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Home Working Policy

Introduction

Home working can provide benefits to both the employer and to individual employees. We promote flexible working for all staff and will agree to an employee working partly or wholly from home where appropriate. Individual requests for home working will be considered dependent on whether or not your work can be done from home effectively. We cannot agree to all requests because every job is different, and every employee is different.

If making a request to work from home you should consider whether or not you have the necessary organisational and time-management skill, the ability to work without direct supervision, and are able to cope with the potentially conflicting demands of work and family.

This policy sets out the District’s approach to home working.

What is home working?

There are different models of home working and it is important that anyone who is a ‘home worker’ understands the type of home working agreement that they are working under.

a. Designated home workers: employees whose contract of employment states that they will be based at home for all or part of their working week

1. Flexible home workers: employees whose contract of employment states a specific site or sites as their working base, but who may work at home on occasion with approval of their manager. Their working at home may be occasional, or through routine may have developed a regular pattern of set days per week

Deciding that home working is appropriate

The District/Circuit/Church may decide that a role is suitable for designated home working and a vacancy may be advertised as such. This will occur when it is not necessary for a post holder to be present at a specific site in order to carry out their responsibilities and job applicants must confirm that they have appropriate facilities for home working. If they do not have the equipment they need, the employer will provide it if it is deemed necessary.

Home working may also arise as a result of a flexible working request or as a reasonable adjustment from an employee. This may be a request for designated home working or flexible home working and should be made by the employee to their line manager. Employees and line managers should refer to the flexible working procedures to make and process these requests.

Home working cannot be set up as a replacement for care arrangements and employees must be able to focus all of their agreed working time on their job responsibilities.

Requests for occasional home working must always be agreed in advance with line managers.

Designated home workers

* The employee should carry out a risk assessment of the home working environment and take reasonably practicable measures to reduce risk. If the risk assessment determines that the environment and/or equipment is not suitable for home working, then the employer will purchase the equipment required. The employer reserves the right to suspend temporarily or permanently any home working arrangement if it is not satisfied about the level of risk. [Appendix 1: Home Working Risk Assessment Form](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1xfv0qMoTC4kx56CZKlCU-VWAVenefagLho_HmXh8Wo0/edit#heading=h.u6vu4kzhdaj2)
* The line manager will ensure there is a budget for equipment which the home worker may need and the District/Circuit/Church is required to provide, and make arrangements for the procurement and setting up of any equipment.
* The employer is responsible for the safety and maintenance of equipment that it supplies to the employee for the purposes of designated home working.
* Where an employee provides their own equipment, then they are responsible for its safety and maintenance.
* Depending on the results of the risk assessment, the equipment required may include:
  + Laptop, Chromebook or PC
* Printer
* Any other IT equipment necessary for the fulfilment of the role
* Mobile phone
* Stationery
* Desk
* Chair
* Filing cabinet
* Lockable cupboard
* In the event of a person leaving their employment, all equipment purchased by the employer should be returned.

Allowance that home workers may be able to claim

It is District policy to claim £6 per week from your employer towards costs incurred by working at home. This will be claimed on the appropriate expenses claim form. You may also be able to claim tax relief towards homeworking bills but this claim should be made to the government, not your employer, and you cannot claim tax relief if you choose to work from home. You can only claim for things to do with your work, for example, business telephone calls or the extra cost of gas and electricity for your work area. You cannot claim for things that you use for both private and business use, for example, rent or broadband.

Please see <https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/working-at-home> on how to claim

Responsibilities of home workers

Home workers will:

* Set up and pay for their own internet connection, and any other expenses related to home working including electricity, heat and light
* Take all necessary steps to look after their own health and safety while working at home
* Inform their manager of any changes in their environment or any other factor which may cause a risk to their health and safety or affect the success of their home working
* Maintain the security of all data, information and equipment
* Understand that they will be required to attend meetings, training or other events at a designated venue at the request of their line manager from time to time
* Understand that their employer has the right to ask to visit them at their home for the purposes of monitoring health and safety.

Hours of work

Homeworkers are not usually subject to fixed hours and are free to perform the agreed number of hours at times that suit them. Depending on the role, there may be, however, core hours during which homeworkers must be available. These core hours would be agreed with the line manager.

A homeworker will normally be expected to contact their line manager weekly.

Homeworkers must ensure they take adequate rest breaks, as set out by the Working Time Regulations 1998:

• take a break of at least 20 minutes;

• ensure the time period between stopping work one day and beginning the next is not less than 11 hours; and

• have at least one complete day each week when no work is done.

Security

Employees who work from home are responsible for keeping all documents and information associated with the District/Circuit/Church secure at all times. Specifically, homeworkers are under a duty to:

• keep filing cabinets and drawers locked when they are not being used;

• keep all documentation under lock and key at all times except when in use, and

use a unique password for the computer and any other digital devices.

Further, the computer and other equipment provided by the employer must be used for work-related purposes only and must not be used by any other member of the family or third party at any time or for any purpose.

Insurance

The homeworker is responsible for checking that all home and contents insurance policies provide adequate cover for the fact that they work from home.

Mortgage or rental agreements

You are responsible for checking applicable mortgage or rental agreements to ensure you are permitted to work from home, and for obtaining any permissions necessary to work from home.

Appendix 1: Home Working Risk Assessment Form

Desk Area: Yes/No or N/A

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Do you have adequate space to work comfortably? |  |
| Is there enough space underneath your desk to stretch your legs? |  |
| Are there trailing electrical cables around your working area that need to be tied up? |  |
| Is your working area warm, well-lit and well-ventilated? |  |
| Is your working area clutter free so that you can focus easily on the task? |  |

Display Screens Set-Up

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Is your desk chair set up correctly? Is your lower back supported, are there armrests and are your feet flat on the floor? |  |
| Can you easily reach everything that you need without twisting and straining your upper body? |  |
| Are your keyboard and mouse clean and within easy reach, without having to stretch? |  |
| Is your display screen clean and positioned so there is no glare from a window or light? |  |
| Is your display screen level with your eyes so it doesn’t cause discomfort to your neck or head? |  |

Fire and Electrical Safety

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Are smoke detectors working and checked regularly? |  |
| Does any electrical equipment spark or show signs of burns and so needs removing from use? |  |
| Do any wires look damaged or frayed and so need removing from use? |  |
| Do you regularly inspect your electrical equipment to check for signs of wear and tear? |  |
| Do you switch off equipment when not in use? |  |
| Do you have emergency arrangements in place in case of fire? |  |

Stress and Welfare

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Do you take regular breaks away from your workstation? |  |
| Do you carry out regular stretches at your desk to avoid stiff or sore muscles? |  |
| Do you sit with a good posture or are you hunched over the desk? |  |
| Do you have easy access to first aid equipment if required? |  |
| If you regularly use a computer, do you have your eyes tested every year? |  |

Manual Handling

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Are all items that you need for work within easy reach? |  |
| Are heavy items stored on lower shelves to avoid the need for lowering them? |  |
| Do you know how to correctly pick up, carry and lower heavy items? |  |

Slips, Trips and Falls

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Are floor coverings, such as carpets and rugs, secure? |  |
| Do you frequently carry hot drinks and food upstairs/downstairs and risk tripping? |  |
| Are stairways and corridors clear of trip hazards? |  |

Lone Working

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Are you familiar with your employer’s lone working health and safety policy? |  |
| Do you know the name and number of a manager or supervisor who you can get in touch with easily? |  |
| Do you have a system for regularly ‘checking in’ with your employer if you are not visibly online each day? |  |
| Is your home kept secure whilst you’re working there? |  |
| Are important files and laptops kept locked away securely when not in use? |  |

Any additional comments:

Date: ………………...………………..

Signed by employee:                                                  …………………………………..

Signed by Line Manager: ……………...…………………..

*September 2020*