our working way

Handbook

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ourworkingway.growthco.uk

The Growth Company

Our Working Way Handbook

Introduction:

The Growth Company has transformed ways of working over recent years moving from a traditional approach of fixed working hours and places of work to a more flexible working time and agile place of work approach.

The introduction of 'Dress for your day' and 'Work your way' in 2017 was driven by our opportunity to improve services to our customers, and empower colleagues to have more control over how, when and where they undertook key activities. The added benefits of increased agility also enabled financial savings from the reduction of space we needed to occupy.

These agile working practices have and continue to serve us well during the COVID Pandemic and provided the ability to flex our approach quickly to a predominantly virtual provision as was necessary during periods of lock down. Despite some of the challenges encountered during this time we have successfully maintained our performance and shown how adaptable and resilient we can be.

Moving forward it is important that we build on what we have learned and continue to shape our services and operations to be high performing and maximise our employment offer for colleagues, embracing blended delivery where suitable for both great colleague and service outcomes.

The advantages of providing a range of blended services through enhanced use of technology gives greater accessibility to our customers. It recognises that the pandemic may have altered the customer and commissioner expectations of how we deliver our services moving forward. In turn it provides the opportunity to reduce unnecessary travel in line with our commitment to environmental sustainability, provide better space utilisation and enhance our employment offer to colleagues. The key difference of 'Our Working Way' is our intention to embark on the next iteration of our working practices collectively. Together we need to shape our services to find the right balance of greater accessibility to our services and empowering colleagues to work in a way that not only enables high performance and quality, but also maintains a people centred approach and strong workforce culture.

The vision of 'Our Working Way' has been developed to encapsulate the desire of our future working environment. It places our customers' needs and expectations for high quality services at the heart of not only what we do, but how we do it together.

This handbook will provide clarity on what blended working practices may look like. It will also provide appendices covering operational guidance to address some of the common questions asked by colleagues, as well as ensuring new colleagues have a full understanding of the next iteration of our working practices. This will be supported by e-learning modules, which will take you through practical activities that will support you in our continuous aim to challenge the way we do things.

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The Vision – 'Our Working Way'

The vision for 'Our Working Way' is:

- That we deliver our services in the most appropriate manner to achieve high performance, meet the needs of our customers and commissioners whilst also enabling colleagues to achieve a better work-life balance through the opportunities provided via blended (digital and in-person) working.
- Whenever customers interact with us whether through our network of offices, their workplace, in community settings, or online they experience the same high-quality commitment to excellence and distinctive GC Values.
- Colleagues continue to feel connected to GC's purpose and values which are embedded into our day-to-day activities, induction and on-boarding and culture of continuous learning.
- The utilisation of our space is informed by the design of our services and maximising performance.
- Our flexibility, IT infrastructure and open inclusive offices empower our colleagues to 'work their way'.
- Work is about the timely delivery of quality outputs, of how we do things and not about presenteeism.
- We have an open and transparent approach to performance management.

The journey to 'Our Working Way' is about encouraging and supporting changes in the way people work and empowering us to challenge working practices to continuously improve our services. It is our belief that our vision for transforming the way we work will also achieve the following benefits:

- Increase the effectiveness of our activities for our customers through a variety of channels.
- Focus on outcomes and high performance
- Meet the aspirations of colleagues for an improved work-life balance
- Create office environments to allow collaboration and innovation
- Reduce the environmental footprint of our working practices
- Enable the best use of our estates and that our facilities are accessible.
- Meeting the diverse needs of colleagues and making reasonable adjustments where required.

'Our Working Way' doesn't just cover our working hours, locations and workstyles, it is about being responsive and adaptive to operational needs and advancements in technology, empowered by a culture of continuous learning. The aims are to provide greater flexibility,

particularly in relation to the time and location colleagues can work, subject to service requirements, individual roles, and activity.

Challenging ourselves

Introducing 'Our Working Way' practices will enhance our working culture and will require continuous challenge to our working practices and behaviours. It is not about doing things in the same way with new technology and redesigned spaces, it is about new ways of working using new tools, new processes, and new approaches to management, teamwork, and service delivery. This requires all colleagues to change behaviours and realign expectations about how we do things. For example:

- Commitment to collaboration and communication. Being mindful of making time to have real and virtual 'water cooler conversations.'
- Continuous service improvements, using new technologies to increase efficiency.
- A commitment to flexibility – being open to new ways of working and delivering services.
- An emphasis on promoting trust, empowerment, autonomy, and results.
- An emphasis on working in shared spaces and with shared resources across all our estates to maximise utilisation.
- An emphasis on using new ways of working to assist the diverse needs of our customers and our workforce.
- To help colleagues achieve a good work-life balance and promote health and well-being.
- Commitment to using technology and new ways of working to reduce the environmental impact of workstyles, processes, and delivery of services.
- A commitment to using technology and new ways of working to recruit, retain and develop a more diverse and inclusive workforce.
- A culture of learning using technology to help colleagues, wherever they are located, to develop their skills and capabilities and move forward in their careers.

The benefits of 'Our Working Way' should be focused on tailoring work activity to maximise output not presenteeism. It is incumbent on individuals to rethink in person meetings. Managers must consider how services are provided to customers, team and cross-group interaction and management supervision.

Team protocols should be agreed locally to include:

- A requirement to let others know where and when you are working, we operate a flexible hour's approach from 7am-7pm but this is subject to business requirements
- Clear reporting structures.
- Sharing of calendars, schedules, and activity.
- Systematic use of electronic document management systems, to ensure work is easily accessible.
- Being flexible about flexible working – to ensure that no individuals are disadvantaged by the choices of others, e.g., in providing office cover or attending meetings.
- Signposting availability for phone contact or online discussion.
- Fairness and consideration in use of space when in the office.
- Attending meetings in the office where this is required. Switching cameras on during virtual meetings.

Meetings need to be considered as to whether they are necessary, their frequency and also form – when is it best to do in-person or via Teams or 'just' via telephone. In reaching decisions about holding meetings, attention should always be given to the cumulative effects of meetings, and the need to reduce our requirement for office space and to reduce the need to travel. Physical meetings could be reserved for important collaborative work involving activities, team building, relationship building and activity that would be better suited to the needs of our customer.

In-person activity

Trying to strike the balance of blended working will be an evolving process, particularly when returning from a period of full virtual working. Whilst the increase of flexibility will provide many benefits such as better work life balance in removing the need to travel, we need to ensure that we do not lose sight of the importance of the human factor and the benefits of meeting colleagues face to face. To assist this please consider:

- Team communication/working protocols - It is important to develop protocols within teams about communication and how to work effectively to maintain team cohesion. When working in different locations and at different times, social relationships are important and need to be maintained and appropriate online and offline mechanisms need to be developed. This will require flexibility and commitment to teams coming together in person and a greater sharing of schedules, calendars, activity and appointments with colleagues and managers and updating about work-in progress.
- Keeping in Touch (KIT) Meetings –A blend of alternating between virtual and non-virtual KIT meetings should be undertaken. It will also be likely that face-to-face KIT meetings

are necessary during probationary periods to help colleagues build relationships with managers and other colleagues.

- Recruitment & On-boarding – Successful recruitment and on-boarding is essential in ensuring that new colleagues feel connected to GC from the outset, it is also a critical to helping retain talent in the organisation and requires time and investment to get it right. Where the recruitment process has different stages of interviews, managers should undertake final interviews in-person. Care should be taken during the interview process to ensure candidates are aware of GC's blended working arrangements, this means that they will not be dedicated home workers and will need to be in a position where they can easily commute to the office in line with business requirements. Managers should endeavour to meet new colleagues face to face during the induction process. The use of buddying and mentoring schemes for new colleagues, alongside regular team meetings, are also a useful way to welcome new colleagues into the team.

- Office bases – due to the requirement for roles to have some in person activity the office base which has been assigned to your contract of employment will remain. New colleagues will have an office base assigned which is the office they would most likely be expected to travel to. Expenses for travel to and from your home and normal office location cannot be claimed, however travel to other locations can be claimed in the normal way.

- A non-specific office base location will be assigned only to those colleagues that carry out peripatetic roles.

- Commuting to work for in-person activity is not classed as working time. Colleagues will need to consider this if they are attending the workplace for a meeting and decide whether it is more sensible to attend the workplace for a full day or half a day.

- Virtual Training Courses – Many of these can be successfully delivered via virtual means. Participants should be visible in training contributing and sharing with colleagues to provide greater cross-collaboration and interactive learning.

- Team Meetings – Teams could agree a minimum of meetings to be attended in person throughout the course of a year to ensure teams are able to collaborate in person (e.g., every other or third meeting).

- Blended Meetings – Care should be taken to make sure that everyone feels involved in meetings whether they attend in person or virtually. Attending virtual meetings should not be a downgraded experience. Being visible when attending meetings virtually enables greater collaboration.

Flexible Working Requests and Our Working Way

There is a distinct difference between 'Our Working Way' and Flexible Working requests. Our working way empowers flexibility over when, how and where you work to suit the needs of the service and our customers. However, if there is a business need to work in a certain way, for

example to come into the office to attend a meeting when you had planned to work from home or a contractual requirement to run a service in a particular way, then this will determine your working.

A flexible working request is a process recognised in law which allows qualifying employees to request a specific contractual pattern of working, whether this be on a temporary or permanent basis. Under the legislation, GC is not obliged to grant a request, but must consider it and provide organisational reasons if it refuses. The law requires the applicant to make a case showing that the proposed new working arrangements are workable and will not adversely affect the organisation.

The Growth Company's policy for [flexible working](#) sets out guidelines in respect of this legislation.

Inevitably, there will be some roles which will have greater flexibility than others in how and where its activities are carried out. Whilst we will look at wider working methods to see how we can attain some flexibility across the whole of GC, there will be some roles where virtual/home-based working is not possible.

'Our Working Way' will not affect an employee's individual statutory rights, it enables a wider perspective and positive conversation as to where, when and how activity is successfully undertaken.

Environmental sustainability

One of the drivers to 'Our Working Way' is aligned to our environmental sustainability commitments which includes our carbon footprint.

Becoming a sustainable organisation is not just about complying with standards. It involves changing behaviours and assumptions about how and where we work. Unnecessary travelling equates to thousands of miles each year.   Challenging the way that our activity is carried out can reduce the need for travel in some circumstances using technology.

The decisions we make on a daily basis about where we work, where we expect our colleagues to work, and the ways in which we communicate, can impact the need for travel, our energy consumption and consumption of physical resources.

Appendix 1 - Resource Booking System

As we increase our 'Our Working Way' it is important to ensure that space utilisation is maximised. Most frequently this will be best conducted locally via self-organisation within service delivery teams in local offices. In addition to this, where we have more multi-service use and larger spaces, GC will operate a resource booking system for colleagues to book a workspace or meeting room in:

- Lee House & Broadhurst
- Warren Bruce Court
- Longsight

Embedded in this resource booking system are the following principles:

COVID Secure Declaration
Our offices have been adapted with COVID related safety measures to mitigate the risk of infection and spreading for yours, our clients' and partners' safety. The approach outlined will remain in place until further notice.

Where a desk or meeting room/training room has been made using the booking system, you will be asked to complete a COVID-19 declaration 24 hours prior to your visit. The declaration will be a reminder of the current known symptoms of COVID-19 and for you to declare via a simple tick box that you are not displaying any of these symptoms prior to entering the workplace. In the event that you are displaying any of the known symptoms and have a positive test, we would kindly ask you not to come into the workplace and cancel your booking so that others can utilise the space.

Desk Booking

- Desks can be booked four weeks in advance.
- If a desk has been booked and is no longer required, colleagues <u>must</u> cancel their booking.
- Where a desk has been booked, you will receive a QR code via email to your email address which you will need to use to check into your desk upon arrival to the workspaces (desk checking screens are wall mounted and located inside of each door entry to the workspaces which will be labelled "Desk Checking Screen"). To make checking as easy as possible and avoid queues forming, we would advise colleagues to take a picture of the QR code on a mobile device so that you can locate this quickly upon arrival to display to the checking screen. If a desk is not checked in after 30

minutes of the booking time, the booking will be automatically cancelled and released for others to book.

- It is the responsibility of the organiser/host to ensure that all spaces used are cleared of any personal or professional items when vacated, including used crockery.
- To maintain security, laptops and mobile phones should be locked if stepping away from the desk and any sensitive documentation is secured in a locker.
- Do not claim a desk space for a whole day when you know you will be in meeting rooms or away for several hours.
- If a desk or other work area is to be left unoccupied for more than two hours, the desk should be cleared, and the booking cancelled so that it can be used by others.
- Modified workstations will be available for people who require them. These workstations can be used by others however, colleagues who require adapted workstations will have priority, therefore they must be made available when needed.
- Care should be taken to have private and confidential conversations where they cannot be overheard. This can include moving into a meeting room if available or a quiet area in the office.
- Lockers will be available for day use only unless a colleague is present in the office on consecutive days. Locker keys will be available from reception and must be returned when no longer required.

Meeting room/ Training Room Bookings

- Bookings for meeting/ training rooms can be booked 12 months in advance.
- If a meeting room/ training room has been booked and is no longer required, colleagues must cancel their booking.
- Designated Training room bookings will be prioritised to those who are delivering client facing training. Bookings can be requested online for these types of rooms which will require confirmed booking authorisation by the localised room co-ordinators.
- Where a meeting room/ training room has been booked and not checked in after 15 minutes after the booking time, the booking will be automatically cancelled and released so that the resource will be made available for others to book.
- It is the responsibility of colleagues using the space to ensure that all space used (collaborative space, meeting room, training room) are cleared of any personal or professional items when vacated.
- To maintain security, laptops and mobile phones should be locked away if the room is to be left unoccupied and any sensitive documentation secured in a locker.
- Meetings rooms should be booked in accordance with the meeting group size e.g., smaller groups should book smaller rooms to allow the larger rooms to be retained for larger groups
- Regular monitoring of appropriate use and cancellation of space will be undertaken.

<u>How bookings can be made</u>

To book a meeting room/ training room or desk resource this can be done by simply browsing the my apps page on your company laptop (https://myapps.growthco.uk/) or on any other device by browsing to https://app.matrixbooking.com/ whilst entering your company email address and then selecting "Log in with SSO" where you will be prompted to login with your network password to access the booking system.

Appendix 2 - Working Remotely

<u>Time spent working at home</u>

As some colleagues may be working more regularly from home, it is important that the home working environment is set up properly, with a workspace and appropriate chair. More information can be found under "healthy working". In general, however, the evidence is that working from home does not carry substantial additional risk, and where it reduces travel, it plays a part in reducing risk. Even so, it is necessary for everyone to be aware of the regulations that need to be observed and how to optimise their remote workspace ergonomically.

When working at home, colleagues should be fully contactable and able to connect to all office systems, processes, and meetings. Colleagues should be aware that working at home is not a fixed arrangement or entitlement, it should be used to maximise overall performance (including commissioner requirements) and personal wellbeing. It should not be used to substitute childcare or caring responsibilities as productivity needs to be maintained and there may be a requirement to attend the office at short notice. If you have an emergency caring responsibility which requires you to work from home in the short-term, please speak to your manager. Working from home can also be removed if service delivery changes or where there is a concern that homeworking is having a negative effect on performance.

When working from home, whilst we may feel we have greater opportunity to have more open conversations than in an office environment, we must still be aware of our requirements under GDPR and data protection. Always be aware of who is around you. Whilst you trust your family members to not repeat details of conversations they may have overheard, we need to give colleagues, clients, customers, shareholders etc confidence that only the required people are party to such discussions. We should therefore have the same professional standards for meetings at home as we do when we are in an office location. Colleagues must also read and familiarise themselves with the Remote and Blended Working Policy.

Remote working outside of the UK

Offshore access to GC's network and applications is restricted and controlled to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of our systems. This is to safeguard against the following (please note this is not an exhaustive list):

- To protect against possible cyber security threats from foreign source countries.
- To fulfil contractual terms and conditions that limit processing and collecting of personal and confidential data within UK jurisdiction and shores.
- Possible health and safety and insurance implications for staff and the assets of the organisation.

For these reasons, to ensure security of GC's systems, offshore access will not be permitted. We do acknowledge that there are business needs where certain people within the organisation will require access when undertaking foreign travel in line with the requirements of their role. In such circumstances, colleagues will be required to complete the overseas travel form located on the marvel self-service portal providing details of their travel arrangements. Managing Director authorisation is required. The IT team will then undertake a risk assessment to establish if approval can be provided.

Where access is approved, this will be limited to the location and duration of travel. IT reserves the right to reject an application if the risk is considered too high and, can remove access if risk thresholds increase during the time of travel.

Colleagues must read and familiarise themselves with the Access Control Policy and the Mobile Device and Remote Access Policy.

Working on the move
In addition to home working and GC office space, employees may carry out their work in other places such as clients' work premises, cafes, libraries etc.

Where colleagues are working from external spaces, they need to be able to do this safely and maintain data security.

The main issues with working on the move are to do with security, confidentiality, safety, and health. These areas are covered in more detail under the "Data security" and "Healthy Working" sections of this handbook. Colleagues must also read and familiarise themselves with the Remote and Blended Working Policy.

Appendix 3 - Technology

With the right technology, people can work just as well away from the office when performing activities that are not better suited to an in-person style.

Wi-fi access has been set up across the business to enable mobile working. Access to the network can also be gained from hot desks and touch down areas equipped with yellow network cables.

If you are working remotely and have a company mobile phone, the safest connection is to tether to your company mobile telephone. (Using mobile tethering each user as standard has a 3GB internet connection limited which for general use is sufficient, however if do receive a data usage limit warning please contact the IT Technical Service Centre where they will be able to increase your allowance). External wireless hotspots such as hotels, conference centres and public buildings can also be accessed providing the necessary security standards are met such as:

- Only pick and use secure use wireless networks that are known to the place you are visiting and only attach to these that are secured by password to access the internet (this is commonly displayed by a padlock symbol when choosing the necessary Wi-Fi network). It's best to stick to hotspots where the provider—be it a conference, hotel, or coffee shop—provides you with a clear network to choose from, plus a password to grant access. Then you know at least you're on the network you're meant to be using and that it is secure.
- Do not attach your device to any unknown wireless networks that are not password protected – hackers commonly advertise wireless connectivity with no password to lure people into a false sense of security so that they can start to carry out security attacks.
- Do not leave your device unattended in any public place.
- Always be aware of your surroundings especially in the protection of who can see your screen and the work you are undertaking. In the industry this is known as 'shoulder surfers' where someone will sit in a place that is visible of your screen to see what you are doing. In public places we would advise not to open anything that is commercially or personally confidential data.

Colleagues accessing the network via such external Wi-Fi hotspots should be mindful of information security and confidentiality when working on the move.

A technology and equipment recommendation list of what is available is below. This provides a guide to managers and teams when they begin to think about the type of technology needed.

- Laptop 14inch
- Laptop 15 Inch Device (larger display screen and has separate numerical keys for those roles that undertake lots of numerical work)
- External Monitor
- External Monitor stand
- Laptop riser
- Wireless keyboard and mouse
- Skype for business/Teams Headset
- Skype for business/Teams telephone number (to make and receive calls)
- Mobile handset (for those roles that require agility on the move)

However, this list illustrates the technology and equipment needed for "office-type" roles only. It is recognised that technology needs to be appropriate to the role being undertaken. Colleagues need to be able to work comfortably as well as productively and therefore the technology and equipment needs of the team will need to be discussed between individuals and their managers. Needs will largely depend on the activity undertaken and individual health and safety requirements.

If working from home, colleagues are responsible for ensuring they have an appropriate broadband connection and / or phone reception to enable them to work effectively. Employees should note that inadequate signal and access problems may result in home working not being an option.

Appendix 4 - Data Security

Maintaining the security of the information we work with is vital and those working away from a Growth Company office are responsible for the security of the data they keep and should comply with all relevant legislation, just as if they were working in a fixed office environment. Principally:

- Confidential or sensitive conversations/ work should not be carried out whilst in any public areas. We need to ensure we are providing confidence to others that we are protecting their conversation as well as their data. Even when working from home, be aware of family members who may be in ear shot of your conversation. The use of headphones can support such confidential conversations.
- Other individuals (including family members) should not have any access to personal data either on paper or as electronic records.
- All printed or other paper records must be safely locked away when not in use.
- Confidential waste should be disposed of in the normal way. If confidential waste bags are required, colleagues should contact the Facilities Team.

- Before any agile working arrangement is put in place, managers should discuss how confidential and sensitive conversations/work will be handled in an agile environment.
- Each service will be different, and consideration needs to be given to any relevant legislation or government guidance.
- If sending external emails, any encryption tools introduced by IT must be utilised to protect these emails.
- If working in a public place be mindful who can see your computer screen or mobile device screen and remember during calls be discreet and sensitive as other people around you, will be able to hear your conversations.
- Ensure you remain up to date you are required to undertake annual Information Governance Training and should make sure you are familiar with the Data Protection and associated policies on handling data and information security etc. which can be found here.
- The obligations of all employees to ensure that information is handled correctly and not used for personal benefit or gain.

Certain conversations should not be held in an open plan office if others can hear that conversation. Colleagues must take a sensible approach and use meetings rooms if available or a quiet area in these situations. Whatever approach is taken it is vital that colleagues are made aware of and trained in good information management and security practice.

To ensure you remain up to date you are required to undertake regular information governance training and should make sure you are familiar with, and understand, your obligations that relate to the Data Protection and Information Security policies, which can be found here.

Appendix 5 - Healthy Working

GC is committed to supporting and promoting the health and well-being of colleagues. A suite of health and safety policies, risk assessments and guidance are available, and it is important that colleagues understand the implications of these. These documents can be found on the intranet.
The guidance below covers some key areas that you may need to address.

Home/ workspace

If you are working from home, then your comfort and safety is just as important as it is when working in an office. Using laptops for prolonged periods in an office or home office environment requires the use of a laptop stand and/or additional properly positioned screen, with a separate keyboard and mouse. It is best if there is a separate room to work in at home and that it can be closed off from the rest of the house if needed. For people working regularly from home, a health and safety risk assessment must be carried out to ensure main risks of

home working are identified. It is important that this is considered before any arrangements are put in place.

<u>Health and Safety at Home</u>

There are no specific health and safety regulations when working at home; all the provisions that apply in the workplace apply wherever an employee is working.

Particular regulations to consider include:

- Display screens.
- Heating, lighting, and ventilation.
- Workplace ergonomics.
- Electrics, cabling, and trip hazards.
- Working time.
- Lifting and carrying equipment.
- Security, including data security.
- Safety of third parties, including family members.

You need to have a workstation that meets the minimum requirements of the Health and Safety (Display Screen) Regulations 1992. The only time that you should ever work without a proper set up would be when you are working for a very short length of time usually under an hour at a touchdown space etc.

<u>Workplace Assessment</u>
When a colleague joins the company, and annually thereafter, they will be required to carry out a workplace self-assessment. Colleagues can follow instructional guidance provided by the Health and Safety team on how to set up a safe workplace. This information and form can be found within the <u>Health and Safety section on Our Working Way hub</u>. The assessment once submitted will be kept on record. Where a colleague has a medical condition, requires specialist equipment, or requires advice on a safe workplace they can contact the H&S department who will undertake an individual assessment and make recommendations to the line manager.

<u>Mental Health</u>

We need to be aware of peoples' mental health as much as their physical health when working away from other colleagues. Colleagues may feel isolated which can impact on their general health and their performance. Regular meetings between managers and colleagues should take place with such issues being a key part of those discussions to ensure we identify issues early and can look at what support may be required. There is further

information and support available for both colleagues and managers in these situations [on 'Our Working Way' hub](#).

Taking Regular Breaks / planning in leave

Working from home can bring difficulties in separating work activities from home life and lead to a continuous intense working pattern. It is important that regular breaks are planned into working hours, whether this be to do other work (make some calls and walk around to get the circulation going and give your eyes a rest, get some fresh air/ exercise or simply to have some time away from the screen. Colleagues should also ensure they use their annual leave throughout the year to plan in regular breaks away from work.

Before adopting any change to working practices, be aware that colleagues may worry about issues such as:
• Being isolated
• Loss of personal space in the office
• Difficulties with time management
• Loss of team spirit or team effectiveness
• Dealing with technology and getting appropriate levels of support when working remotely
• Intrusion of work into home life
• 24/7 working
• Managing performance
• Loss of opportunities for career progression or training

The evidence from implementing flexible/agile working is that many more problems are anticipated than arise and that once any initial problems are overcome, most people appreciate the greater flexibility and autonomy that agile working can bring. (Reference: [Flexibility.co.uk](#))

All the same, problems can occur. It is the responsibility of teams to look out for each other, and for managers of dispersed teams to spot problems and resolve them before they become major issues. These may be teased out through regular informal conversations.

If necessary, the manager and team member can agree an alternative work style. It is about finding the right work style for the individual, that meets the desired work outcomes, and providing the appropriate support to overcome the problem. The aim in moving to agile working is to create the context in which teams can operate more dynamically and have better physical and online spaces in which to interact. Though they may no longer sit next to one another, the new technologies and team protocols should allow much more effective sharing of work and enable team members to communicate more effectively than before. In this way, agile working can also support more effective cross-team working when undertaken alongside in-person activity.

Appendix 6   Personal Safety

When working in an agile way we want you to be as safe as possible when out and about. Here are some simple examples of precautions you can take to keep yourself safe when carrying your agile equipment in public:

- Keep bags fastened and out of view: if it is open an opportunist thief is more likely to see what you have and take it.
- Avoid listening to music on headphones whilst walking alone. Keep to well-lit, busy areas.
- Make sure no one is loitering too close to you or following you if so, make it known that you are aware of the individual and move away from unpopulated areas.
- Never leave your bag, mobile, tablet or laptop unattended in public view, even if you are going to the toilet.
- Do not keep all your valuables in one place. Instead place items such as wallets and mobile phones in inside pockets
- Avoid talking on your mobile whilst walking home at night alone and keep to well-lit, busy areas.
- Be careful when using it outside train and bus stations which are popular venues for theft, often by motorcycle or moped.
- Keep items of value hidden from view and not in your back pockets.
- Do not be over-protective of your belongings or the company provided items. If you are a victim of theft (and the chances are exceptionally low) please do not put yourself at risk. If you are in a dangerous situation leave your possessions and seek help in the nearest safe place and report to the police.
- Use a personal safety application on your phone that you can alert someone that you are in trouble.

Appendix 7 - Remote Learning

To continue promoting agility in our ways of working, we will continue to offer online/remote learning. Where this is the case, we are asking colleagues to:

- Always switch on your camera and microphone so that the trainer and other attendees can interact with you during the course and breakout activities.
- Do not have any personal items including items with personal details held on them, in sight when you have your camera on

- Try to actively participate in exercises and discussions as much as possible.
- Arrive promptly for your training course.

To ensure the protection of information and to maintain discretion, please remember: if personal information is shared during the course, it should remain confidential.

Appendix 8 - Personal Considerations

As stated above, all forms of home working, whether ad hoc, full time or part time, will be voluntary, in line with business requirements and by the mutual agreement between the employee and the line manager.

It is important that colleagues recognise the opportunities and challenges of working from home before this is agreed with your line manager.
Key considerations include:

- Caring or childcare responsibilities.
- A reduction in commuting time and costs.
- The suitability of the home environment.
- Insurance implications.
- Employee contractual changes.
- A potential increase in household bills.
- Tax relief.
- Household bills*
- Rental and/or mortgage agreements.
- Broadband and/or line rental agreements including speed of connectivity.
- Family members.
- Health and Safety considerations.

The guidance below covers some further detail that you may need to consider:

*Household bills - GC will not make any contribution for household bills. This includes, but is not limited to, broadband, heating, lighting, water, landline connection, etc. Although financial assistance will not be provided, colleagues may find that they are still financially better off when considering the cost of commuting, clothing and food/drink purchases.

Claiming tax relief

You may be able to claim tax relief for additional household costs and should look at the HMRC Website - claiming tax relief for information relating to this.

Appendix 9 - Facilities and Equipment

Technology Equipment

It is necessary for colleagues to have the right facilities to work from home. GC will provide appropriate equipment and technology such as laptops, screens, mobile phone (equipment required to carry out their role and responsibilities). However, employees must ensure they have an adequate mobile phone reception and internet connection to allow them to work seamlessly from home. Tethering from mobile hotspots when working from home, should only be used in exceptional circumstances

Internet and Broadband

Colleagues are advised to contact their internet provider to ensure that the terms and conditions of their internet/broadband package cover provision of internet connection for business use at home. Internet provision companies may differ in their stance regarding this.

Equipment - Furniture

Should you require other equipment such as special chairs or desks, this must be identified as part of a workplace assessment (please refer to section on page 15). Equipment will only be provided on this basis. Equipment must not be removed from the office for use at home or another office location.

Appendix 10 - Travel

When carrying out any work-related travel, mileage must be calculated as if travel was being made to and from the office unless your employment terms and conditions state otherwise. More detail can be found within the Travel and Expenses policy.

Commute time to and from work, must not be factored into your daily working hours. This has always been done in your own time and will continue as such. In situations where you are only spending a proportion of your day in the office, if you choose to travel home part way through your working day, the commute time does not form part of your working day and therefore any time must be added onto the end of the day.

Travel costs to and from your allocated office cannot be claimed in any event. This includes but is not limited to, situations where you may be attending a meeting or training, or where you are required to travel to the office to use GC office equipment or collect equipment/ IT kit.

Appendix 11 - Insurance

The Growth Company's existing Employers Liability insurance is not limited to covering a particular place or building and there are no exclusions or limitations in cover for colleagues working at home or on the go.

However, it is important to ensure that reasonable care and precautions have been taken to minimise accident, injury, loss, or damage and this should be done before any ways of working change. The relevant health and safety policies and risk assessments should be undertaken to ensure that precautions have been satisfied.

In terms of personal motor insurance, employees are reminded that if they use their private vehicle for work, they should have the appropriate level of insurance that includes business use on behalf of The Growth Company.

Employee Insurance
If colleagues are undertaking any type of home working, it is advisable that they notify their own household insurance that they intend to work from home as it could affect the terms of their own insurance.

Some household insurance providers may charge an additional premium if homes are used for business purposes. Each insurer has its own view to business use at home and the Growth Company will not provide any allowance for personal household insurance.

Colleagues who are considering working from home on a regular or ad hoc basis are required to check that no restrictions apply in mortgage or tenancy agreements.

If you need any further guidance you can refer to the following:

- Our Working Way Hub
- Your line manager
- HR Service Desk
- IT
- Data Protection Officer
- Learning and Development

Who to contact for further information

Health and Safety
Eddie Copeland - Group Health and Safety Manager
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