



An Garda Síochána

Policy Document

Blended Working

Effective Date	29 October 2024
Version No.	1
Approved by	Garda Executive
Introduced by	HQ Directive 081/2024
Policy Owner	Executive Director, HRPD

1. Purpose

An Garda Síochána is committed to being a workplace of choice, embracing opportunities for blended working, to build a more dynamic, agile and responsive public service, while sustaining strong standards of performance and high levels of productivity in order to *Keep People Safe*.

Our organisation must respond to the ever evolving needs and demands of the communities we serve, and ensure the agility of our workforce. By enhancing work practices, An Garda Síochána will support broader recruitment and retention initiatives. We will also augment the sustainability efforts across the organisation by reducing the burden on the Garda estate, and reducing our carbon footprint.

The key objectives of the Policy are to:

- Formulate a tailored approach to blended working that best meets the needs of both the organisation and Garda personnel;
- Facilitate blended working for Garda personnel where it is feasible to do so;
- Enhance productivity, innovation and employee engagement, by providing options for greater flexibility.

There are a number of broader impetuses for the introduction of blended working across the Public Sector, including:

- Supporting government, policies and commitments set out in the [Programme for Government](#);
- Promoting a diverse, innovative and progressive work environment that offers flexibility and values work-life balance;
- Delivering on commitments set out in the [National Remote Working Strategy, Our Rural Future](#), the [Climate Action Plan](#) and the [National Planning Framework](#);
- Meeting the requirements under Part 3 of the [Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023](#).

In addition to the Government commitments set out above, there have been substantial learnings from the move to blended working in An Garda Síochána resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Having considered the benefits, challenges, opportunities and risks, An Garda Síochána now requires a sustainable approach where personnel, in suitable roles, can work on a blended basis.



2. Scope

This Policy document and all associated documentation apply to all Garda Personnel, i.e. members of An Garda Síochána and Garda staff. It also applies to Police Officers from the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) seconded to An Garda Síochána in accordance with [Section 53, Garda Síochána Act 2005](#)¹ or any future amending legislation.

3. Policy Statement

Blended working refers to a combination of working from an employer's work premises, and working remotely.

- Garda personnel who are in a role eligible for, and are granted blended working arrangements, will be required to attend the office:
- at regular intervals and as needed (subject to reasonable notice, usually a minimum of 24 hours)
- if required, at a given time, notwithstanding their agreed schedule;
- on one designated mandatory attendance day for all personnel per week (excluding leave).

Personnel may be approved to work a blended arrangement **1, 2 or a maximum of 3 days** per week remotely. This will be regularly assessed by local management having regard to operational, organisational and team needs.

The maximum number of days for part-time workers will be dependent on work patterns and organisational need.

4. Eligibility

The availability and patterns of blended working will be based on operational needs and the suitability of the role at any particular point in time, and may be subject to change if operational needs dictate. The availability of a blended working arrangement for Garda personnel will be subject to eligibility requirements. All eligibility criteria, as set out, must be met before an application for blended working can be approved. The consideration of eligibility criteria must be undertaken by local management in line with the [Garda Decision Making Model](#).

¹ To be amended upon commencement of the Policing, Security & Community Safety Act 2024

4.1. Organisational Needs

The policing and security service must continue to be delivered to the highest of standards, and in an efficient and effective manner. Blended working arrangements cannot negatively impact on service delivery across policing, operational or business functions. The facilitation of blended working must be considered in terms of the flexibility that can be afforded while maintaining productivity levels at all times. Office attendance will be required for those working in a remote way, especially to support operational needs, team effectiveness and engagement. The need for team collaboration, on-site mentoring/coaching and onboarding will also be a factor in determining the eligibility for blended working.

In considering applications for blended working, supervisors will take cognisance of:

- Policing, operational, business and project demands;
- Potential costs to the organisation of the individual working remotely;
- The percentage of the team, and the total number of Garda personnel who are availing of or applying for blended working, against the operational need to have personnel on site.

4.2. Role Suitability

Given the nature of a policing organisation, blended working will not be applicable or available to all personnel. There are a wide variety of roles and responsibilities carried out by An Garda Síochána personnel, some of which will not be suited to blended working. Details of role suitability are available in the Blended Working Procedures.

4.3. Person Suitability

To be considered for approval, Garda personnel must have met certain criteria in terms of performance, attendance and an ability to work offsite in an unsupervised fashion. Details of person suitability are available in the Blended Working Procedures.

4.4. Remote Working Environment

All personnel wishing to avail of blended working must take reasonable care to ensure that the designated work space in the home is a safe environment.

Workspaces in the home that are being used for blended working must:

- Be a suitable space to work from, with enough workspace to accommodate the equipment or other materials supplied;



- Be suitable in terms heating, space, lighting and other factors for work environments;
- Provide for complete confidentiality and freedom from disturbances;
- Be easily secured to protect the integrity of any AGS equipment supplied.

Garda personnel submitting an application for blended working will be expected to engage with the relevant Head of Function or Divisional Officer (or Garda Personnel nominated on their behalf) to arrange for a Risk Assessment to be conducted (either by AGS directly or a third party appointed for that purpose).

Personnel who commenced blended working prior to the introduction of this policy may continue to do so on a maximum 3-day basis only, pending the outcome of a blended working location assessment following Policy publication.

5. Application

In assessing individual applications, supervisors will determine if the work assigned to the applicant meets the service delivery needs of An Garda Síochána, and each application will be considered on its individual circumstances.

Initial approval for blended working arrangements will be for a maximum 12-week trial period and will stipulate the terms of the trial. On completion of the trial period, a review will be conducted by the supervisor, and a recommendation made to the Head of Functional Area/Divisional Officer to either cease or continue the arrangement.

Reviews of the blended working arrangement will be made by the supervisor at 6 months following the initial commencement of the arrangement and again at 12 months. The arrangement will be reviewed annually thereafter.

Personnel who transfer to another area, or are promoted within their current area, must submit a new blended working application to the relevant supervisor.

5.1. Refusal

If an application is refused, a written explanation of the reasons for refusal must be provided. Refusals may be appealed to the relevant Head of Function/Divisional Officer (or manager one rank or grade higher than the approving manager where more senior).



5.2. Review

Where an application for blended working is refused, or where a decision is made to withdraw a blended working arrangement, the applicant may wish to request a review of the decision-making process. Before seeking a formal appeal, applicants will have an informal discussion with their manager in the first instance in relation to the reasons for refusal, and to explore whether there is an opportunity to resolve any issues identified. If the issues can be resolved, the manager can reassess the application and may amend their decision. If the issues cannot be resolved, the applicant may apply to the Blended Working Oversight Board to seek a formal appeal of the decision.

The full application, refusal and review processes, together with the relevant forms, are set out in in the associated Procedure document.

6. Compliance

Compliance with this Policy and its associated documents is mandatory for all Garda Personnel.

7. Related Documents

- [Blended Working Policy Framework for Civil Service Organisations](#)
- [Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023](#)
- [Code of Practice for Employers and Employees Right to Request Flexible Working and Right to Request Remote Working](#)
- [National Remote Working Strategy](#)
- [Our Rural Future](#)
- [Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023](#)
- [Climate Action Plan](#)
- [National Planning Framework](#)
- [Garda Decision Making Model](#)

8. Legal & Human Rights Screening

This document has been legal and Human Rights screened in terms of the respective obligations placed on An Garda Síochána for the subject area concerned.

9. Ethical Standards & Commitments



Every person working in An Garda Síochána must observe and adhere to the standards and commitments set out in the [Code of Ethics](#) for An Garda Síochána and uphold and promote this Code throughout the organisation.

10. Policy & Procedure Review

This document and associated Policy will be reviewed 12 months from its date of effect and every three years thereafter.

11. Disclaimer

This document is not intended to, nor does it represent legal advice to be relied upon in respect of the subject matter contained herein. This document is not to be used as a substitute for professional legal advice.

12. Policy & Procedure Document Feedback

Personal data shall only be processed for the purposes specified in this policy and within a clearly defined lawful basis under the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) ([\(EU\) 2016/679](#)) and the [Data Protection Acts 1988/2018](#). All necessary measures will be put in place to ensure personal data is kept safe and secure. Only authorised personnel shall have access to personal data. Only relevant personal data will be processed and will not be retained for longer than is necessary.

In respect of the personal data processing activities associated with this procedure, a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been completed in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation.