



**Stiúrtóra Náisiúnta,
Acmhainní Daonna**

Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhísí
Sláinte Ospidéal Dr. Steevens',
Baile Átha Cliath 8, D08 W2A8

**National Director
Human Resources**

Health Service Executive,
Dr Steevens' Hospital,
Dublin 8, 08 W2A8

**www.hse.ie
@hselive**

t 01 635 2319
e nationalhr@hse.ie

**To: Chief Executive Officer
Each National Director
Each Assistant National Director HR
Each Assistant Chief Finance Officer
Each Hospital Group CEO
Each Hospital Group Director of HR
Each Chief Officer CHOs
Each Head of HR CHOs
Head of HR, PCRS
Each CEO Section 38 Agencies
Each HR Manager Section 38 Agencies
Each Employee Relations Manager
Each Group Director of Nursing & Midwifery
Each Group Director of Midwifery
Each Clinical Director
Director National Ambulance Service**

From: Anne Marie Hoey, National Director of Human Resources

Date: 20th December 2022

Subject: HR Circular 033/2022 - HSE Blended Working Policy for the Public Health Service

Dear Colleagues

Please find attached a copy of the *HSE Blended Working Policy for the Public Health Service* which comes into effect from 20th December 2022. This Policy covers all employees in the HSE and Section 38 organisations.

As outlined in this policy, management in each HSE area/division/unit and Section 38 organisations must identify the roles which are suitable for remote working within their area of responsibility. All of the following criteria must be satisfied for any blended working arrangement to be approved, none of which may be excluded from consideration:

- Business needs and role suitability
- Employee suitability
- Designated workstation requirements

Each HSE area/division/unit and Section 38 employer must determine the management level at which decision-makers will be designated.

In this policy the term 'blended working' refers to working arrangements that involve a combination of working from the employer's work premises and working remotely¹, based on an agreement between the employee and the manager, and approved through the organisation's application process. The employer's work premises will continue to be the primary work place for all employees, and there will be a requirement to attend on-site:

- on specific days each week agreed with the manager; and/or
- an agreed percentage of days per week or month as agreed with the manager; and/or
- on days as and when required by the manager, for example for collaboration, meetings, training and key events. The employee should be given an appropriate period of notice in such cases.

In general, no employee should work 100% remotely.

An employee has the option to apply for blended working but there is no requirement on employees to avail of blended working arrangements regardless of the nature of their role.

This policy is underpinned by the following key principles:

- Blended working arrangements must align with business/service needs and support the delivery of efficient, high-quality health and social services.
- Senior management will encourage and facilitate blended working where practical based on a role identification exercise and determination of eligibility criteria to be undertaken by management within each HSE area/division/division/unit and Section 38 organisation.
- Management will inform employees of the outcome of the role identification exercise and eligibility criteria.
- Blended working applications will be dealt with in a fair, consistent, transparent and timely manner. Where an application is refused, the reasons for refusal will be clearly communicated to the employee in writing. The employee will also be informed of their right to appeal the decision under the organisation's Grievance Procedure.
- Employees who are granted blended working arrangements will generally have no automatic right to a dedicated workstation, or single occupancy office at the employer's work premises but will have a suitable work space available to them when required to attend on-site. The employee should be advised of the specific

¹ This refers to the employee's place of residence.

arrangements that will apply in relation to allocation of desks/offices prior to confirmation of their blended working application (if approved).

- The approval of any blended working arrangement is at the discretion of management. Blended working agreements should include an initial trial period. In general, the trial period should last no less than three months and no more than six months.
- An employee who wishes to avail of blended working may submit an application for consideration no more than once every 12 months unless their role and/or unit changes or there have been significant changes to their proposed home work station.
- Employees must be in a position to carry out all the responsibilities of their role while working remotely under a blended working arrangement. Blended working must not be used as a substitute for annual leave or sick leave. While blended working may have benefits for persons with caring responsibilities, any caring responsibilities must take place outside of working time. The introduction of blended working will not reduce the availability of current flexible working options such as part-time working under the Flexible Working Agreement, the Shorter Working Year Scheme, parental leave and carer's leave.

HSE employees who wish to apply for blended working arrangements can access the HSE Application Form [here](#).

Each Section 38 employer should devise an application form and put in place their own administrative arrangements.

Update on legislation

The Government has approved the integration of the Right to Request Remote Work for all workers into the Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Bill. Once the new legislation is enacted, employees will have a legal right to request remote working from their employer. In addition, employers will be required to have regard to the Code of Practice to be developed by the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) when considering requests. The Code of Practice will be established on a statutory footing and it is expected that this Code will include guidance to employers and employees on their obligations regarding compliance.

Please ensure that this Circular is brought to the attention of all relevant managers and employees in your area of responsibility.

Queries

Queries from individual employees or managers in relation to this policy and related matters should be referred to local HR Departments/Employee Relations

Departments. Please note that the National HR Help Desk is also available to take queries on 1850 444 925 or email: ask.hr@hse.ie.

Queries from HR/Employee Relations Departments only in relation to this Circular and policy may be referred to Anna Killilea, National Employee Relations, HR Directorate, 63-64 Adelaide Road, Dublin 2 Tel: 01 6626966, Email: anna.killilea@hse.ie

Yours sincerely



Anne Marie Hoey

National Director of Human Resources