

Management

Traditional practice	Now in 2014	Framework in practice says
Manage through attendance. If I cannot see you, I cannot manage you	Manage through what staff produce and do (deliverables/outcomes) regardless of where they are located	We trust staff to work effectively and efficiently wherever they are. Everybody will be clear about what is expected of them in their roles Focus will shift from hours worked to what is being done Managers have a responsibility to track performance and progress with their team regardless of their location If deliverables are not being met, poor performance will be managed robustly
Traditional practice	Now in 2014	Framework in practice says
Some flexible working schemes are available	There are increased opportunities for us to work flexibly such as part-time, different working patterns	We can balance our work and other life demands better The needs of the customer and the service come first when deciding when I work

Agile Working FAQs

The 'Agile Working Guidance' document sets out Camden's approach to agile working and provides managers with a framework for considering agile working arrangements and managing staff in an agile environment.

This 'Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)' document provides answers to some of the practical questions that can arise when Agile working is being considered and implemented. For ease of reference the FAQs are presented against the following themes.

- General
- Communications
- Working time
- Working remotely
- Hot-desking
- Management and Service Delivery

This is a live document that will be amended as more questions arise, or our approach changes, as more flexible working arrangements are introduced. For that reason, only an electronic version has been produced and made available on essentials. If you are using a downloaded hard copy please ensure that you have the most up-to-date version.

If you require further assistance or you have a more specific issue around Agile working, contact the following:

- HR issues - HR Direct on extension 6655
- Health & Safety - via HR Direct on extension 6655
- ICT issues - Corporate ICT on extension 4321
- Telephony - Corporate ICT on extension 4321
- Mobile phone contracts - email ictsupport@camden.gov.uk

General

1. What is the difference between Agile working and flexible working?

Agile working is an umbrella term to encompass remote working, flexible working, mobile working and different ways of working within an open office environment. It provides greater choice and control for employers and staff over where and how work is done and services are delivered, making the best use of new technology.

Agile working is multi-dimensional and has many different forms, but can be summarised as combining flexible-location and flexible-time working arrangements.

- **Flexible-location** working includes hot-desking, remote working, working from community hubs and working from home arrangements.
- **Flexible-time** working means having a varied working pattern that is not just Monday to Friday, 9 to 5. Camden operates many different types of flexible working time arrangements, including compressed working week, part time hours, term time only working and job sharing.

2. What are the benefits of Agile working?

Agile will be a benefit to majority of employees and residents. Employees can attend the office for meetings or if a client is visiting. Instant messaging, telephone and video technology will be used to keep in contact with managers and colleagues. Some employees may want to work from home when they are working on a department report or a project. There may be fewer distractions and staff may focus better on that type of task however they should be available and contactable.

3. Why can we not stick to the 'old' way of working?

There are a number of reasons why we need to depart from the old ways of working. For example:

- Customer demand
- Economics
- Changing demographics
- Work-life balance
- Competition and productivity gains
- Environmental concern
- Advances in technology
- Costs

Technology enables people to work from any location at any time. Technology today means that you can work from:

- Offices
- Home
- Customer's sites
- Partners' offices
- Conferences
- Exhibitions
- Coffee shops and cafes
- Community hubs
- Public places i.e. library

4. I am on the new contract, so how does agile working apply to me?

Under the new contract you will be working to the principles of agile working, which applies where appropriate to all employees where their roles allow for agile working. The type of service being provided may dictate that some services may be more agile than others.

5. I am on the old contract how does agile working apply to me?

The old contract has provisions to ensure flexible working is available where applicable. Agile working applies council-wide to all employees where appropriate as some staff have fixed rotas and shifts. The type of service being provided may dictate that some services may be more agile than others.

6. Do I have the right to work in an agile/flexible way?

No it is not a right, but a way of working that Camden has adopted to enable the workforce not to be confined to the office but be closer to our residents to deliver outcomes that matter/they need and work suitably without compromising service delivery.

Camden actively encourages employees to work in an agile manner to ensure a more dynamic and fluent way of working. However managers can review agile working at any point and change arrangements accordingly. It does not mean because someone has worked in an agile way there can be no changes.

Flexible working is again, not a right per se but a mutually beneficial arrangement to balance effective service delivery with employee's individual needs. As stated if the needs of the service are not in your managers reasonable judgment being met this right can be removed. In some circumstances employees may have a legal right to *request* flexible working and details can be found on Essentials.

7. Can I refuse to work in an agile way?

No, there will be only limited and exceptional circumstances as we would expect all employees to work in an agile way, where service delivery allows.

8. Can Camden laptops be used by staff and their families and friends for personal use?

With the exception of a staff member (we allow staff to use Camden facilities for reasonable personal use), the answer is no. There are various implications around allowing this, for example, ensuring the security and integrity of Camden's data. Access to the Internet would still be via Camden and therefore you are logged in under your usual Camden ID, leaving you and Camden exposed. The IT Code of Conduct (which is available on [essentials](#)) applies both in and outside of Camden buildings and office hours.

Communications

9. What happens if I am working remotely and not available to be contacted?

Working remotely does not mean you should be unavailable and you will need to be contactable at all times; if you are unavailable then you should discuss with your line manager whether you should be on leave. In principle while working remotely you should be available and contactable (other than being in meetings, visiting a client location etc.)

10. I am working remotely all day, but in the afternoon I will be taking a few hours out to attend an appointment and will not be contactable and I intend to catch up with my work later in the evening. Is this allowed?

If you are going to be unavailable for half a day then you need to discuss with your line manager whether you should take the afternoon as leave, as you would do if you were in the office environment, as it is unlikely that you will catch up on half a day's outputs during the evening. Working remotely means that you are available and can be contactable. If you are unavailable for a large portion of the day, then you should be taking annual leave having already arranged this with your manager.

11. Working flexibly may mean that emails may be sent to customers/ internal and external at hours that they may not be used to. How do we explain this if challenged by customers that may be concerned?

Whilst the hours people may work and send out communications may vary, (e.g. an employee may send an e-mail late at night or early in the morning), it should be made clear to customers that they are not expected to respond outside of traditional office hours – normally 9-5. There is however, a facility in the outlook system to delay emails going out until to traditional working hours if you so wish.

12. What if I prefer not to be video Lynced?

Lync technology is an extension of being in an office and assists with principles of agile working. Therefore, unless there are specific reasons as to why you cannot be video Lynced you will be expected to be contactable via this method. If you have specific concerns about the use of video you should raise it with your manager/HR.

13. How can I maintain the incidental communication I have with colleagues in the office, e.g. being able to ask quick questions, when we are working remotely?

The new technology has the use of the instant messages, Lync, availability statuses, location updates etc. will help with this.

14. I'm worried that working remotely will make me feel less connected with my colleagues/team, how can I avoid this?

Geographical distance should not affect cohesive work practices in light of the technology provided and available. Managers and staff should ensure that they regularly meet to avoid sentiments of isolation but also use the technology available.

Working Time

15. What will my core hours be?

The Council's normal working hours are between 7am and 10pm Mon-Fri and 8am and 5pm Sat-Sun Your contract states the number of hours per week you are required to work and your line manager will discuss with you your working pattern subject to service delivery. From time to time you may be asked to work additional or different hours/working patterns.

16. I prefer to work 11:00 to 19:00 can I do this?

It will depend on the role you carry out, your team and service delivery. Your manager may be able to accommodate this or he/she may not. Part of your responsibilities may for example be to be available during office hours to give advice. The manager needs to take into account work patterns, service delivery and customer service. Your manager may initially agree to you working these hours but in the future retract this and ask you to work different hours to deliver the service. Your working pattern is not a permanent arrangement it is subject to service needs and delivery which will be reviewed and changed as our environment changes.

17. What is the expectation of my team if I call or email them later in the evening?

You can work in the evening however, you should be aware that you may not receive a response until the next working day unless this has been previously arranged in the team.

18. There are colleagues in my team that come into work at 10:00. How will a manager choose who comes in at 10:00 and who does not?

This will depend on the following:

- Services needs
- Service cover
- Each case to be judged on its merits
- A fair system of rotation
- Team agreements

19. I need to pick up my child at 15:30 - can I take time out to do this?

If you are working from home and the service is being adequately met yes, you can pick up your child from school and work at a different time to catch up with work. However, you should not carry out childcare whilst working and you should remain available to be contacted. You will also need to consider whilst being contactable with customers, managers and other staff whether you want to take a telephone call in the playground or not answer the phone and the impression this may give about you or question your whereabouts which will trigger a review you working in an agile way.

20. Can I supervise my child whilst agile working?

No. Agile working does not mean that you carry out child care while working.

21. I can do my job in less than 36 hours, what do I do in the remaining hours?

Speak to your line manager immediately to discuss what additional duties and tasks can be assigned to you. In addition, consider how you can be innovative in your role. We do expect staff members to be proactive in improving service delivery and working with the team to meet team and organisational goals.

22. Do I record my flexi in the usual way?

Yes. However, with different ways of flexible working available employees are encouraged to complete their work within contracted hours and therefore reducing a build-up of a surplus of hours to be taken at a later date.

Remote Working

23. I do not have a workspace at home – I flat share. So working from home would not be an option. Is there anything else I can do?

You can utilise other council facilities e.g. touchdown areas, client departments/offices. There is a list of community hubs where you can work from which is found on essentials.

24. If I work from home are management more likely to overlook me?

No, working from home or at any other suitable locations is something that is promoted within the new agile working framework. Managers would still carry out their duties in terms of management e.g. one to ones, team meetings etc. and therefore should automatically consider all employees when opportunities arise

25. I regularly work from home and am concerned that I may miss out when there are opportunities for promotion or taking on new challenges. How can I maintain my profile when I'm not in the office?

You should:

- Ensure regular two-way communication with your manager
- Agree objectives and targets with your manager and plan regular performance reviews.
- Attend team meetings and ensure that colleagues participate - whether in person or via Lync.
- Ask to participate in projects that will help with your development and keep you in contact with colleagues
- Undertake self-development activities such as e-learning as part of your Personal Development

26. Are there rules about what I wear when working from home?

Dress etiquette when working from home should be smart/casual as employees need to be contactable via Lync by the team and others in the organisation at any time.

27. Working from home can feel isolating, for example when social workers have difficult conversations with clients, how can I avoid this?

Staff are expected to exercise their judgement when deciding to discuss sensitive matters with clients remotely. With some difficult conversations it is advised that staff Lync in peers or manager afterwards for a de-brief/support. Sometimes face to face meetings are more appropriate and if in doubt, guidance should be sought from the management team.

28. Will Camden pay for my fuel costs and/or other expenses, for example, the cost of new power points/lighting?

Lighting and heating costs will not generally be reimbursed, particularly if the arrangement is ad-hoc, where it has been requested by the employee. However, some managers may agree to do this. It is difficult to know what is being used when and if, for example, staff work in the evening from home they are likely to have heating and lighting on anyway so there are no additional costs incurred. If something like a new power point is needed, managers should consider on an individual basis, whether there is an alternative or not and whether to pay for any additional works.

29. Does home working affect my Council Tax/mortgage conditions, for using the premises as a business?

No, as your business base is still your nominated Camden office. However, those conditions could be affected if you were to regularly work 5 days a week at home.

Hot-desking

30. What is Hot-desking?

Hot-desking is when an employee does not have an assigned desk in any of the offices. When an employee needs to work from a particular location they can choose which workstation they work at depending on what they are doing and who they need to work with that day

31. How will those that require special equipment or a special chair be able to hot-desk or work remotely?

Special equipment and chairs will be fixed in order to assist staff who may have specific personal requirements due to a disability. However for staff that do not require a special chair and we are asking all staff to try out the new chairs in the building first as it is expected when arriving at a hot desk staff will adjust their chairs accordingly. It is similar to how you would get into someone else's car and adjust the mirror and seat, you wouldn't just get into someone else's car and drive you would make these adjustments.

If employees have concerns about their work spaces at home they should contact the Health and Safety team.

32. If I am working at a hot desk, can I stay the whole day? Can people ask you to vacate a hot desk?

There may be occasions when someone may come and ask if you would be able to relocate to another available space. This may be because they need to use the collaboration space for a meeting and if you are the only person sat there, it is not a good use of space. It may be that someone needs to have a confidential discussion with someone sat near to you where it is not always possible to use a meeting room or someone may need to use specialist equipment that is not available soewhere else.

You should always be mindful of the principles of agility within a framework which is about considering others and being respectful of the space and always being aware the space is a shared resource for everyone.

Management and Service Delivery

33. Our department has various Service Level Agreements, how would this work when employees work in a flexible or agile way?

Agile working should not compromise our responsibilities as outlined in service level agreements.

34. Some of my staff would prefer to work outside core hours but I am concerned about service delivery and individual outputs. What are my options?

As a manager you will have to gauge what hours suit the needs of your team and fulfil your team's requirement to provide customers/residents/clients with a high level of service. Thus, staff will have to co-operate and work hours which are agreed by you in order to achieve this. Should you have concerns with staff output levels or issues with their performance, you should discuss these with your staff in the first instance and if necessary, consult HR and utilise our formal performance management procedure.

35. How do I know I am being consistent?

By comparing working practices with similar departments and wider council practice. HR will be reviewing team practices and talking to teams where there are extreme practices that are not consistent to the values of agile working and where Camden wants to be.

36. How can I trust my team to deliver when they work remotely?

Managers must ensure that they are aware of what staff are working on in the same way as when staff are in the office. There must be mutual trust and confidence amongst colleagues that they will work professionally and responsibly. Employees must be transparent and open with their managers on their whereabouts and outputs. If a manager has cause for concern then the manager may remove agile working until outputs and performance are no longer cause for concern. If there are issues around performance or outputs then these issues will be there regards of working agile. If managers do have issues then please speak to HR who will provide individual and specific support.

37. How do I manage performance if I cannot see my employees?

Managers must fully utilise agile working tools available to them i.e. Lync, video calls, instant messaging, document sharing etc. This can be in the form of one-to-ones, regular team huddles, agreed time in the office e.g. every week.

Open lines of communication should be maintained. Staff still should make use of their electronic diary, office availability and notify their manager if they are working in a place that is not usual. Managers should be aware of what staff are working on whether they are physically in the office or working remotely.

38. How do I manage my employee's output?

Managing an employee's output will be no different from managing it if they were visible in the office. The following could be used to manage output:

- Meeting of team/service deadlines
- Customer satisfaction
- SLA agreements
- Locally agreed targets Agreed turnaround times
- Meeting of set objectives
- Being contactable

39. Building team spirit is more difficult when working remotely and using technology, what can I do to address this?

Again, working in an agile way includes maintaining contact with staff and clients and using available technology to not let distance become a barrier to integrated working.

Technology is to aid work and not a substitute for regular team interaction and catch up sessions/team meetings. You can capture how you and the team will work together and maintain team identity and in your team agreement.

40. Do I need to invite employees to team meetings if they are working from home/ working remotely?

Yes. Using Lync technology this is possible to do via video call.

41. Is it necessary for me to always video Lync my member of staff or can I just dial them in to a team meeting?

Whilst video Lync is preferable to promote inclusion and stimulate the working environment as accurately as possible - dialling them in would be acceptable if for some reason video Lync is not working on that particular day. It should be a one off as all staff are required to use Lync. . A member of staff should be available for team meetings unless they have notified the Chair prior to it due to other work commitments e.g. client meetings.

42. Is there enough capacity for all team members to attend the office at the same time?

Yes in collaboration space but not for everyone to have a fixed desk. Agile working is a way of working that enables employees to have the opportunity to work from various locations, which would in turn promote cohesion with their clients, business partners and the community. It is encouraged that employees should be robust in working with residents, in community hubs and with clients at their location and remotely. The offices have been designed with this in mind and therefore, there will be sufficient capacity if employees adhere to this way of working to continue to provide an excellent service to the borough residents. Agile working can help reduce costs, improve productivity and customer focus, as well as providing a better work-life balance for us all.

According to flexibility.co.uk, one in eight people now work mostly from home. Another 20% do so for less than three days per week. It is suggested that by 2015, 70-80% of workers could be, at least partially, working from a remote location.

43. When activating business continuity plans our preference is for face to face contact during the crisis/emergency management situation?

A manager must have the office adequately covered to allow for release of staff when such incidences occur and vice versa if staff are required to physical attend a site.