

WEST LIMERICK INDEPENDENT LIVING CLG

Work-Life Balance, Flexible and Remote Working Policy

Policy Reference	WLILP73
Category	Operational Policies — HR & Employee Relations
Version	1.0 (new policy)
Status	APPROVED — by the Board of Directors on 9 October 2026
Supersedes	The Work Life Balance Policy section of the WLIL Employee Handbook, which now refers to this policy.
Policy Owner	Board of Directors, West Limerick Independent Living CLG
Applies To	All employees of West Limerick Independent Living CLG ("WLIL"). It is mainly relevant to office-based roles.
Related Policies	WLILP56 – Grievance Policy; WLILP55 – Disciplinary Policy; WLILP29 – Information Systems and Cloud Access Control Policy; WLILP39 – Digital Communications and Social Media Policy; WLILP47 – Confidentiality and Information Sharing Policy; WLILP50 – Travel and Subsistence Policy; WLILP7D – Data Retention Policy; Payroll and Expenses Policy; Safety Statement
Review Cycle	At least every two years, or sooner where legislation or the Code of Practice changes

1. Purpose

WLIL is committed to supporting work-life balance. This policy explains how employees can ask for flexible or remote working, how WLIL will consider requests, and how approved arrangements work. There is no automatic right to a flexible or remote working arrangement other than the statutory rights described below, and any arrangement must work for both WLIL and the employee. Approving or refusing one request does not set a precedent for other requests.

2. Legislative and Regulatory Framework

- Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023 (right to request flexible working and remote working)
- Parental Leave Acts 1998 to 2023
- WRC Code of Practice for Employers and Employees on the Right to Request Flexible Working and the Right to Request Remote Working
- Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005
- Organisation of Working Time Act 1997
- Employment Equality Acts 1998 to 2015 (including reasonable accommodation for disability)
- General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018

3. Scope

This policy applies to all employees. It is mainly relevant to office-based roles. Personal Assistants deliver their work in service users' homes, so remote working will rarely suit that role, but any employee may ask for a flexible arrangement (for example, reduced hours or a change of pattern), and each request will be considered individually and fairly. The banded hours system in a Personal Assistant's contract is not a flexible working arrangement; it is dealt with in the contract of employment, which also explains how to ask for a change of band.

4. Types of Request

- Statutory flexible working request: for employees who are parents (or acting in loco parentis) of a child under 12 (or under 16 if the child has a disability or illness), or who provide or will provide personal care or support to a specified person who needs significant care or support for a serious medical reason. Specified persons are the employee's child, spouse or civil partner, cohabitant, parent, grandparent or sibling, or another person who lives in the same household.
- Statutory remote working request: open to any employee.
- Other flexible working requests: any employee may ask for a flexible arrangement for other reasons. WLIL will consider these in the same way, but the statutory rights do not apply.

Flexible working means a working arrangement in which an employee's hours or pattern of work are adjusted, including through remote working, flexible schedules or reduced hours. Examples WLIL may consider are: part-time working (fewer hours than full-time); flexi-time (varying start and finish times outside core hours while completing the contracted weekly hours); and compressed hours (full-time hours worked over fewer days).

Remote working means that some or all of the work normally done at WLIL's place of business is done at another location without a change to the employee's ordinary hours or duties. It can mean working from home, hybrid working (partly in the office and partly remote), or using an approved co-working or hub location. Home means the employee's residential address in their normal tax residence as recorded on WLIL's systems. It does not include a second or holiday home, a holiday location, a café or other establishment. Remote working is not intended to provide childcare or to allow tasks that would not normally be done during the working day. Employees travelling on WLIL business may work from airports, hotels and similar places while keeping security and confidentiality.

5. Eligibility

An employee may make a request from the first day of employment, but an approved arrangement cannot begin until the employee has completed six months' continuous employment. If an employee leaves and is re-employed within 26 weeks, their earlier service counts as continuous.

In deciding a request, WLIL may take into account whether the employee has completed probation, their performance and conduct record, and whether the role is suitable for the arrangement. For remote working, WLIL may also consider whether the employee can work independently, manage their workload, resolve new pressures that remote working creates, and keep in contact with their manager and colleagues. These are factors in the decision and not preconditions to making a request. They do not reduce any right under the legislation or the Code of Practice, which apply where they differ from this policy.

6. How to Apply

Requests must be in writing, made as soon as reasonably practicable and at least 8 weeks before the proposed start date, using the form available from the General Manager or the Office Administrator and sent to the General Manager.

A flexible working request must state the form of flexible working requested, the proposed start date and the proposed duration. For caring purposes, the employee must also give details of the person the request relates to and the relationship: for a child, a copy of the child's birth certificate or certificate of placement from a registered adoption agency or Tusla; for a specified person, the nature of the significant care or support and either a medical certificate signed by a registered medical practitioner stating that the person needs significant care or support for a serious medical reason, or such other evidence as WLIL may reasonably require.

A remote working request must state the proposed remote working location, start date, number and timing of remote days, expiry date (if any), the employee's reasons, and the date of any previous remote working request. The employee must also confirm that:

- the workstation is suitably equipped and configured for them to do the role to the required standard, and gives adequate privacy;
- the distance from the proposed location to WLIL's place of work is acceptable to WLIL;
- company data and intellectual property will be kept secure in line with WLIL policies;
- they will comply with their duties under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, agree to a risk assessment, and make no significant changes to the workstation without approval;
- they will comply with the data protection, confidentiality, IT, social media, email and intellectual property policies;
- the equipment and technology needed, and a secure internet connection, are available at the location (WLIL's IT support or management may assess this).

7. How WLIL Considers a Request

WLIL will consider each request objectively, fairly and reasonably, case by case, having regard to the business's needs, the employee's needs and the Code of Practice. WLIL will consider the suitability of the role and of the employee for the arrangement. Factors may include: eligibility; health and safety; the effect on other staff; the need for and effect on supervision; the employee's skills and ability; the suitability of the role; the costs; and the availability of staff resources. WLIL may ask the employee for more information in writing and may meet them to discuss the request.

A request may be approved in full, approved in part, approved on a temporary basis, approved in a modified form, or refused. If WLIL cannot approve the request as made, it will consider a feasible alternative with the employee.

8. Timelines and Decisions

- WLIL will reply as soon as reasonably practicable and no later than 4 weeks after receiving the request.
- If WLIL is having difficulty assessing the request, it may extend the period by up to a further 8 weeks, giving the employee written notice of the extension and how long it will be.
- If the request is approved, WLIL will prepare an agreement to be signed by WLIL and the employee. It will set out the arrangement, the start date, the end date for a trial or temporary arrangement, any review requirement for an indefinite arrangement, the frequency and days of remote working for hybrid arrangements, and any equipment or allowances.
- If the request is refused, WLIL will give written notice with the reasons within the same time limit.

9. Reasons a Request May Be Refused

WLIL may refuse a request for reasons including the following. The list is not exhaustive and each reason must be objective and relevant to the request.

- the nature of the work does not allow it to be done in the way requested;
- work cannot be reorganised among existing staff;
- a likely negative effect on the quality of the service or on the performance of the employee or others;
- the cost, having regard to the financial and other costs and WLIL's scale and resources;
- concerns about the protection of confidential information or intellectual property;
- concerns about the suitability of the workspace on health and safety or data protection grounds, or about internet connectivity;
- concerns about the distance between the remote location and the place of work;
- planned structural changes that would make any of the above apply;
- documented performance or conduct concerns that are relevant to whether the arrangement can work.

10. Appeal, Withdrawal and Complaints

An employee may appeal a refusal using WLILP56 – Grievance Policy. An employee may also refer a complaint about a breach of their statutory rights to the Workplace Relations Commission, within six months of the breach (extendable to 12 months for reasonable cause). The employee is not required to use the internal procedure first.

An employee may withdraw a request in writing before the agreement is signed. WLIL may treat a request as withdrawn if the employee does not provide requested information or does not attend a meeting to discuss it, and the time limit for WLIL's reply has passed. WLIL will acknowledge the withdrawal in writing. Where a request is withdrawn or refused, the employee may make a new request, following the same procedure and notice periods as any other request.

11. Approved Arrangements

- Trial period: every approved arrangement has an initial trial period of 3 months. Issues are raised early with the General Manager, and a review meeting is held at the end of the trial. A further trial period, an end to the arrangement or sign-off may follow.
- Flexibility: employees on flexible, remote or hybrid arrangements must stay flexible to meet business needs and may be required to attend training, meetings or events in person, even on a remote day.
- Changes: WLIL and the employee may agree in writing to postpone the arrangement or change its length or form. The employee may ask in writing to return to their original arrangement at any time, giving reasons and a proposed date. WLIL will reply in writing within 4 weeks, and may propose a different date. The employee is entitled to return to the arrangement they held immediately before.
- Illness: if the employee becomes ill or unable to provide the care the arrangement was approved for, they may give written notice, with a medical certificate or other reasonable evidence, to postpone the arrangement until they have recovered.
- Fitness to work alone: if a medical issue may affect remote working or fitness to work alone, WLIL may ask for medical evidence and for details of any accommodation needed, and may ask the employee to attend an occupational health specialist.
- Review: all arrangements are reviewed annually, which may be at the yearly appraisal.

12. Ending an Arrangement

WLIL may end an approved arrangement, before or after it starts, if it has or would have a substantial adverse effect on the business. Examples are seasonal variations in the volume of work, the unavailability of a person to do the employee's duties, the nature of the duties, the number of employees, or overlapping arrangements. Before giving notice, WLIL will write to the employee with the reasons, and the employee has 7 days to reply and give reasons for continuing. WLIL will consider the reply, and if it ends the arrangement it will give at least 4 weeks' written notice, stating the grounds and the date the employee must return to the original arrangement.

If WLIL has reasonable grounds to believe that an employee is misusing the arrangement or not meeting the requirements of their role, it may notify the employee in writing of the proposal to end the arrangement, with the reasons and the return date. The employee has 7 days to make representations. Misconduct or performance concerns during an arrangement may also be dealt with under WLILP55 – Disciplinary Policy.

13. Conditions of Remote Working

- Location: remote working is approved for a specific location in the Republic of Ireland that is within a commutable distance of WLIL's premises. A planned move must be discussed with and notified in writing to the General Manager beforehand.
- Access: by agreement, and on at least 48 hours' notice, WLIL may access the remote location to inspect the working environment for health and safety, to check security arrangements for electronic and physical data, and to collect files or equipment or reallocate work during long-term absence.
- Equipment: WLIL will review the systems and equipment needed to work safely and productively and will provide equipment that is essential to the job (such as a laptop, headset or mobile phone), but not secondary equipment such as printers or screens. Equipment remains WLIL's property. Employees must keep it password protected, use it only for its intended purpose, take reasonable care of it, store it safely, follow encryption and data protection standards, and not download suspicious, unauthorised or illegal software. WLIL may ask for its return, and the employee must return it within five days. See WLILP29 and WLILP39.
- Health and safety: the same standards apply as in the office. The employee must complete a self-assessment of the ergonomic suitability of the workspace with the request, take reasonable care of their own safety and that of others, attend health and safety training, use equipment safely, and keep working patterns from harming their health. WLIL will carry out appropriate risk assessments, and will extend the same adjustments and equipment already provided for an employee's disability to their remote workstation as far as reasonably practicable. Incidents must be reported promptly in line with WLILP30 – Incident Management and Reporting Policy.
- Confidentiality and data: confidentiality must be kept at all times and WLIL's IT and data protection policies continue to apply. Devices must not be lost or left unattended, must be kept updated and protected with strong passwords, multi-factor authentication and encryption where available, and must be locked or stored carefully when not in use. Use work email rather than personal email for work involving personal data, and check recipients before sending. Use only trusted networks and cloud services. Paper records must be kept secure and locked away, disposed of securely, and removed from a secure location only where strictly necessary, with a written record of what has been taken home. Extra care is needed with health data.
- Performance: before a remote arrangement starts, the employee and the General Manager will agree how performance will be managed, with criteria and feedback in the agreement.
- Meetings: in-person client meetings must not be held at the employee's home and the home address must not be given to stakeholders. Employees are expected to dress professionally for video meetings.

- Insurance, expenses and tax: employees should check with their home insurer that remote working does not affect their cover. Expenses are claimed under WLILP50 – Travel and Subsistence Policy and the Payroll and Expenses Policy. Employees may be able to claim tax relief on additional utility costs and should check the Revenue website.

14. Protection from Penalisation

WLIL will not penalise an employee for proposing to exercise, or for exercising, their right to request a flexible or remote working arrangement or to return to a previous arrangement.

15. Records

WLIL will keep a record of approved flexible and remote working arrangements for three years. Notices given or received by WLIL or the employee in connection with a request will be kept for one year. Records are handled in line with WLILP7D – Data Retention Policy.

16. Raising Concerns and Support

An employee with a concern about how a request was handled or about an arrangement can raise it informally with the General Manager, and if it is not resolved, may use WLILP56 – Grievance Policy. An employee who has any difficulty while working remotely should contact the General Manager straight away.

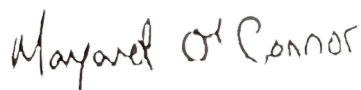
17. Review

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years, or sooner if legislation or the Code of Practice changes. Employees will be told of any amendments in writing or electronically.

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'Brien O'Connor, General Manager

Date signed:

