

WEST LIMERICK INDEPENDENT LIVING CLG

Clean Desk and Clear Workspace Policy

Policy Reference	WLILP28
Category	Operational Policies — Information Security
Version	3.1 (CCTV cross-reference to WLILP7A added)
Status	APPROVED — by the Board of Directors on 9 October 2026
Supersedes	WLILP28 - CLEAN DESK POLICY (issued Jun 2018, reviewed Apr 2025); WLILP28 - CLEAN DESK POLICY redraft (unapproved, Sept 2025)
Policy Owner	Board of Directors, West Limerick Independent Living CLG
Applies To	All employees, in all workspaces — office, remote, and mobile/field settings
Related Policies	WLILP7A - Data Protection Policy; WLILP39 - Digital Communications & Social Media Policy; WLILP51 - Emergency Remote Working Policy
Review Cycle	Every 2 years, or sooner if legislation or working arrangements change

1. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy is to foster a culture of security, confidentiality and trust among all employees of West Limerick Independent Living CLG ("WLIL"). An effective clean desk approach, supported by every employee, protects paper documents and devices containing sensitive information about clients, staff and stakeholders, and supports WLIL's compliance with data protection legislation.

This policy covers documents and notes, but also post-its, business cards, and removable media (USB drives, CDs, memory sticks). It applies to all employees and to all workspaces — not just desks in WLIL's offices, but remote workstations at home and mobile setups used while working in the community or in a client's home.

2. Legislative and Regulatory Framework

This policy is informed by the following legislation and guidance:

- Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) — the primary legal basis for this policy: paper records, notes and devices left unsecured are a data protection risk in the same way an unsecured digital file is, and this policy is one of the physical safeguards expected under GDPR's security principle
- Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023 — gives employees the right to request remote working arrangements. Because WLIL must accommodate such requests, this policy's scope extends beyond the office to cover remote and home workstations, not just desks on WLIL premises
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 — supports the general workplace safety rationale for a tidy desk: reduced trip hazards, spills, and clutter-related accidents

- HIQA Draft National Standards for Home Support Services (2024) — relevant where Personal Assistants handle or carry client-related paperwork while providing support in a client's home; the same clean desk principles apply to that paperwork as to office-based records

3. Policy Statement

WLIL is committed to ensuring that all employees maintain a clean and organised workspace — wherever that workspace is — as an essential part of safeguarding data security and protecting personal and confidential information. WLIL does not expect this policy to be implemented in a heavy-handed way, but expects employees to live within its spirit.

4. Requirements — Office Workspaces

- At known extended periods away from your desk, such as a lunch break, sensitive working papers must be placed in locked drawers, and computer workstations must be locked
- Computer workstations must be shut down completely at the end of the working day
- Any Highly Restricted or Sensitive WLIL information must be removed from the desk and locked away when the desk is unoccupied and at the end of the working day
- File cabinets containing Highly Restricted or Sensitive information must be kept closed and locked when not attended
- Keys for access to Highly Restricted or Sensitive information must not be left at an unattended desk
- Laptops must be locked with a locking cable or locked away in a drawer
- Passwords must never be left on sticky notes on or under a computer, or written down anywhere accessible
- Printouts containing Highly Restricted or Sensitive information must be removed from the printer immediately
- Highly Restricted and/or Sensitive documents must be shredded on disposal
- At the end of the working day, employees must tidy their desk and put away all office papers; locking desks and filing cabinets are provided for this purpose
- All cups, plates and similar items must be removed from desk areas

WLIL operates CCTV at its office premises for the security of staff, visitors and property. This policy covers keeping the physical workspace itself secure; the legal basis, signage, access, retention and data-subject rights for that CCTV are set out in WLILP7A - Data Protection Policy, Section 11, which this policy does not restate.

5. Requirements — Remote and Mobile Working

Where an employee works remotely or carries paperwork or devices while supporting a client in the community, the same clean desk principles apply, adapted to that setting:

- Devices must be locked or logged off whenever left unattended, even briefly, at home or elsewhere
- Sensitive papers or devices must never be left visible or accessible in a parked vehicle
- Client-related paperwork carried while providing support must be kept with the employee or securely stored, never left unattended in a client's home or a public place
- Home workstations should be positioned, where practicable, so that screens are not visible to other household members or visitors during confidential work

- Printouts made at home must be stored and disposed of with the same care as those made in the office, including secure shredding or return to WLIL premises for disposal

6. Reduction in the Amount of Paper Used

This policy is also designed to help reduce the amount of paper WLIL uses, which in turn reduces spend on paper, toner and cartridges, and the amount of filing space required. Staff should not rely on printouts as a backup against losing information — information should instead be backed up to the server as and when required.

7. Tips for a Tidy Desk

- Allocate time in your calendar to clear away your paperwork
- Always clear your desktop before you go home, including removing cups, dishes and glasses
- Always clear your workspace before leaving for longer periods of time
- Consider scanning paper items and filing them electronically
- Avoid printing off emails to read them — this generates unnecessary clutter
- Go through the items on your desk and remove anything you no longer need
- Handle any piece of paper only once: act on it, file it, or bin it
- If in doubt about whether a duplicate of a sensitive document should be kept, it is usually better to shred it
- Lock away portable computing devices such as laptops or tablets
- Lock your desk and filing cabinets at the end of the day
- Treat mass storage devices such as USB drives as sensitive, and secure them in a locked drawer
- Use the recycling bins for office paper that is no longer required and does not need shredding

8. Compliance and Enforcement

Adherence to this policy is a shared responsibility, and all staff must integrate its requirements into their daily routine, wherever they are working. Any employee found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

9. Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if data protection legislation, HIQA standards, or WLIL's working arrangements change.

Legislative references are checked as accurate as of this policy's drafting date. This policy is not a substitute for legal advice.

Approval

Approved by the Board of West Limerick Independent Living CLG on 9 October 2026.
Signed on behalf of the Board, on its instruction, by the General Manager:

Margaret O'Connor

Margaret O'Brien O'Connor, General Manager

Date signed: *09-10-2026*