London Borough of Bexley
Remote Working Guide

HR Service
01/09/2018

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1. INTRODUCTION TO BEXLEY'S REMOTE WORKING GUIDE

Purpose of guide

This guide is designed to provide an overview of all the aspects of working life whether people are sharing an office environment, working remotely or at home or a combination of all three.

It covers those core aspects of working life including team communication, team management, how to maximise the use of technology and electronic housekeeping of files.

1a. Working in a shared Office Environment

The following guiding principles will help employees to adapt to working in a shared office environment.

7:10 desk ratio
The 7:10 desk ratio refers to the allocation of 7 desks for every 10 employees. This ratio will be achieved by championing different ways of working.

Clear desk and screen policy
A clear desk policy aims to reduce the amount of clutter on employees' desks. As well as the fact that a tidy working environment enables anyone to use the desk, it also prevents confidential information from falling into the wrong hands.

Employees should keep their desks clear from personal belongings such as photos to enable any one to use the desk.

At the end of each day, or when desks/offices are unoccupied, any 'confidential' information must be locked away in filing cabinets. All waste paper, which has any personal or confidential information or data on, must be placed in the confidential waste bins located through-out the floor. Under no circumstances should this type of waste paper be thrown away with normal rubbish in the waste paper bins.

Whenever you leave your desk and your PC is switched on, it is essential that you always lock' your screen by pressing 'Ctrl, Alt, Delete' and then enter, to confirm that you wish to 'lock' your workstation. Locking your screen not only prevents someone else from using your PC, which is logged on in your name, but it also prevents someone from reading confidential information left open on your screen. If working on sensitive information, and you have a visitor to your desk, lock you screen to prevent the contents being read.

Consideration of colleagues
When working in shared office environments consideration of colleagues should be taken into account. Office protocols should be established for the use of mobile phones and noise considerations.

1b. Working from Home

Working from home protocols should be agreed between employees and their manager to support this type of working.

If you are planning to work from home you will need suitable office equipment and space including storage. If you have dependents, you will need to ensure that there are suitable arrangements to allow you to work successfully from home.

1c. Roles and responsibilities

If you and your manager agree to any form of remote working, you will both need to work together to ensure the success of the arrangement.

Employee's responsibilities are to:

- Undertaken the DSE Workstation Self-Assessment via My View.
- Have received the relevant remote working training if required.
- Participate in team meetings regularly.
- Inform your manager of any changes to your location which may affect remote working e.g. moving house or personal circumstances.
- Review the remote working arrangement on a regular basis.
- Report key issues/exceptional events or incidents/accidents that arise immediately.
- Recognise that from time to time changes to the remote working arrangements may need to be agreed with your manager.
- Do not disclose your private telephone number or home address in any correspondence with customers or contacts; post must be via the office.
- Do not hold work related meetings at home.
- Use and maintain your Microsoft Outlook diary and OCS to plan and communicate remote working.
- Be familiar with and apply Bexley's policies detailed in this Guide

Manager's responsibilities are:
- Agree communication methods and contactable times.
- Ensure good communication is maintained with individual team members, regardless of whether they are remote workers.
- Ensure that the correct equipment and technology is put in place and that health and safety requirements are met if identified in the DSE Workstation Self-Assessment available via My View.
- Deal with any issues raised by the employees in a timely manner.
- Review the remote working arrangement on a regular basis.
- Agree and monitor agreed targets and outputs.
- Use Microsoft Outlook diaries to plan and manage remote working.

1d. Reporting sickness/accident

Employees working at home or from other locations should report any sickness in the normal way whatever their pattern of work. Accident reporting should be completed via My View.

1e Procedure for Lone working

Working at home or on a mobile basis will often mean that you are a lone worker.
Your safety is paramount to us. Before you start any period of remote working you must ensure that you are familiar with the guidelines for lone working available here.

1f. Maximising the use of ICT

Telephony
The ICT equipment you receive depends on what style of worker you are. Desktop PC users will have a desk phone. Laptop users have a headset or handset to plug into their laptop. To make calls, receive calls etc, you can use Avaya via your computer or desk phone. Your direct dial number is 020 3045 extn. Please update TADU with your details. In the extension field only put your 4 digit number.

Office Communicator (OCS)
OCS is an easy way to keep in touch with your colleagues, check if they are available to phone and Instant Messaging (IM) for work related activities for short and immediate communication. It is not a replacement for email or telephone. It is an enhancement that helps improve immediate communication using short messages.

VPN and home broadband
To enable you to work from home you will receive a Bexley laptop and power pack, a network cable, and ActivIDentity token (all supplied by Bexley). You will also need to use your personal home broadband router. This will mean you can use your laptop with your home broadband and use your laptop in the same way as you do when working in the office.

Multi-functional devices (MFDs)
MFDs can be used to scan, print and copy work. MFDs are located near to all offices and operated by your security pass.

Further details of the above can be found here.

Evolve
Evolve is an interactive 24/7 site providing you with access to a variety of learning modules and resources. Further information regarding working at the Civic Offices is available as an essential course for new starters via Evolve and can be accessed here.

1g. Information Management

File structure
A clear and tidy file structure should have the following:
• An agreed file naming convention
• File structure that is clear and logical

Scanning
For advice regarding the scanning and archive policy please contact ICT solutions.

Housekeeping
To prevent your computer from becoming slow to log in and shut down the following tips can be followed:
• Regular review inbox and sent items to decide whether to file or delete emails.
• Save all documents on the N drive rather than the desktop
• Only have shortcut to files on your desktop and not actual files.

Further details of the above can be found here.

2. Communication

2a. Team communication

Communication with your team
All teams should have agreed formal team communications. Formal communications should include:
- Monthly team meetings.
- Regular 1:1s or supervision
- Manager's core briefings.

A few ways in which team communication can be made easier are:
- Outlook Calendars are open to all so that managers and team members can check your whereabouts. Teams dealing with sensitive information may want to open their calendar only to their team.
- Ensure all team members are added to Office Communicator (OCS).

1:1 or supervision
It is important to have regular one to one discussions with your manager and to meet at least once per month to discuss your work performance, expected outcomes and individual progress. Where there are current supervision practices in place e.g. fortnightly meetings for social workers, these should continue.

Communication protocols
Informal communication protocol within the team For example, using OCS for instant messages and checking availability before contacting colleagues, team networking, team chat.

Agree communication methods and contactable times with your colleagues and manager, and respond to voice and e-mails within agreed time scales; contactable times should be shown on your Outlook calendar.

Communication with hot desk and mobile/remote workers.
One-to-one meetings and team briefings should still take place regularly regardless of both manager and employee working patterns. The onus is equally on both manager and employee to ensure they happen.

If employees are working at home / another office agree principles of how you will communicate / cover calls. Agree protocols between the team and review as appropriate.

Special attention needs to be given to ensuring that there is regular communication in place for remote workers. Managers should include them in team meetings, either via electronic means such as conferencing or by arranging meetings at times/venues that is mutually convenient.

Remote workers should also be invited to attend training days or other events aimed at team building. Regular access to BexWeb and Outlook Today will be expected to ensure that the remote worker is up to date with the latest news about the Council.

2b Team Management

Agreed objectives and targets
Managers should ensure regular appraisal 1:1 meetings are arranged. Objectives and targets should be agreed and updated with employees regularly. Targets should be measured on employees work outputs rather than "presenteeism". This is even more important when employees are working remotely.

Recognition and feedback on performance
Managers should ask employees how they would like to be recognized and receive feedback on their performance. Agreed work outputs for employees should be monitored and feedback given when positive or negative events happen. Underperformance should be addressed as soon as it happens. Problems should be identified and actions agreed to support the individual back on track.

Team work
Managers should understand each of their teams' strengths and utlise them. Conflict or differences of opinion should be addressed in a timely and constructive manner allowing each party to speak to ensure all team members have been listened to. Common ground should be found to resolve the issue.

Evolve offers a range of e-learning tutorials that can help develop individuals skills and knowledge. Details of which can be accessed here.

Working from home
Managers should agree protocols for employees working from home to ensure a "seamless" service.

3 ICT Policy and links

ICT Policy and Procedures can be found here.

Information Security Policy
The Policy defines common security standards, which apply to all Council sections and includes all temporary, agency employees and non Bexley employees using Bexley system and working for London Borough of Bexley. This Policy is relevant to all information systems whether they be computer or paper based. It covers all devices capable of holding information and the Council's entire computer network, and includes the use of information systems not owned by the Council but used by employees for Council purposes as well as those not owned by the Council but accessed from or via equipment located on Council property.

Further information on Information Security Policy can be found here.

4 Health and Safety Procedures and links.

Display Screen Equipment
Procedure document - CP 037

Lone working
Procedure document - CP 046

Mobile hand held devices and driving for work Procedure
document - CP 057

Other H&S Procedures can be found here.