



Principles of a clear desk

Introduction

The vision of the Ways of Working programme is *to create and provide modern and efficient ways of working for employees of the County Council*. It is concerned with the utilisation of office space which allows people to operate flexibly. It will provide working policies, modern styles and work space with equipment that motivates and enables staff to perform to their best and ultimately maximises the benefit to its customers and taxpayers. Flexible working is about providing the right work settings for the way County Council staff work in the future.

This document has been prepared in order to introduce the requirements of a clear desk policy to support the Ways of Working programme and the introduction of a more flexible approach to the way that we utilise the available office accommodation and deliver the service outcomes that are required in the future.

This document forms part of a suite of policy and guidance statements which can be found on the [Ways of Working pages on the intranet](#)

Background

Nottinghamshire County Council currently has a clear desk requirement as part of its information governance policy which requires staff to protect sensitive and confidential information by keeping it in a secure environment when it is not in use.

This did not mean that everything had to be removed from your desk or work environment, every day. See the [Information Management](#) pages on the intranet for more information on what is best practice for sensitive and confidential information.

What needs to change?

With the increase in flexible working options, we need to have consideration for our colleagues who may be sharing the workspace that we use.

For office based, hot desk and nomadic, workers ([see definitions](#)) this means that we need to clear the desk that we have been using completely at the end of each day or if we are going to be away from it for a period in excess of 3 hours.

For nomadic workers and those using touchdown areas in locations that are not their designated work area, e.g. managers checking email when attending a meeting in another building; this means that the desk should be cleared immediately prior to leaving it.

What about my personal items?

Personal items should be kept to a minimum as fixed desks will not be allocated as part of the new flexible working facilities unless you have specific needs.

However, as work areas are likely to be allocated for office based workers and occasional home workers; personal items can be stored in your personal storage area so that they are safe. This applies to items such as mugs, tea/coffee, photographs etc.

What about the papers that I am working on?

As part of the Ways of Working programme we will be implementing a corporate Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) which will mean that most of the information that we need will be available electronically and therefore the amount of papers that we are dealing with will reduce. Where we do have papers these will need to be stored in the team storage areas which will be located in the designated area for your team. These areas should be used to store papers that you are working on currently, any files that are not in current use should be returned to the relevant filing area so that they are available for your colleagues to use.

What about the reference material that I use?

The designated work areas for each team will have an area for reference material that is used by the team.

What happens if I forget or I get called away suddenly?

There will be instances where meetings overrun, you get an emergency to deal with or something else stops you from clearing the desk that you have been working on. In these instances your colleagues may need to remove your working papers etc. for you, they will put them in a designated safe place within the team area, so you can find them when you are next in the office.

Responsibilities

ALL staff – are responsible for maintaining this policy and respecting the workspaces that are shared with others.