

29th March 2022

REVIEW OF WLGA AGILE WORKING POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the outcome of the review of agile working arrangements which has recently been undertaken and to seek support for next step actions.

INTRODUCTION

1. The WLGA Management Sub Committee met on 20th August 2021 and considered a report on the proposed introduction of a new **WLGA Agile Working Policy, Procedure and Guidance**. It was noted by Members that the proposals within the new policy would result in permanent major changes to the way in which WLGA staff work; there were also some significant changes proposed in relation to some conditions of service.
2. Members agreed that -
 - (a) The **WLGA Agile Working Policy, Procedure and Guidance** be approved;
 - (b) The **WLGA's Chief Executive** be authorised to amend the policy, as necessary, and to put in place any operational arrangements which might be required to support the effective implementation of the policy;
 - (c) The **WLGA Management Sub-Committee** receives a progress report regarding the implementation of this agile working policy by no later than March 2022
3. The purpose of this report is to -
 - (a) Outline the agile working and associated developments which have taken place since August 2021;
 - (b) Report on the outcome of the review which has recently taken place in relation to the Agile Working Policy and its implementation, including the outcome of a staff survey conducted in February 2022
 - (c) Decide next step actions
4. It was not known in August 2021 when WLGA employees would be permitted to "return to the office" to work on a regular basis. Local Government House was unavailable at that time due to the cessation of the lease; the fitting out of OCP was not completed until late November 2021.

5. A small number of employees were able to work at OCP for a short period in December 2021 for wellbeing reasons but this proved to be short lived because of the rapid transmission of the Omicron covid variant. However, following a reduction in the incidence of Omicron from January 2022 onwards, it again became possible for a small number of individuals to work at OCP with effect from 31st January 2022.
6. Most recently, up to around 20 WLGA employees have been working at OCP. The position regarding how and when existing restrictions on working arrangements at OCP will be lifted will be considered following the Welsh Government's covid review announcement at the end of March 2022.
7. For the foregoing reasons, the implementation of the new WLGA Agile Working Policy has mostly been restricted to home working, along with a small amount of remote working. The review which has been carried out has, therefore, necessarily focussed primarily on these aspects of agile working. However, as most WLGA employees have had the opportunity of making a "familiarisation" visit to One Canal Parade, the opportunity has been taken to seek "initial impressions" from all employees about the Association's new office accommodation.

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

8. The new WLGA Agile Working Policy was introduced on 1st September 2021. The launch of the policy was supported with a comprehensive Staff Bulletin, regularly updated online FAQs, a series of team meetings and a number of individual discussions.
9. The Agile Working Policy seeks to ensure that all "work" which needs to be carried out at a specific place, at a specific time and by a specific person is actioned accordingly, with all other work being subject to the "where and when" flexibility described in the Agile Working Policy. Within this context, effective forward planning is becoming increasingly important.
10. All employees and managers have been urged to ensure that the new and additional flexibility now available to them is managed as effectively as possible.
11. All employees are required to use the Association's Outlook calendar and to permit colleagues to access their calendar. Diary entries must be updated regularly and must provide sufficient information to allow colleagues to be able to contact the employee, when necessary. Non-working time must also be clearly identified.
12. Employees have been asked to plan and record details of their forward looking "working" and "non-working" time in their Outlook calendar on a rolling four weekly basis. Non working time includes annual leave and bank holidays.
13. These processes are a fundamental pre-requisite for effective communications within an agile working setting.
14. In addition to working in accordance with the provisions of the new agile working policy, all managers were required to have 1:2:1 discussions with their team members during September 2021 to determine what work activities should best be carried out at One Canal Parade (or another specific location), and when. The onus

was put on managers and employees to jointly ascertain what will work best for each team in advance of the new office at OCP becoming available to all employees on a regular basis.

15. The terms of reference for these discussions were to consider -

- The type, frequency and timing of work activity within each team which should best be carried out in the office; the rest of the working week will be the flexible / discretionary part of the week in terms of work location and working time
- Ensuring that there is sufficient cover and capacity available within each service area at all (necessary) times, with identified employees providing cover in person and/or remotely
- Each individual's personal circumstances, including any caring responsibilities, and the need to safeguard each individual's health, safety and wellbeing
- How the range of flexible options available within the agile working policy can be put into practice

16. The supporting **Guidance Note** issued to managers and staff emphasised that -

"With agile working comes a responsibility for everyone to put arrangements in place which focus on delivering the Association's priorities. However, all staff must also be treated in a fair and equitable manner so it is important to balance what works for the organisation with what works for the individual. This is the challenge for staff and managers alike".

17. The feedback received from the 1:2:1 discussions in September 2021 was both positive and consistent -

- (d) The overwhelming view of managers and employees alike was that most work activities could be carried out successfully at home, or from a remote location
- (e) It was recognised by most employees that being in the company of colleagues at OCP from time to time will contribute positively to team cohesion and to personal health and wellbeing
- (f) It was agreed that some learning is best achieved through the spontaneity of face to face contact with colleagues in unstructured situations in the office
- (g) Several teams plan to meet fortnightly or monthly in future at OCP, with all team members being in attendance; some (other) meetings will, though, continue to take place online
- (h) It is believed that it will be beneficial to arrange /construct "team days" in the office at OCP so that, as far as possible, team meetings and 1:2:1s will take place on the same day, maximising the benefits of bringing together everyone in a team at the same time
- (i) All teams stated that they have made suitable arrangements over the last 18 months to provide appropriate levels of cover within their respective service

areas. These cover arrangements have been delivered remotely, away from the office, and there appears to be little appetite - or necessity - for employees to be in attendance at OCP solely to provide cover and to respond to queries

- (j) Employees have referred to the sharing of diaries etc being a key part of them making sure that appropriate cover is always available within their service area
- (k) Several individuals have commented that a timely response from support functions is important, but not necessarily an immediate response, and that attendance by support staff at OCP depends upon the nature of the support to be provided
- (l) Many employees believe that their frequency of attendance at OCP will most likely increase as covid fades into the background and individuals become more comfortable about returning to an office environment

UPDATING OF SOME KEY CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

18. In addition to introducing agile working arrangements relating to “where” employees can work, the opportunity has also been taken to put in place several revised / new WLGA policies relevant to the new agile working arrangements -

- (a) A new **WLGA Working Time Scheme**, alongside the permanent discontinuation of the former Flexitime Scheme
- (b) A revised **Annual Leave and “Other Paid Leave”** policy
- (c) A revised **Dentist, Optician and GP Appointments** policy
- (d) A revised **Scheme for Car Mileage, Meals & Overnight Accommodation**
- (e) A new WLGA (and Data Cymru) **Dress and Appearance Code**
- (f) A new WLGA (and Data Cymru) **Clear Desk Policy**

18. **Working Time Scheme and Annual Leave** - the former WLGA flexitime scheme has been discontinued and replaced with a new Working Time Scheme with the following features -

- (m) The operational needs of the Association are paramount. All working time arrangements must be consistent with achieving this objective
- (n) Managers must determine in consultation with their teams which specific work activities must reasonably be carried out at a specific place at a specific time
- (o) Thereafter, each employee has discretion available in terms of how, where and when to carry out all other work activities
- (p) The standard working week for full-time WLGA employees remains 36 hours pw
- (q) There are no longer any fixed hours of work, subject to each individual’s working pattern not being detrimental to business needs or personal wellbeing

- (r) All employees can work their contracted hours in a flexible manner, subject to complying with the new Working Time Scheme
- (s) Working time settlement periods of 13 weeks (65 working days) now apply; these provide employees with a great deal of flexibility to balance working time, non working time, annual leave and their workload
- (t) All working time is to be logged on a spreadsheet to the nearest 15 minutes
- (u) Whole days and part days can be taken as non working time, subject to the needs of the business
- (v) A debit balance at the end of a 13 week period is not permitted
- (w) Up to 50 hours may be carried forward by a full time employee at the end of each 13 week period (pro rata for part time employees); this replaces the former four weekly carry forward of flexitime credit hours, time off in lieu arrangements and the carry forward of annual leave at year end
- (x) Any hours in credit over 50 hours at the end of the 13 week settlement period will be forfeited
- (y) Annual leave may be taken at any time, subject to the needs of the business
- (z) All annual leave must be taken within this designated leave year. No carry forward to the next annual leave year is permitted
 - (aa) There needs to be a continuous dialogue between employees and managers about ensuring that individuals' workloads are broadly commensurate with their working hours, always recognising that workloads will be subject to peaks and troughs

19. **Dentist, Optician and GP Appointments** - the new policy states -

“Employees are expected to manage their own time within the large amount of flexibility now available, so paid time off to attend routine medical appointments with dentists, opticians and GPs etc will no longer be necessary. This provision will be kept under review”.

Paid time off will, though, continue to be granted to employees for the purposes of attending hospital appointments, maternity and antenatal appointments, medical screening and fertility treatment etc.

20. The agile working policy now in place provides all WLGA employees with far greater flexibility than ever before to better plan, organise and balance both their personal and their working life commitments. In these circumstances it is considered that it is no longer necessary to provide employees with special paid leave for occasional visits to a dentist, an optician or a GP.

21. The trade unions have been reassured that this proposed arrangement will be kept under review in the light of operational experience.

22. **Car Mileage, Meals & Overnight Accommodation** - the new policy primarily updates and modernises longstanding travel and subsistence etc. arrangements.
23. One specific significant change, though, relates to the following provision -

Paragraph 18.8 - “a mileage claim may be submitted only in relation to any additional mileage travelled by the employee. The additional mileage will be calculated by deducting the employee’s normal home to fixed place of work mileage (return) from the total miles travelled on that day”
24. This new arrangement takes into account the pre-covid WLGA situation where a significant number of employees regularly travelled on WLGA business direct to remote locations from their home rather than from Local Government House. WLGA business travel is currently minimal, but - as the covid situation improves - it is anticipated that an even smaller proportion of journeys to remote locations will be from the WLGA’s office.
25. The trade unions have been reassured that this proposed arrangement will be kept under review in the light of operational experience.
26. **Dress and Appearance Code** - a new WLGA Dress and Appearance Code has been introduced in readiness for WLGA and Data Cymru staff to jointly occupy shared office accommodation at OCP. Data Cymru has operated a Dress Code for a number of years and, therefore, it has been necessary to put in place arrangements which seek to harmonise working conditions for both WLGA and Data Cymru staff.
27. **Clear Desk Policy** - a new Clear Desk Policy for One Canal Parade has been introduced for WLGA and Data Cymru staff. This policy has been introduced to maximise GDPR compliance, to ensure employee comfort and cleanliness and to provide an additional covid precaution.

REVIEW METHODOLOGY

28. In addition to ongoing monitoring of the operation of the agile working policy, a comprehensive staff survey has been undertaken to seek employee feedback about - (a) all aspects of the operation of the new Agile Working Policy and (b) associated changes to working time and some conditions of service. The survey took place during February 2022.
29. Many thanks to Data Cymru colleagues for conducting the staff survey and for carrying out the subsequent analysis on behalf of the WLGA.

SUMMARY OF STAFF SURVEY FINDINGS

30. **The introduction of a new agile working policy and a new Working Time Scheme, alongside home working and the move to One Canal Parade, have undoubtedly been viewed as a very positive development which has been welcomed by most staff. However, some concerns have been expressed about a small number of issues; these need to be addressed as soon as reasonably practicable.**

31. A summary of the staff survey findings is set out in **Appendix A** to this report. The findings are based on 8 key themes. Headline results in relation to each of these key themes are as follows -

1. Personal Wellbeing

Between two thirds and 80% of staff responded positively to most questions relating to their personal wellbeing over the last six months.

However, up to one third of staff have indicated that one or more aspects of agile working has resulted in some degree of concern for them.

Around 40% of staff said that they have felt a little isolated at times working from home. This is one example of a concern which will be addressed as soon as the restrictions on working at One Canal Parade are lifted.

Comment: Staff will be encouraged to attend at OCP (when covid restrictions are lifted) for specific work activities which it is considered are best undertaken in the office. This will also assist to improve the support provided for individuals' personal wellbeing.

2. Working at Home

Most staff have said that working from home is advantageous and offers additional flexibility to them.

Some staff have, though, reported that the space and/or facilities available to them at home is not fully satisfactory.

Several staff have requested "a clear steer from senior management around working from home when children are off sick or self-isolating from school"

Comment: The availability of OCP for work purposes will provide staff with an alternative work place; this will be of assistance where work space facilities at home are limited. The request for clarity regarding caring for dependent young children is something which will be looked at shortly.

3. Staff Engagement

Over 90% of staff believe that - when working from home (WFH) - the new agile/flexible working arrangements help them to carry out their duties more effectively.

Around 95% of staff said that - when WFH - they know what is expected of them by their manager in terms of their work priorities and other duties and responsibilities.

Around 90% of staff said that they feel valued as an employee.

Around one third of staff believe that there is room for improvement in relation to the safeguarding of their mental health.

Comment: The survey results indicate that staff engagement is currently at a very high level, which is very positive. Mental Health First Aiders are currently being recruited and trained as one positive way of safeguarding individuals' mental health.

4. Home Working Pledge

The introduction of the WLGA's Home Working Pledge has received overwhelming support.

However, around one quarter of staff believe that the operation of the Home Working Pledge is not as effective as it could be, particularly in relation to the timing and frequency of some online meetings.

Comment: SMT has issued guidance on several occasions advising staff to adhere to the Home Working Pledge as much as possible; in particular, to be more a little more considerate regarding the timing of meetings. This message will continue to be repeated.

5. Working at One Canal Parade (OCP)

A high proportion of staff are satisfied with the facilities on offer at OCP, albeit most staff have only had the opportunity to make one visit to OCP.

50% of staff said that they plan to attend at OCP - when covid restrictions are fully lifted - less than once per week; 45% of staff plan to attend on 1 or 2 days per week; a handful of staff plan to attend on 3 or 4 days per week

Comment: Staff will be encouraged to attend at OCP (when covid restrictions are lifted) for specific work activities which it is considered are best undertaken in the office. This will support workforce cohesion, team working and spontaneity of interaction and learning.

6. WLGA Dress and Appearance Code

86% of staff believe that the new WLGA Dress and Appearance Code applicable is fair and reasonable.

However, a small number of staff provided details of the changes they would like to see made to the new Code.

Comment: This topic requires a "light touch" approach and will be kept under review in an appropriate manner.

7. New Working Time Scheme / Annual Leave Arrangements

The flexibility arising from the new Working Time Scheme has been universally welcomed. All staff now have a great deal of flexibility regarding the way in which they organise their work, where they carry out the work, when they work and when they take annual leave. This is - put simply - an unprecedented development.

However, around one-fifth of staff have reported that they anticipate losing some excess working hours at the end of each 13 week calculation period, over and above the 50 hours “carry forward” permitted; 10% of staff also anticipate being unable to use all of their annual leave by the end of the leave year.

Comment: This is a business critical matter. All staff have the responsibility - and now the flexibility - to plan their working time and non working time over a 52 week period in a way which balances business needs and personal circumstances.

The inability of some staff to balance their personal workload and their working hours / annual leave continues to be of concern to SMT as this constitutes a potential wellbeing issue for the individuals concerned and a potential risk / liability for the WLGA.

All staff were informed in summer 2021 that there would be no annual leave carry forward as at 1.4.2022. There remains an expectation, though, on the part of some staff that annual leave will be carried forward. This will not address the fundamental problems which exist and a reversal of the current policy is not supported.

There are two separate but linked issues to consider here - (a) each individual’s total workload, and (b) each individual’s ability to manage their working and non-working time.

Action has recently been taken - in the form of an organisational review - to address a couple of known cases where a mismatch existed between workload and the staffing resources available. Whilst there will always be peaks and troughs in terms of workload, it is each managers’ responsibility to ensure that workloads do not become persistently excessive for any individual employee. This is a critical and non-negotiable management role.

There also needs to be a continuous dialogue between managers and employees about how working time and non working time is organised so that business needs and personal circumstances are balanced in a suitable way.

The new WLGA performance review system which it is planned will be introduced from April 2022 onwards will require managers and employees to have regular discussions about all of these matters, with a formal quarterly check-in which will highlight any corrective actions which may be needed.

8. Travel and other expense claims and Annual Leave / Other Paid Leave

Staff have not raised any significant concerns in relation to the changes which have been made to these conditions of service matters.

Comment: It is too early yet to assess the full impact of these changes in conditions of service as staff continue to work predominantly from home at the present time. These matters should, therefore, be kept under review for at least another 12 months.

CRITICAL QUESTION

32. Paragraph 4.1 of the Agile Working Policy, Procedure and Guidance states -

“The WLGA Management Sub-Committee is responsible for approving this policy and subsequently periodically reviewing the effectiveness of its implementation. In particular, has agile working led to the delivery of better services and a workforce which feels better supported?”

33. As far as the “delivery of better services” is concerned, it is to be noted that the agile working scheme was launched in September 2021 at a time when (a) covid restrictions continued to prevent WLGA employees from working at an office base and (b) the demands of the covid emergency placed significant additional pressures on WLGA staff. Feedback to date suggests that WLGA staff have generally met expectations both in terms of the support provided to member organisations and also the working relationships established with a wide range of partner organisations.

34. **This question is, though, more properly one for Members to comment upon as part of an ongoing discussion with the Chief Executive over the coming period.**

35. Whether the “workforce feels better supported” is a more straightforward question to answer. The staff survey indicates that around 93% of staff believe that the new agile working arrangements help them to carry out their duties more effectively. Around 90% of staff said that they feel valued as an employee. This is very positive feedback, but it is still very early days to be definitive about whether the workforce feels better supported.

36. **It will be appropriate for employees to be asked this question when the next staff survey takes place** because, by that time, agile working arrangements will have become much more established and, hopefully, existing covid restrictions on employees’ working arrangements will have been lifted in their entirety.

NEXT STEPS

37. The agile working staff survey results have been considered by the Association’s Strategic Management Team. It is considered that the survey results are sufficiently robust to form the basis of an action plan going forward.

38. It is necessary to now consolidate those features of agile working which are working well, whilst at the same time working with staff to identify and implement those actions which are needed to address the concerns and opportunities for improvement which have been identified in the staff survey.

39. Some of the concerns which have been identified will be addressed quite quickly when it becomes possible for staff to work at OCP on an unrestricted basis, eg improved contact with managers and colleagues and the ability for staff to attend at OCP when a break is required from working at home.

40. Additionally, SMT is already aware of - and committed to addressing - the need to ensure that the benefits of bringing staff together at OCP are maximised by

arranging meaningful work activities at OCP which regularly involve most or all members in each team. For example, team meetings and individual 1:2:1 meetings to be arranged on the same day, where practicable.

41. There are some suggestions arising from the staff survey which SMT do not believe should be accommodated, eg reversing the current policy which does not permit annual leave to be carried forward at year end in addition to the 50 hours of carry forward which is permitted. In such cases, the reasons for SMT not adopting these suggestions will need to be communicated and explained to staff.
42. As far as all other suggestions and opportunities for improvement are concerned, it is planned that these matters will initially be discussed at team meetings and then by a staff focus group which will be requested to develop a package of actions which will address those matters of concern highlighted in the staff survey. In addition to the specific findings which have emerged from the staff survey, the focus group will, additionally, be asked to identify any perceived / actual barriers to working at OCP.
43. It will take some months to progress all the necessary actions outlined above; it is appropriate, though, that a further formal review takes place before the end of 2022 so that progress made can be assessed.
44. It is also planned that a staff survey will be carried out in future on at least an annual basis; it is intended that a number of the questions asked in the recent staff survey will be repeated in future staff surveys so that trends can be monitored.

CONCLUSION

45. Welsh Government's message to employers and employees in Wales to work from home wherever possible remains in force at the moment. This means that day to day working practices remain restricted. It is anticipated, though, that this situation will ease over the coming weeks, with many pre-covid workplace arrangements being resumed.
46. However, some former working practices will not return. For example, hybrid and wholly online meetings will replace some of the meetings which in the pre-covid era took place exclusively face to face. It is also the case that many WLGA staff will not readily return to work in an office on a daily basis; there will, instead, be a mix of office, home and remote working with less time spent in the office and more time spent at home.
47. Successful agile working requires improved forward planning on the part of individuals and teams, along with the development of an organisational culture which empowers and supports employees and managers alike.
48. The WLGA Agile Working Policy and Procedure states -

“ The organisational needs of the Association are paramount. All agile working arrangements must be consistent with achieving this objective. With agile working comes a responsibility to co-operate with colleagues to develop and put into practice individual, team and organisational working arrangements which all focus on delivering the Association’s service priorities.

The Association aims to make sure that the benefits arising from agile working lead to the delivery of high quality services and a workforce which feels better supported. A nimble, responsive, flexible and adaptable organisation and workforce are key objectives ... “

49. The Association has put in place sound foundations with the aim of striving to meet the above objectives. The challenge now is to consolidate existing good practice, whilst at the same time continuously seeking out and addressing opportunities for improvement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

50. It is **RECOMMENDED** that -
 - (a) The outcome of the agile working review and staff survey is **NOTED**
 - (b) Further action be taken as outlined in the “Next Steps” Section of the report

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APPENDIX A

WLGA Agile Working Staff Survey - February 2022

Summary of Feedback

Introduction

There has not yet been sufficient time to analyse the agile working staff survey results in detail. This feedback report is, therefore, necessarily an interim report which will need to be further developed and built upon over the coming period.

Sample Size

There were a total of 73 WLGA staff respondents. This high response rate is welcome.

Theme 1 - Personal Wellbeing

- (a) 60% of WLGA staff believe that it has been advantageous overall for them to work from home (WFH) over the last 6 months. 68% of staff have welcomed the additional flexibility available as a result of WFH.
- (b) Just over half of all WLGA staff have reported that WFH has not resulted in them feeling isolated. Around 40% of staff said that they have felt a little more isolated at times, with a little under 10% feeling significantly more isolated.
- (c) For those staff who responded “significantly more isolated” or “a little more isolated” a further three questions were asked, which indicated that whilst staff felt isolated to some extent from their respective managers, isolation from “other work colleagues” and “people in other organisations” appears to be far more prevalent.
- (d) Two thirds of staff have reported that they “always” or “on most days” take regular breaks from work when working at home.
- (e) In terms of taking regular breaks from their laptop / device, the position is almost identical.
- (f) However, of the remaining one third of the workforce, around 11 staff have reported that they only take breaks from work or their screen “on some days”; the remaining 11 staff have indicated that they rarely take breaks from their work or their device / screen.
- (g) 19% of staff have reported that they have suffered one or more physical ailments during the last 6 months which they believe are attributable to WFH.
- (h) 16% of staff have reported that they have been eating less healthily over the last 6 months compared with the pre-COVID era.
- (i) After setting aside COVID-related illnesses / isolation, 14% of staff reported that they have taken other sickness-related leave during the last 6 months.
- (j) 45% of staff have said that they have continued to WFH whilst feeling unwell during the last 6 months where, in the pre-COVID era, they would have taken sick leave and not gone into the office.

(k) Over half of respondents have said that they do not believe that their mental health has been adversely affected during the last 6 months as a result of WFH. Around one third of staff have reported that their mental health has been affected “a little”. A very small number of staff believe that their mental health has been significantly affected by WFH.

(l) Two thirds of staff have said that they would feel comfortable to talk about their mental health at work. The remaining one third of staff have varying degrees of concern about discussing their mental health at work; some would, though, do so with the support of HR and/or their trade union representative.

(m) Surprisingly, over 40% of staff have said that they are unaware that counselling is available to them from an independent source at no cost to the individual and on a confidential basis. 86% of staff have said that they would feel comfortable accessing such counselling support, if needed.

(n) Around 80% of staff have reported that, when working in an agile way, they are content that their personal circumstances are fully taken into account by their manager. 18% of staff believe that their manager only partially takes into account their personal circumstances. A very small number of staff believe that their personal circumstances have been ignored.

(o) Staff were asked what actions they would like to see taken where opportunities for improvement exist. These can be summarised, as follows -

- Guidance needed about what arrangements apply when WFH and a dependent child is ill or self-isolating from school (x 2)
- Weekly/fortnightly team meetings to take place with all the team in attendance
- More regular contact from manager, initiated by the manager, particularly in relation to team-wide developments
- Regular catch ups where work is parked for 5 or 10 minutes “would do the world of good”
- Senior managers to act as role models to minimise / stop back to back meetings
- Recognition that staff are not always available
- Improved availability of office equipment etc for WFH (x 2)
- Greater sincerity, investment and empathy

Theme 2 - Working at Home

(a) Around 42% of staff have indicated that they are at home alone for more than 50% of their working time at home. One third of staff said that there was someone else at home for more than 50% of their working time at home.

(b) Just a handful of staff have indicated that they need to share their working space at home with another person.

- (c) Over half of staff have reported that their work space at home is a home office or other dedicated space. The remainder of staff have indicated that their work space at home is used for other purposes when they are not WFH.
- (d) Around 38% of staff are satisfied with their home work space. Just one person expressed dissatisfaction with their work space at home. The remainder of staff were neither satisfied or dissatisfied.
- (e) Several staff have requested “a clear steer from senior management around working from home when children are off sick or self-isolating from school”
- (f) Consideration does need to be given when staff members are ill, their children are home from school...pre-covid people would not be able to come to work. No flexibility or parental leave considered
- (g) Staff were asked if there is anything which the WLGA can do to help improve their home workspace. The responses can be summarised, as follows -
 - No, the issue is a lack of space (x 2)
 - I have had an assessment, waiting for desk and monitor to arrive
 - Desk and chair not really suitable, but not giving any H&S problems at present
 - No, I think WLGA have done everything they can during this period

Theme 3 - Staff Engagement

- (a) Around 93% of staff believe that the newly introduced WLGA agile/flexible working arrangements help them to carry out their duties more effectively.
- (b) Around 95% of staff said that - when WFH - they know what is expected of them by their manager in terms of their work priorities and other duties and responsibilities.
- (c) One third of staff reported that, over the last 6 months, they had spoken about their work with their manager by telephone, Teams or similar, more than twice per week. Over 50% had spoken to their manager about work once or twice per week. 15% of staff said that they had spoken to their manager about work less than once per week.
- (d) Around 79% of staff reported that their views on work matters are regularly requested by their manager.
- (e) Around 90% of staff said that they feel valued as an employee. 10% of staff said that this is not the case.
- (f) Three quarters of staff believe that the need to safeguard their mental health is understood by their manager and is acted upon in a supportive manner. The remainder of staff believe that room for improvement exists, with the policies which exist not always being used as intended.

Theme 4 - Home Working Pledge

- (a) There is a unanimous view amongst all WLGA staff respondents that the Home Working Pledge represents a suitable balance between business needs and individuals' well-being.
- (b) However, only three quarters of staff believe that the pledges are being implemented as intended.
- (c) Staff were asked for examples of the pledges which are not being implemented consistently. These can be summarised, as follows -
 - The social aspect; as a relatively new starter I know very few people in the organisation
 - Back to back meetings are still being scheduled (x2)
 - Difficult to take planned meal / other breaks / non working time, particularly between 12 noon and 2pm, but also before 9am and after 4pm (x5)
 - Lack of understanding regarding difficulties with new born / young children at home (x2)
 - Some meetings are being arranged without considering colleagues' existing diary arrangements (x 2)
 - Walking meetings are not currently feasible
 - Only a minority of staff feel able to make time for social conversations, especially in the lower grade (x3)

Theme 5 - Working at One Canal Parade (OCP)

- (a) 80% of WLGA staff said that they had visited OCP prior to completing the staff survey.
- (b) 90% of the staff who have visited OCP said that they are either satisfied or very satisfied with the arrangements that have been made for **workstations**. A couple of staff said that they are very dissatisfied.
- (c) 88% of the staff who have visited OCP said that they are either satisfied or very satisfied with the arrangements that have been made for **printing**. One individual is very dissatisfied with the facilities for printing.
- (d) 94% of the staff who have visited OCP said that they are either satisfied or very satisfied with the arrangements that have been made for **collaboration areas**. One individual is very dissatisfied.
- (e) 94% of the staff who have visited OCP said that they are either satisfied or very satisfied with the arrangements that have been made for **informal work / relaxation areas**. One individual is very dissatisfied.
- (f) 68% of the staff who have visited OCP said that they are either satisfied or very satisfied with the **4th floor kitchen arrangements**. One individual is very dissatisfied.
- (g) 78% of the staff who have visited OCP said that they are either satisfied or very satisfied with **personal storage arrangements**. One individual is very dissatisfied.

(h) Staff were asked **how often they planned to attend the OCP office** on average when full access is available -

- 50% of staff said that they plan to attend at OCP less than once per week
- 45% of staff plan to attend on 1 or 2 days per week
- A handful of staff plan to attend on 3 or 4 days per week

Theme 6 - WLGA Dress and Appearance Code

(a) 86% of staff believe that the new WLGA Dress and Appearance Code applicable is fair and reasonable.

(b) Staff were asked if there are any changes they would like to see made to the new Dress and Appearance Code. The responses can be summarised, as follows -

- I don't think that I have seen this new code (x5)
- Policy not required - people should dress for their diary, within reasonable work standards (x7)
- Can be unintentionally discriminatory to employees on a lower income (x3)
- I would expect the employer to pay towards the cost of office attire
- Good that that words 'Please have regard' and 'some occasions' is included, otherwise I would probably not agree with the code.
- Don't see why flip flops are suddenly a no no, they weren't before!
- Code doesn't need to be so prescriptive regarding summer attire
- Don't recall seeing this circulated and can't find it on Sharepoint. If there's a code brought in, it should be sent round to all staff so nobody can claim ignorance

Theme 7 - New Working Time Scheme / Annual Leave Arrangements

(a) 19% of staff said that they usually lose some excess working hours at the end of each working hours calculation period. The remainder of staff only rarely, or never, lose excess working hours.

(b) 10% of staff have said that they will not use all of their annual leave by the end of the current leave year.

Theme 8 - “Travel and other expense claims” and “Annual Leave and Other Paid Leave”

(a) 88% of staff do not believe that any changes are needed to the new travel / expenses and annual leave / other paid leave arrangements at present.

(b) The remainder of the staff consulted suggested the following changes -

- Annual leave to be carried forward, in addition to the 50 hours already permitted at the end of each 13 week period (x2)
- One recording system is required to replace BreatheHR and spreadsheets for ease of use
- 3 days per week availability of OCP (*since increased to 5 days per week*) is not helpful to colleagues who are situated in North Wales and need to spend 2 to 4 days at a time when working at Cardiff
- Are we going to retain our contract with Enterprise when we will start to attend meetings again, or use our own vehicle?