

Clean Desk and Floor Policy

Overview

A Clean Desk Policy is an important security and privacy control and necessary for compliance with data protection legislation and the General Data Protection Regulation 2016, in relation to the management and processing of personal data. The policy should be read in conjunction with the [Access to Information policy \(pdf\)](#).

Harlow Council has adopted a Clean Desk Policy for desks, conference tables and other work areas to improve the security and confidentiality of information.

This will ensure that all personal information including sensitive and confidential information, whether it be on paper, a storage device, or a hardware device, is properly locked away or disposed of when desk is not in use. For example: anywhere you may store personal information i.e. computer, cupboard, CD, phone, or USB stick, this list is not exhaustive.

This policy will reduce the risk of unauthorized access, loss of, and damage to information during and outside of normal business hours or when workstations are left unattended.

Background

The main reasons for having a clear desk policy are:

1. To improve data security as mentioned above.
2. To show the right image - that we are taking our data compliance duties seriously.
3. Scientific studies have shown that there is a reduction in stress with employees having a tidy desk.
4. There is also a reduction in slips and trips with a clear working environment.

Scope

This policy applies to all permanent, temporary, and contracted staff working at Harlow Council.

Policy

Whenever you leave your desk or workstation unoccupied the following will apply:

1. Computer workstations must be locked when the desk is unoccupied and completely shut down at the end of the work day.
2. All personal, sensitive and confidential paperwork must be removed from the desk and locked in a drawer or filing cabinet. This includes mass storage devices such as CDs, DVDs, and USB drives.
3. Laptops, tablets, and other hardware devices must be removed from the desk and locked in a drawer or filing cabinet.

4. Keys for accessing drawers or filing cabinets should not be left unattended at a desk.
5. All waste paper which contains personal, sensitive or confidential information must be placed in the designated confidential waste bins. Under no circumstances should this information be placed in regular waste paper bins.
6. Printers and fax machines should be treated with the same care under this policy:
 - a. Any print jobs containing sensitive and confidential paperwork should be retrieved immediately. When possible, the "Locked Print" functionality should be used.
 - b. All paperwork left over at the end of the work day will be properly disposed of.

Office space other than a desk or workstation

Floors, spaces under desks or conference tables must not be used to store any sensitive or confidential papers. These areas are to be treated the same as desks and workstations and must be kept clear.

Compliance

This policy will be officially monitored for compliance by the Data Protection Officer or their nominated officer and may include random and scheduled inspections.

Non-Compliance

All policies require the participation of staff and contractors to be successful. Any employee or contractor found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.