

Hot Desk Guidance

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out guidance in respect of hot desking arrangements.
- 1.2 Hotdesking is an important element of the Council's agile working arrangements and allows office space to be utilised to its maximum potential.
- 1.3 This guidance should be followed by employees who have agile working arrangements that include access to hot desks.
- 1.4 Hot desks provide office-based employees with a workspace where they can undertake their role, and provide mobile and home workers with a workspace when they return to an office.
- 1.5 The introduction of hot desks allows the Council to use its office space more effectively, as employees use a free hot desk rather than have a dedicated desk, which may be frequently vacant due to meetings, off-site visits, leave, absence and home working.
- 1.6 Employees benefit from a more flexible office environment and the introduction, alongside hot desk working of other forms of agile working such as home and mobile working.
- 1.7 For hot desks to work effectively the impact of sharing workspaces needs to be considered.
- 1.8 Managers and employees should follow this guidance to ensure hot desk workplaces remain a professional, welcoming and flexible working environment.

2. Availability of Hot Desks

- 2.1 To maximise the use of hot desks and ensure hot desks are available when required, managers should put in place protocols for the booking of hot desks within their particular teams or departments.

3. Working at a Hot Desk

- 3.1 When an employee is occupying a hot desk, it is unavailable to others who require desk space.
- 3.2 A hot desk will be considered occupied when an employee's personal items (for example a laptop computer) are present, even if the employee themselves are not present. It is acceptable for an employee

to occupy a desk in this way if they are away briefly, for example for a short meeting, short lunch break or to speak with a colleague.

- 3.3 However, if hot desks are to provide sufficient accommodation, employees must make hot desks available to others whenever it is sensible to do so.
- 3.4 At the very least, employees should vacate the hot desk they are currently occupying at the end of the working session (for example the end of the employee's working day), or when the employee will be away from the desk for more than two to three hours (depending on demand for desks at that time).
- 3.5 Employees should prepare the hot desk for a new user and vacate it if they are to be away from the desk for a considerable amount of time (for example to attend a meeting or attend training). This good practice becomes increasingly important when the office is busy.
- 3.6 When vacating a hot desk, employees should log off the Council network, phone system (if applicable), clear all personal items from the hot desk and ensure it is left in a clean and hygienic environment.
- 3.7 Employees should be able to use any vacant hot desk in any area of any Council building. However, employees may be encouraged to work in a zoned area with team colleagues. Such arrangements must be agreed by the Team Manager. Employees who have such arrangements should only use a hot desk in another area when all the hot desks in their zone are being used.
- 3.8 In the unlikely event of there being no hot desks available, the employee could work in a break out or meeting area temporarily before moving to a hot desk as one comes available. Alternatively, with agreement from their line manager and subject to relevant home working policies, the employee could work from home.

4. Personal Items

- 4.1 It is important that employees feel able to work at a vacant hot desk when they wish to; keeping hot desks clear of personal items (work related or otherwise) when they are not in use allows employees to recognise available hot desks and enables employees to set the desk up quickly and efficiently. Clear desks also promote a cleaner and professional-looking workplace.
- 4.2 Employees' personal items should be either taken home or locked in their designated pedestal at the end of the work session as appropriate. Examples of personal items can include:
 - Food and drinks.
 - Cups, mugs and cutlery.

- Magazines and books (work related or otherwise).
 - Photographs and ornaments.
 - Mobile phones, PDAs or smart phones.
 - Keys, purses and wallets.
 - Personal stationery (which employees have brought to work themselves).
- 4.3 Items not strictly property of the employee, but which are used by the employee as part of their job, are also required to be cleared from the hot desk when it is not in use. Items should be securely locked in their designated pedestal, if they are for the employee's sole use, or securely stored in a central location defined by your manager, if they are team resources. Such items could include:
- Specialist technology (e.g. digital pen) – if it is sufficiently portable.
 - Manuals, textbooks and other paper-based guidance.
 - Removable media (CD/DVDs, floppy discs and USB sticks).

5. Health, Safety and Welfare

- 5.1 It is important that workstations are suitable for employees' individual needs. It is the responsibility of each employee to ensure that, when beginning a hot desk session at a new desk, the workstation is set up in the correct manner. Any issues that arise from a DSE self-assessment should be brought to the attention of the manager. For further guidance refer to the Health and Safety Management Arrangements for Display Screen Equipment policy: http://10.107.1.50/Personnel/Pdf/HS_DSE.pdf.
- 5.2 Hot desk working may not be suitable where adaptations have been made to a specific desk, or desk equipment to facilitate the needs of an individual employee, for example as part of a reasonable adjustment to their working practices. In this case, this policy will not apply as the desk will not be deemed to be a hot desk. However, if adaptations are easily moved (for example a specialist chair), the desk may be used by others and will be deemed to be a hot desk – although care should be taken to ensure that the adaptation is always available when needed.

Hygiene

- 5.3 Managers must ensure that cleaning materials (e.g. telephone wipes) should be available for use by employees using hot desks (shared over a team area, or a number of hot desks), and should be used to ensure the workstation area is left in a hygienic state for the next user. The desk should be a welcoming work environment, and cleanliness is an important factor in achieving this.
- 5.4 It is the responsibility of the employee using the hot desk to ensure that, when vacated:

- The desk is free from debris and dust
- Surfaces, including mouse, keyboard and telephone handset, have been wiped clean.

6. Documents and Filing

- 6.1 By keeping hot desks free of paper documents when they are vacated the desk becomes available for use by other agile workers as necessary. The process of managing paper documentation as described below promotes good data security and prevents loss of information.
- 6.2 When vacating a hot desk, the employee should ensure any paper copies of documents should be either:
- Filed in a designated team location, if they will be used at a later date by the employee or another team member.
 - Locked in the employee's designated pedestal if they will be used shortly by that employee – and will not be required by any colleagues in the meantime.
 - Destroyed or recycled (securely if necessary), if they are not to be archived (e.g. were produced for convenience from an electronic copy of a document and a paper copy is no longer required).
 - Archived (with suitable permission), if they are not required for use in the short or medium term. Refer to the Document Retention Policy for further guidance ([link](#)).
- 6.3 Employees should ensure there are no paper documents on the desk at the end of the work session, including documents in any printers/scanners or in/out trays.
- 6.4 Employees should aim to reduce the amount of paper documentation used, by refraining from printing documents or emails unnecessarily. Paper documentation is difficult to version control, easy to misplace, and costly to print and store. Care should still be taken, however, to ensure electronic documents are stored appropriately.

7. Confidentiality

- 7.1 Working in an office shared with others highlights the need to practice good information security principles. In order to make the most efficient use of Council office space, employees from different teams and departments will be working at hot desks in close proximity to each other. Discretion when dealing with confidential matters is therefore important.
- 7.2 The following guidelines should be followed:

- Employees must ensure any computer connected to the Council network is locked with a password whilst unattended (to comply with ICT Security Policy).
- Employees should use a private breakout or meeting space when discussing confidential matters with colleagues.
- Paper documents of a confidential nature should not be left unattended on a desk; employees should securely file documents in their designated pedestal or a team storage area when they are away from the hot desk.

8. Equipment

- 8.1 In order for agile working to operate as efficiently and effectively as possible, hot desks must contain all the essential equipment required for an employee to begin working.
- 8.2 Each hot desk workstation should meet with the specification for hot desks within the Health and Safety Management Arrangements for Display Screen Equipment, but as a guide it should include:
- A computer or docking station connected to the Council network.
 - A telephone connected to the Council network.
 - A separate, height adjustable screen for use with a laptop or a laptop riser to ensure the screen height is suitable.
 - A separate keyboard and mouse for use with a laptop/note book or docking station where provided.
 - A suitable office chair that takes into account the personal requirements of multiple users.
- 8.3 Each hot desk should also have access to:
- A stock of stationery (e.g. pens/pencils/stapler/calculator/letterhead etc.)
 - A multifunction device (printer/scanner/copier/fax).
- 8.4 Employees should report missing or damaged equipment as soon as possible to their manager.
- 8.5 It is important to remember that a hot desk is designed to be an environment suitable for any agile worker, so hot desks should not be personalised with personal paperwork, including post-it notes, or home-made signs and notices.

9. Communication

- 9.1 Reliable communication is essential for the efficient working of the Council. Hot desks contain the necessary equipment for employees to be able to maintain effective communication links with colleagues and employees.

- 9.2 Employees should familiarise themselves with the user instructions of their telephone handset and ensure that they log their personal extension number into the system when they occupy a hot desk, and log out when they then vacate that hot desk. Mindful usage of the system in this way allows others to contact you easily and ensures that colleagues are not interrupted by your phone calls in your absence.

Employees should enable voicemail (if applicable), or divert calls to a designated person or a mobile phone when not at a desk.

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