Item	Hybrid Working Policy
Committee	Board of Management
Date paper prepared	04/12/2024
Date of committee meeting	11/12/2024
Subject	Hybrid Working Policy
Author	Vicky Ferguson
Action requested	☐ **For Information** ☐ **For Discussion** ☐ **For recommendation** ☒ **For Endorsement** ☐ **For Approval**
Purpose of the paper	For endorsement by the Board of Management
Brief summary of the paper	Hybrid working is an arrangement which provides staff with the opportunity to split their working time between the college's workplace(s) and an alternative location (this is usually at the employee's home - or at a suitable alternative location agreed with your line manager), within the UHI North, West and Hebrides geographical operating region. Taking account of post pandemic changes to working practices, this policy aims to support a staff work life balance by introducing greater flexibility in relation to where work is undertaken, whilst continuing to maintain a vibrant college community and supporting the needs of the business.
Consultation How has consultation with partners been conducted?	The policy was presented to the HR Committee and the Executive Leadership Team in November 2024.

Item	Hybrid Working Policy
Resource implications What are the risks with this proposal?	To support a staff work life balance by introducing greater flexibility in relation to where work is undertaken, whilst continuing to maintain a vibrant college community and supporting the needs of the business.
Risk implications	Maintaining a vibrant college community.
Link with strategy	North, West and Hebrides Strategic Statement
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	The policy is compliant with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
Paper status	Highlight the paper status in the list below: ☒**Open** – the paper may be circulated to non-members of the committee and published online without restriction. ☐**Restricted** – the paper must not be circulated to non-members or published online until after the committee meeting. ☐**Confidential** - the paper must not be circulated beyond the committee members and should not be published online. [Please note papers may still be subject to Freedom of Information requests, as specified in the next section].

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Freedom of information (FOI)	Highlight the FOI status in the list below. Refer to **NWH Freedom of Information Site** for more information: ☒**Open** ☐**Closed –** disclosure would substantially prejudice a programme of research. ☐**Closed –** disclosure would substantially prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs. ☐**Closed -** Disclosure would substantially prejudice the commercial interests of any person or organisation. ☐**Closed -** Disclosure would constitute a breach of confidence actionable in court. ☐**Closed -** Disclosure would constitute a breach of the Data Protection Act. ☐**Closed -** Other, please specify.
Freedom of information (FOI) disclosure date	If closed/ withheld is selected above, enter the date when this will become 'open': Click or tap to enter a date.

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Hybrid Working Policy

Lead Officer (Post):	Director of HR and Organisational Development
Responsible Office/ Department:	People & Culture
Responsible Committee:	HR Committee
Review Officer (Post):	Vicky Ferguson
Date policy approved:	Click or tap to enter a date
Date policy last reviewed and updated:	November 2024
Date policy due for review:	12 months from date of issue
Date of Equality Impact Assessment:	
Date of Privacy Impact Assessment:	N/A

Policy Summary

Overview	**Why is the policy required?** As an employer we are also committed to supporting a work-life balance for our employees. The policy sets out how the hybrid model will be implemented within UHI North, West and Hebrides.
Purpose	What will the policy achieve? To set out UHI North, West and Hebrides approach to hybrid working for all employees (excluding those in certain functional roles and those who already have home working defined as their place of work in their contract of employment).
Scope	This policy applies to all members of staff employed by UHI North, West and Hebrides (excluding those in certain functional roles and those who already have home working defined as their place of work in their contract of employment).
Consultation	Who has been consulted on the policy, and who will be notified? ELT and HR Committee
Implementation and Monitoring	Who will be responsible for implementing and monitoring the policy, and what resources/ costs will be incurred? Directors and Head of Departments are responsible for the implementation and monitoring of this policy, supported by Human Resources.
Risk Implications	What are the risk implications of this policy? Lone working, communication with colleagues, wellbeing risks, infrastructure requirements.

Link with Strategy	How is this policy linked to the college's strategy? The Hybrid Working Policy will link with the College's strategy where the College will see a shift in thinking and working practices. The move to a hybrid working approach encompasses this.
Impact Assessment	Equality Impact Assessment: Will involve all staff and no employee will be exempt from the policy. Any concerns regarding the policy will be reviewed in a fair and consistent manner.
	Privacy Impact Assessment: Does not apply, policy will be freely available.

1. Policy Statement

Hybrid working is an arrangement which provides staff with the opportunity to split their working time between the college's workplace(s) and an alternative location (this is usually at the employee's home - or at a suitable alternative location agreed with your line manager), within the UHI North, West and Hebrides geographical operating region. Taking account of post pandemic changes to working practices, this policy aims to support a staff work life balance by introducing greater flexibility in relation to where work is undertaken, whilst continuing to maintain a vibrant college community and supporting the needs of the business.

The college fully recognises the potential benefits of staff working a proportion of their time in a hybrid location manner. These benefits can include improved staff wellbeing and morale; higher levels of job satisfaction; increased efficiency; greater ability to focus with fewer distractions; flexible time for family and friends; reduced commuting time and associated costs; and higher levels of motivation.

This policy will go live in January 2025, initially to be rolled out for 12 months, with a review at this time to reassess the policy and its effectiveness for business needs and the employees.

Definitions – (Policy Strategic Aims)

- To provide the best possible experience for our staff and students and ensure the effective and efficient operation of the college, providing an excellent service to students, staff, partners, and stakeholders.
- To create a flexible and vibrant college environment for both work and study.
- To provide key parameters within which managers and their teams can operate a more hybrid approach.
- Contribute to the College's Strategic Statement

2. Purpose (Hybrid Working Fundamentals)

OPERATIONAL ASPECTS

1. Plans will ensure our UHI North, West and Hebrides centres remain vibrant with collaborative working opportunities, significant social interaction, and informal networking opportunities.

2. These hybrid principles focus solely on working location (not working hours) and the hybrid approach is not a contractual change or right. Anyone wishing to make a request to change their contractual hours of work can still do so by submitting a Flexible Working Request.

3. All staff, regardless of role (excluding those with home-working based contracts) will be required to work on site in the workplace (where the work place is defined as the college, or on an academic partner campus) for 3 days (pro rata for part time staff working full days where possible) of their working week; this can be managed flexibly based on role and business needs (Section 3).

4. Staff may request a permanent contractual change to a home working contract. To make this application please speak with your line manager in the first instance prior to submitting a Flexible Working Request. There are no guarantees any requests will be approved. All applications will be considered on the wider team and business needs, individual's circumstances and anticipated costs.

5. Staff cannot work from an international location on a permanent basis.

6. Work at a college site or at an academic partner site, will count as contributing to the requirement to be on site 3 days (pro rata for part time staff working full days where possible) of their working week.

7. There will be certain roles whose duties can only be undertaken on site and where they are co-located with other employees, therefore they may not be eligible for hybrid working. These roles may include but are not exhaustive to; face to face teaching, security, facilities, cleaners, catering and on-site support staff.

8. Local business needs and department operational plans will determine the frequency and format of workplace activity within this hybrid limit, ensuring that necessary cover is provided across all working days.

9. Working time will reflect the Department's normal business hours regardless of location unless individual flexible working plans have been agreed.

10. All staff will continue to have access to an office/campus-based workspace available to them – this may be via hot-desking, with a booking system in place.

11. When staff work remotely, they must have a suitable work location, and access to sufficient broadband to perform their role. If sufficient broadband is not in place, then that staff member will not be allowed to work from that location.

12. Remote meetings should ensure full engagement such as cameras on, particularly when engaging on a one-to-one basis wherever possible.

All employees must follow existing UHI IT Policies and only use UHI IT equipment and online storage for work purposes.

In particular please refer to the University Partnership Information Security Policy.docx and University partnership IS Acceptable Use Policy.docx

As hybrid working remains a mutually agreed arrangement (unless enforced through governmental law) there will be no reimbursement of expenses incurred, e.g., heating, internet, phone calls, rent, mortgage. However, staff may be able to claim benefits from HMRC for working from home.

13. All remote workers must be contactable during usual working hours – via the usual systems: e.g., Microsoft Teams, email etc for the period they are working at home. Teams are expected to share calendars, apart from private appointments, to maintain access with their wider team.

14. Hybrid working must not be used as care for dependants. The relevant absence management arrangements are available for these purposes. As ever Line Managers must be understanding and sensitive to any employees with caring responsibilities and manage these requests on a case-by-case basis seeking advice from the HR department.

15. Staff working from home (who are unable to do so due to ill health), should report any absence via the standard procedure in line with the – UHI NWH Attendance Management Policy.pdf

16. The employees usual place of work is at North, West and Hebrides premises (or as outlined in the employment contract), and staff will be provided with one set of IT equipment as standard, unless, in very exceptional cases, the nature of their work requires them to have additional equipment such as noise cancelation headphones. Any reasonable (IT or other) adjustments that are required due to an underlying health condition or disability, should be raised with your line manager in the first instance.

17. North, West and Hebrides provided IT equipment will comprise of a docking station, monitor, keyboard, mouse and laptop. Since working at a College venue is the primary workplace, in terms of equipment provided, any additional home working equipment required will need to be sourced by the employee. Any equipment or furniture not in use at home should be returned to North, West and Hebrides.

18. All physical working arrangements, office layouts etc. must comply with the college's health and safety requirements. It is the employee's responsibility to read, understand and complete the DSE Workstation Self-Assessment

19. Please talk to your line manager for any guidance on this. You must notify your line manager if you feel any serious discomfort whilst working remotely (i.e. back pain); or any work-related health and safety hazards or accidents. Any work-related H&S concerns must be raised as soon as possible with your line manager who will escalate as appropriate.

20. Staff are trusted to manage their workload in agreement with their line manager. As the hybrid working policy remains an ongoing working practice, should there be any concerns over the way this is being undertaken, or that the employee is deemed to need additional support, line managers retain the right to review and remove this working practice. This may lead to a return to working in a North, West and Hebrides location with any required ongoing employee support.

21. While remote working patterns will be agreed with staff in advance, they do not guarantee a set pattern of work and may be altered with notice based on service / business needs.

22. The college reserves the right to review any hybrid working (based on changing business and/or operational and employee needs and/or abuse of the policy). Should this be the case, staff will be provided with at least **4 weeks' notice** and a rationale as to why.

MANAGERIAL ASPECTS

25. Managers will treat all hybrid working discussions and agreements equally and fairly and based on genuine business and wider team requirements. This means ensuring equality of opportunity and fairness for all, consideration being made to Reasonable Adjustments on a case-by-case basis and in line with the Equality Act 2010.

26. Managers, regardless of employee and manager location, have an implied duty of care for their staff. It is expected that managers will establish regular communication to ensure the agreement is working and that employees are fully supported.

27. It is the responsibility of Executive Leadership Team to have overall operational responsibility for ensuring that the Hybrid Working Policy is implemented, monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure business, operational and employee needs are being met.

3. Scope (Hybrid Working Agreement)

To mutually agree a hybrid working pattern the line manager will:

- Identify which roles within their area are suitable for hybrid working.
- Consider how hybrid working will be implemented in full for their respective team/ school/ department taking account of wider service/business needs.
- Communicate their expectations to staff in terms of how the business / service can operate in a hybrid manner.

- Discuss the application of hybrid working with individual staff, taking account of their personal circumstances, before reaching any final wider decisions.
- Confirm, via email, agreed hybrid working arrangements to individual staff. Final hybrid working arrangements, once agreed, should be sent to HR using the Departmental Hybrid Working Agreement Template (appendix 1) by email for storage. All agreements should be reviewed on an ongoing basis, at least twice a year, to ensure the practice is working.

The employee will:

- Complete the required health and safety assessments and share with their line manager.
- Ensure all relevant work is agreed and that their manager is aware of their location and working hours - as per their contract of employment.
- Take regular and appropriate breaks.
- Discuss their circumstances for hybrid working with their line manager and remain flexible when it comes to its application and the requirement to attend North, West and Hebrides locations as required and with notice, for example for team meetings.
- Work to the agreed hybrid working arrangement and ensure managers are aware of any required support and concerns.
- Ensure any requests to change any hybrid working is raised with their manager in the first instance to ensure appropriate wider team cover if relevant.
- Raise any (safety/wellbeing or personal) concerns with their manager at the earliest opportunity.

4. Exceptions

Employees who already have home working defined as their place of work in their contract of employment. Specified roles that fall under a category of unable to complete their work whilst working in hybrid capacity.

5. Notification

The policy will be highlighted during induction for new employees. For existing employees this has been consulted via the Executive Leadership Team, HR Committee and the Local Joint Committee.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Human Resources will own the policy and will monitor and review it on an annual basis. Adherence and management of the policy is the responsibility of the Executive Leadership Team.

7. Procedures

As set out in section three (Scope) of the policy.

8. Legislative Framework

- Acas Code of Practice on requests for flexible working | Acas
- UK government guidance and legislative requirements relating to health and safety
- The Equality Act 2010 – Reasonable Adjustments

9. Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Other Resources

- Flexible Working Request Form
- UHI NWH Attendance Management Policy.pdf
- DSE Workstation Self-Assessment

10. Version Control and Change History

Version	Date	Approved by	Amendment(s)	Author
0				
1				
2				
3				
4				

Appendix 1

Departmental Hybrid Working Agreement Form

To be completed by the Director/Head for each department upon an agreed hybrid working arrangement and sent to the HR team at hr.nwh@uhi.ac.uk

Department (e.g. Operations)	
Directorate (e.g. LIS)	
Team (e.g. Servicedesk)	
Staff Members in the team	
Details of the agreed Departmental / Team Hybrid Working arrangement	
I confirm I have worked with LIS and Facilities to ensure the team Hybrid Working arrangement is physically possible	Yes/No
All staff members in my department have confirmed any secondary kit which was provided due to the covid-19 lockdown (such as monitors, keyboards, and mice) to the LIS department	Yes/No
I confirm the above Hybrid Working arrangement meets the needs of the business and department	Yes/No

I have considered individual circumstances of the staff members and made the appropriate reasonable adjustments (if any)	Yes/No Comments:
I have ensured staff members have undertaken the appropriate health and safety documentation DSE Workstation Self-Assessment as well as reviewed the appropriate policies mentioned:	Yes/No Comments:

University Partnership Information Security Policy.docx University partnership IS Acceptable Use Policy.docx	
I have reminded staff that adherence with UHI policies remains mandatory regardless of working location. For instance, reporting sickness absence accordingly even when remote working	Yes/No
Any issues foreseen	
Date of implementation	
Review dates – **to be reviewed twice yearly**	

Name	
Signed	
Dated	

Review date 1:

Amendments to departmental hybrid working agreement:

Rationale:

Review date 2:

Amendments to departmental hybrid working agreement:

Rationale: