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Health and Safety

Agile Working Policy and Guidance - DRAFT

SAF-POL-AGI

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1. Introduction

University policies establish standards and expectations for health and safety across the organisation and set the minimum standards expected. This policy covers health and safety requirements in an agile working environment where staff may be working both on campus and remotely or solely on campus or remote.

Each unit, which may be a Faculty, School, Department or Institute, will be referred to as a Business Unit (BU) in this policy and should read and comply with the guidance set out in this document for each type of worker defined in this document and their respective working arrangement.

2. Scope

This policy covers the management of health and safety related to office-type tasks whilst on campus (including Professional Services Hubs) or working remotely including the home. This is particularly where that type of working is routinely carried out as a significant part of an individual's working hours, either because of their contract of employment or it is required by the university.

All workers will be subject to the university's policies, procedures and guidance in addition to their terms and conditions of employment.

The term 'worker' covers all employees and postgraduate research students.

3. Policy statement

The University Health and Safety Policy (P2), alongside the Vice-Chancellors Vision Statement (P1) sets out the university's ambition for health and safety, including defining our principal aims for health and safety. These aims ensure legal compliance is met as a minimum and that all workers strive for best practice.

Office-type work using IT equipment or carrying out paper-based tasks, whether on campus or at home, is generally considered to be a low-risk activity. However, the university recognises it has a duty of care to take for the health and safety of its workers regardless of where they are located, considering both physical and psychological issues.

4. Regulatory Background

- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (as amended).

5. Definitions

Agile working – Agile working is an approach to work which brings together people, technology and systems with places and time to find the most effective way to achieve a work task. Agile working is about providing people with the flexibility to decide how best to achieve a task; optimising use of their time and the available resources and workspaces. This style of working reframes the traditional approach of measuring performance through inputs like time and attendance, and instead focuses on measuring through outcomes.

Worker categories - There are three types of worker category at the university as set out in the table below:

Worker Type	
Campus	A campus-based worker, who may work at one or multiple sites across campuses
Campus and remote	A campus-based worker, who may work at one or multiple sites across campuses, plus at home or other offsite locations (most workers fall into this category)
Remote	A home or remote-based worker (this is not a standard category and is only used in exceptional circumstances)

Table 1: Worker Categories

DSE User - A Display Screen Equipment User (DSE) is defined in the DSE Regulations as a worker who frequently carries out DSE work for a significant proportion of their working hours. The university applies this definition to any member of staff and PGR who carries out DSE work for more than 2 hours on a daily basis.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

University Council will

- Seek assurance from the Director of Health and Safety that appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure compliance with this policy

University Executive Board (UEB) will

- Seek assurance that there are suitable arrangements in place for the management of health and safety in an agile working environment.
- Seek assurance that these health and safety arrangements are being suitably and adequately implemented across the University
- Seek assurance that competent health and safety advice is available to assist the Business Units management and assessment of agile working
- Seek assurance that all requirements and arrangements for agile working are met and adequately resourced
- Seek assurance that there is a process for monitoring the safety of agile working
- Be notified of any significant incident or enforcement action in relation to agile working.

The University Health and Safety Department will

- Provide the overarching policy, arrangements and guidance covering the health and safety aspects of agile working
- Provide a Master Risk Assessment for Agile Working (SAF-MRA-AGI) and a Master Risk Assessment for Homeworking (SAF-MRA-HOM) to give direction on what controls should be in place and applied by all Business Units in terms of management arrangements
- Ensure effective communication on agile working with relevant Business Units
- Provide competent advice and support on agile working to the University
- Ensure that Business Units adhere to the University policy by carrying out reviews of agile working arrangements and implementation
- Provide reports and as appropriate, specialist advice to the University Health and Safety Committee, Council and UEB; on agile working activity, both in terms of compliance and improvement actions.

The University Health and Safety Committee will

- Be the formal oversight and compliance committee in relation to agile working
- Receive and consider reports on agile working from the University Health and Safety Department and ensure an appropriate action plan to address shortfalls is being implemented
- Provide assurance to Council and UEB regarding compliance and any action plans necessary to improve compliance and/or performance.

Estates (via the Workplace Manager) will

- Liaise with line managers to ascertain the reasonable adjustments that can be made in Professional Services Hubs as recommended by Occupational Health.
- Manage space and resourcing of reasonable adjustments in Professional Services Hubs in liaison with the appropriate line manager.

Human Resources will

- Provide policy, arrangements, and guidance relevant to other aspects of agile working that do not fall under the remit of health and safety, e.g., contractual issues
- Support Heads of Business Unit with advice and procedural measures in relation to general contractual and employee relations issues for agile working
- Support line managers/supervisors with advice and procedural measures in relation to contractual and employee relations issues for individual agile workers.

Heads of Business Unit will

- Ensure that the Business Unit has suitable arrangements in place for the identification of agile working needs and the implementation of appropriate controls for agile working
- Ensure that adequate resources are allocated to the above within the Business Unit
- Appoint sufficient trained DSE Assessors to coordinate compliance with this policy and the DSE guidance
- Ensure suitable work equipment is provided
- Seek assurance from direct reports and local Safety Critical Roles that agile working is being identified and appropriately managed
- Ensure that local monitoring of compliance with arrangements is in place in accordance with this policy and ensure reports are considered by the Business Unit Health and Safety Committee
- Where there are issues identified that could compromise health and safety in the agile environment, support line managers to resolve issues satisfactorily, where necessary, by escalation to the Health and Safety Department,
- Ensure any significant incident or enforcement action relating to agile working is appropriately investigated.

Line Managers will

- Ensure they support workers with creating a suitable and safe working environment
- Ensure they regularly communicate with all workers working remotely (full or part time) to support them with their work and their wellbeing, particularly where remote such working is for prolonged periods which might lead to social isolation

- Ensure they consider the impact of working arrangements/location on individual members of their team, and in particular any specific equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) considerations by using the [reasonable adjustment passport process](#).
- Ensure that workers with recognised health issues are supported in terms of equipment and that a suitable review of the workers' health is carried out to ensure that remote working is suitable for the individual (with the support of an Occupational Health referral if required).
- Where there are issues identified that could compromise health and safety; support the worker to resolve them satisfactorily or facilitate them to work on campus
- Monitor team compliance with DSE assessments and ensure issues are being actioned
- Investigate in collaboration with the Business Unit's Health and Safety Coordinator any significant incident occurring in their group's activities.
- Work in collaboration with the Workplace Manager to agree a suitable solution to any reasonable adjustments considering space and resources (for Professional Services Hubs)

Health and Safety Coordinators (HSC) will

- Ensure there are suitable arrangements in place for implementing this policy
- Collaborate with their Business Unit's DSE Assessor(s) to ensure adequate resource for the coordination of health and safety matters related to agile working
- Provide assurance, via the Business Unit's Health and Safety Committee, or where applicable, directly to senior management, that agile working is being appropriately managed
- Ensure the DSE Assessor(s) review checklists and instigate actions where there are shortfalls
- Where there are issues identified that could compromise health and safety, support line managers and the DSE Assessor(s) to resolve issues satisfactorily
- Ensure any significant incident or enforcement action is appropriately investigated in collaboration with the relevant line manager
- Ensure their knowledge of university requirements on agile working is sufficient and seek information and training as appropriate.

DSE Assessors will

- Coordinate compliance with this policy considering the location of each worker
- Ensure that the Master Risk Assessments have been considered within local arrangements
- Ensure all workers complete the relevant DSE Assessment checklists
- Support workers with information and advice about the safe use of DSE and the provision of suitable work equipment where appropriate in line with policy.
- Promote DSE good practice
- Ensure their knowledge of university policies and guidance is up to date; and seek information and/or training where required
- Report to Business Unit's management via their Health and Safety Committee on the status of DSE safety and highlight any unresolved issues or incidents
- Ensure any significant risks are identified and, if they cannot be resolved, are escalated to the Health and Safety Department immediately

Occupational Health Provider will

- Provide occupational health services to workers where there is a management referral in relation to health effects deemed relevant to agile working, particularly involving prolonged use of DSE.

Workers will

- Complete DSE Checklists as relevant to their role and assess the suitability of each work location
- Adjust DSE equipment to optimise the workstation set up
- Take suitable action to ensure each work environment is set up with health and safety in mind, e.g., equipment is set up to avoid trip hazards by routing cables safely
- Seek further information and/or training where required via their line manager or local DSE Assessor
- Report issues or incidents relating to DSE on the University's online incident reporting system
- Report any health and safety issues or concerns arising to their manager and / or the DSE Assessor

7. Risk Assessment

The university has a duty to apply risk assessment to all working environments, including the home.

The most significant hazards arising from office-type tasks, are those associated with DSE. For prolonged use of DSE on a regular basis, regardless of location, common health effects can arise in terms of muscular-skeletal affects to the upper body, eye strain and general fatigue and stress. Those most at risk are those defined as DSE Users (see definition above).

Where agile working predominantly involves short periods of DSE work in multiple different locations, the risks to health from any one location are likely to be minor. However, if the work is predominantly DSE, then the cumulative effect could still result in adverse health issues.

Table 2 below sets out the risk assessments for DSE hazards required for each type of worker.

Risk assessment requirements		
Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DSE Workstation Assessment*	Assessment to be completed as a new starter and then every two years for on campus working and be reviewed by the DSE assessor.
Campus and remote	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DSE Workstation Assessment*	Assessment to be completed as a new starter and then every two years to consider both on campus and home working and be reviewed by the DSE assessor.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DSE Homeworking Checklist Form	To be completed by the individual before regular home working and signed by worker and manager.
Remote (home or other location)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DSE Workstation Assessment*	Assessment to be completed as a new starter and then every two years to consider home working and be reviewed by the DSE assessor.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DSE Homeworking Checklist Form 	To be completed by the individual before regular home working and signed by worker and manager
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Table 2: Risk assessment per worker category

**online training to be completed before undertaking the DSE workstation assessment (see section 8 Training and Competency)*

Conducting risk assessments for homeworking

It is not required that either the line manager or DSE Assessor visit the worker's home to make the assessment. Virtual means of assessment are considered sufficient, whereby the use of the checklist can be used to enable a worker to undertake their own risk assessment and highlight any potential hazards or concerns.

University controls

With regard to working on campus, e.g.: offices and professional services hubs, the following controls are in place:

- A Master Risk Assessment for Agile Working (SAF-MRA-AGI) is available - this covers the following control measures:
 - Suitable furniture and equipment that allows the worker to adjust the workstation to suit them.
 - A suitable working environment in terms of lighting, heating, and ventilation.
 - Provision of information and training so that workers understand and can apply the control measures to minimise the risk of both physical and psychological effects; and
 - Information displayed to remind workers of the actions they can take to minimise the risks.

With regard to working remotely:

- A Master Risk Assessment for Home working (SAF-MRA-AGI) is available - this covers the general control measures for minimising risks related to homeworking.
- This must be read and applied as appropriate by Business Units for all their workers.

Support to workers

Where any risk is deemed significant, appropriate advice, support and resources will be provided by the line manager in the first instance with support from the DSE Assessor and the Health and Safety Coordinator.

Additional considerations and measures must be applied for those known to be vulnerable to muscular-skeletal disorders (MSDs); either by reference to past problems; or because their homeworking environment places them at higher risk.

If a suitable remote/home workstation set up cannot be achieved, the individual's line manager will be involved in discussing this with the individual and trying to see if there are any resolutions the individual can implement. If issues cannot be resolved satisfactorily, it may be determined that it is not appropriate for the worker to continue working at home. In this instance, workers will be accommodated to work on campus 100% of their time and supported to do so to ensure their workstation is suitable.

The need for specific equipment to be supplied for reasonable adjustments will be identified as part of the individual assessment process, and items will be procured through the normal ordering

processes within the Business Unit. All equipment provided by the university will remain the property of the university. **Reasonable adjustment equipment provision guidance** and the application of when reasonable adjustments apply to support this policy is available from HR.

8. Training and Competency

Line Managers

Information, in the form of this policy, guidance, checklists and local arrangements, will be available for managers.

Safety Critical Roles (Health and Safety Coordinators and DSE Assessors)

Training and information relating to health and safety for agile working, including home working, will be made available for safety critical roles that are involved in assessment and review of work and home working situations.

Workers

Individual workers are expected to undertake training to ensure they understand how to optimise their agile set-up and how to manage their work routine.

Training for DSE Workers		
Training	Location	Description
Safe Use of DSE	Moodle module	Training for workers for the safe use of DSE equipment and Business Unit arrangements
Setting up at Home	Health and Safety Department DSE workspace pages	Information for Workers about setting up DSE equipment and working comfortably at home

9. Provision of DSE and other Equipment

The table below sets out the provision of equipment for all types of worker.

Provision of Equipment			
	Campus	Campus and remote	Remote
IT Equipment Guidance	New starters to be provided with a laptop and headset for use on campus	New starters to be provided with a laptop, headset, mouse, keyboard, docking station and monitor for home working	New starters to be provided with a laptop, headset, mouse, keyboard, docking station and monitor for home working
	Access to on campus workstations with fixed DSE peripherals (docking station, monitor, mouse,	Access to on campus workstations with fixed DSE peripherals (docking station, monitor, mouse,	Provision does not cover the cost of Wi-Fi or utility bills

	keyboard) at each campus location	keyboard) at each campus location	Remote workers may have an established set up they want to continue using if meets DSE requirements
Furniture Guidance	Suitable furniture (chair, desk and optional footrest) across locations used on campus	Suitable furniture (chair, desk and optional footrest) across locations used on campus. The University does not provide home office furniture to staff contractually based on campus	Suitable furniture (chair, desk, footrest) at contractual location, should it be needed.

Table 3: Provision of equipment

10. Working Environment

General safety refers to those safety aspects that generally apply in office environments, e.g., fire safety, provision of first aid, electrical safety, slips and trips, lone and isolated working and having suitable lighting, heating, and ventilation. Further guidance can be found on the Health and Safety Department website.

Working on campus

All the above aspects will be managed through the normal processes in place for university buildings and there will be monitoring to ensure suitable standards are being maintained. There are reporting processes via management for workers to notify any shortfalls.

Working at home

The University will advise workers to consider general safety through completion of the Homeworking checklist. Generally, shortfalls identified by the worker will need to be addressed by them as the home environment is the worker's responsibility. However, such matters can be discussed with their manager for support, as necessary. Where issues cannot be satisfactorily resolved workers will be required to work on campus.

No payments or contributions will be made by the university to support home workers (e.g. for heating, lighting, internet usage etc)

11. Monitoring

Monitoring of DSE arrangements for safe working campus and remote working will be followed in accordance with the University's arrangements (SAF-MAN-3.1) and will include Business Unit and University-level auditing.

Monitoring activity data will routinely be reported with significant findings and lessons learnt to the University Health and Safety Committee as appropriate.

12. Incident Reporting

Any injury or ill-health that is related to University activity is required to be reported on the University's online incident reporting system, e.g., musculoskeletal issues relating to use of DSE for work purposes should be reported to the University. Significant incidents must be investigated to root cause in accordance with the University arrangements (SAF-MAN-3.2) and trends monitored by the University Health and Safety Department.

Incidents at home that are not within the University's management control need not be reported on the University system. For example, misplacing footing on a home staircase does not need to be reported to the University.

Insurance cover

The university's employer's liability insurance continues to operate regardless of whether an employee is working on campus or remotely.

Workers are advised to check with their own household insurers regarding the impact of home working on their policy cover. Workers are not responsible for insuring equipment belonging to the university.

13. Wellbeing and Mental Health

Agile working can provide workers with benefits such as greater flexibility, however, those based remotely on a frequent basis may struggle mentally with prolonged isolation and limited, or solely virtual interactions with colleagues or customers.

Line Manager should make use the Leadership and Management Academy to support their understanding and management of Agile Working within their teams.

Line managers should frequently check-in and communicate with remote based workers. Managers need to be conscious of changes in workers behaviours and create open lines of communication so that workers feel comfortable raising any challenges which may be impacting on their work e.g. issues with caring responsibilities or domestic abuse. Managers should signpost individuals to internal support teams such as Mental Health First Aiders, the University Counselling Service and Occupational Health, along with external agencies such as Mind.

14. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

The university will apply this policy to all workers and ensure that it does not cause detrimental effects to any of the protected characteristics. In particular, line managers of workers with a disability should seek to enable these workers to benefit from agile working practice as they would any other worker.

Equality Impact Assessments are available on the EIA SharePoint and the PS Hubs SharePoint and cover:

- Agile Working
- Home Working
- Working from Professional Service Hubs

15. Further Information and Support

Below you can find supporting documents, policies, and resources.

- [University Health and Safety Website](#) - DSE Guidance and Master Risk Assessments
- [Reasonable Adjustments Guidance](#) – Reasonable adjustment passport
- [Home working information workspace](#) -login required, guidance and checklist
- [Agile Working pages on SharePoint](#) – Agile Working Framework
- [Professional Services Hubs SharePoint](#)
- [Wellbeing and Effective Remote working](#)
- [Leadership and Management Academy](#) – supporting managers in developing their skills

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