a specific arrangement will not work because of our commitments to our children and young people.

- **Different arrangements work for different services**

There is no one-size-fits-all solution. Rigid off the shelf arrangements are less likely to work. The best working arrangements are tailored to the job and service.

- **Flexibility involves give and take**

Responsibility for making it work must be shared by employees and managers. Together you need to assess opportunities and challenges openly and honestly

- **Presence does not equal performance**

It's important to judge the performance of flexible working by measurable results and outcomes, not by how many hours they work or how long they stay in the office

- **Arrangements are not forever**

New working arrangements need to be flexible enough to respond to business requirements. In all cases you need to maintain a dialogue – both sides should keep the possibility of change alive through regular review

- **Flexibility can work for all**

Don't make assumptions about who will and who won't want to work flexibly. Most employees will respond positively for a range of reasons beyond childcare and caring

- **Communication**

Communication between and across teams remains at the centre of our ways of working to ensure that teams do not become fragmented and individual employees do not feel isolated

# Responsibilities

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## **Line manager responsibilities:**

- To ensure that flexible working is effectively managed and in accordance with the Council's flexible working policy which provides you with the discretion support or decline flexible working methods for business reasons such as: ability to meet demands, ability to organise work within available staffing, impact on work colleagues, impact on service quality, impact on performance.
- To ensure employees are aware of the principles and expectations of flexible working and the required standard of work, including specific deliverables.
- To evaluate and review the arrangements on a regular basis to ensure appropriate outcomes are being delivered.
- To keep in regular contact with employees; ensuring performance and health and wellbeing is actively managed.
- To ensure Health & Safe arrangements are in place incl. Homeworking risk assessment.

## **Employee responsibilities:**

- To abide by the requirements of this document and the flexible working policy.
- To deliver the expected work outcomes; ensuring children remain safe, happy, healthy and successful.
- To keep in regular contact with your line manager

# HR and OD – Organisational Development Plan

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An Organisational Plan for the Service is a programme of activity, training, engagement, and communications to ensure the service is moving in the right direction, in line with the wider organisation's vision and priorities. From this work the goals are:

- **'Getting the Basics Right'** - Improving poor performance management and targeted intervention where required
- **Building Trust and Managing by Outcomes** – for all
  - Setting clear expectations of staff and managers
  - Clear understanding of what is 'best for you and the service', with children and families at the heart of what the service does.
  - Training identified for Managers and Staff
  - Coaching and Mentoring offer and Personal Development
  - Reward and Recognition (to be linked with engagement activity)
- **Leadership / Change Development** : Requested / required to develop leadership skills, lead through change; linking to corporate development programmes for Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic staff, Aspiring Managers, Agile Working.

The OD plan was approved by the Children's Leadership Team on 14th June.

The OD plan has been through extensive consultation with Children's and Education management teams with some additional feedback for further improvement and regular monitoring and risks through management teams to ensure the successful delivery of the plan.

# Monitoring Impact

This sets out the proposals to measure and monitor the effectiveness of the OD plan and ways of working; ensuring that we are able to respond to issues, monitor impact and evidence the benefits of the programme.

Method	What?	Who?
Workforce Dashboard	Directorate performance incl. Casework, Absence and Agency.	HR Business Partner
Staff Survey	Employee feedback.	OD / HR Business Partner
Complaints	Customer/service user feedback	Complaints / Heads of Service
Balanced Scorecard	Directorate performance	Strategic Director and Deputy Director
Service Performance	QAF	Heads of Service
Management Engagement	Manager Feedback	Directorate Lead



# ICT

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*Ensuring the directorate has the technology to support and sustain flexible working through the following projects. Children's Services will be one of the first directorates to go live with these projects.*

- **Telephony 8x8 – rollout completed March 2021**

Enabling all staff to work from any location, including domestic environments as appropriate, by using softphone functionality integrated into end user devices.

- **Network Replacement Project – Feb 21 - 2023**

In February 2021, the NRP started work to replace three elements of the Council ICT Infrastructure: the Local Area Network (LAN), the Wide Area Network (WAN), and the Wireless Local Area Network (Wi-Fi). This will give better bandwidth to all sites and WiFi provision at all sites. This will support greater partnership working as people won't be tied to their desk, and colleagues from partner organisations will be able to work from our buildings more easily with their own devices (e.g. guest WiFi in MCC buildings enabling partners to work from our sites more easily)

- **End User Device Project – April 2021 – July 2022**

The End User Device Programme intends to upgrade and standardise the council's ICT equipment. It will enable our workforce and members to become flexible by equipping them with a device suited to their role. The Project has a budget of £5.185m and will replace over 4,000 devices, 1,300 monitors and 2,300 mobile phones.

- **Audio Visual / Meeting Rooms (ongoing testing)**

There will be several pilots to test the different technology, its accessibility and how easy it is to support with pilot test sites including child protection conferences.

# Estates

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**To make the best use of our office buildings we will challenge them to work much harder for us.**

- With our increased use of technology, we need to support large and small virtual meetings as well as hybrid meetings.
- For many the purpose of being in the office will be more focussed on connection and collaboration.
- Not everyone can work from home. By providing touchdown areas for all staff across our estate, as well as space for cross functional and partner working, the choice for staff is broader than just work or home.

In order to ensure we are delivering a **smaller, higher quality, lower cost and lower carbon estate**, the following principles are particularly relevant to Children and Education colleagues.

**Supporting localities:** Physical offices remain the cornerstone of our estate strategy, rooting teams in the localities they serve, creating a visible presence across Manchester's communities. We will maintain a strong office presence both in the City Centre and across our neighbourhoods; **Supporting teams and partnerships:** We will enable people to come together – supporting collaboration and connection through a variety of meeting spaces; **Supporting individuals:** We will provide a variety of workspaces for staff – space to work alongside their team, space to focus, space to work locally, space to connect with others. **Connecting staff to neighbourhoods:** We will provide accessible workspace across the estate so staff can work in a place convenient to them and aligned to the needs of their service, regardless of their main office base.

# Next Steps- points for discussion

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- Implementation of Flexible Working Principles across the directorate.
- Communicate the OD plan to the workforce.
- Roll out of EUD programme for C&E workforce
- Development, Implementation and testing of 'Model Office' at Etrop Court and further consideration of other district offices.
- Refine the impact measurements and agree a date to review the approach