



COMMITTEE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
Room 284, Parliament Buildings, Stormont, Belfast BT4 3XX
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To: Shane McAteer, Clerk to the Committee for Finance and Personnel
From: Kevin Pelan, Clerk to the Committee for Social Development
Date: 21 March 2014
Subject: Inquiry into Flexible Working in the Public Sector in Northern Ireland.

At its meeting on the 20 March 2014, the Committee for Social Development agreed to forward a response from the Department for Social Development to the Committee for Finance and Personnel regarding its Inquiry into Flexible Working in the Public Sector in Northern Ireland.

Dr Kevin Pelan
Ext 21864

Enc.



Human Resources Division

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Dr Kevin Pelan
Clerk, Committee for Social Development
Northern Ireland Assembly
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Your Ref: 017/2011/2/SK

12 March 2014

Dear Kevin

Your correspondence of 12 February 2014 to DSD Private Office regarding Flexible Working in the Public Sector in Northern Ireland has been passed to me to respond.

The Department for Social Development (DSD) currently has approximately 7427 staff and the majority enjoy Flexitime schemes. Of these, 1706 staff also avail of alternative working patterns (AWP).

Applications for alternative working are considered in line with statutory guidelines and NICS policies and DSD strives to support AWP where there are business grounds for doing so.

There is a wide range of AWP's available under NICS Work-Life balance provisions including flexitime, compressed working hours, part-time, job-sharing, personalised hours, term-time working, home working and partial retirement. Although there is no central remote/home working policy across the NICS some provision exists within DSD. However, due to the ad hoc nature of these arrangements DSD does not record this information.

In order to facilitate home/remote working some DSD staff have been supplied with encrypted laptops and have the facility for secure remote access. Good working practices also include teleconferencing and keeping in touch or accessing documents remotely via Blackberry devices. Also, a pilot is currently being run by IT Assist where documents can be securely accessed on an iPad.

I hope you find this information helpful and if you need further detail we would be happy to assist.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maevé Walls', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

MAEVE WALLS
Human Resources Director