

Homeworking Policy



April 2022 Version 4

Introduction

Our hybrid working model enables many of you to work from home as part of your usual working pattern however we understand that there may be some situations where it is preferable to work at home on a permanent basis (be this for part or the whole of your contractual hours). This policy outlines the working arrangements that will apply when a request for permanent homeworking has been approved.

How do I apply to work from home on a permanent basis?

If you would like to make a request to work from home permanently for some or all your working week you should put your request in writing to your manager. This will be considered as a right to request flexible working in line with the process outlined in the Entitlement for Time Off Policy.

The approval of home working requests will take into account the needs of the role, team and organisation, along with your performance and personal circumstances.

It is recognised that not all roles lend themselves to homeworking and personal circumstances will vary, consequently all requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

What will need to be in place for me to work from home?

All applications will be considered on an individual basis however as a minimum you would be expected to:

- Have a suitable place within your home to work, where you are free from distractions.
- Have a stable broadband internet connection with sufficient bandwidth to enable video conferencing.
- Ensure your proposed work base is covered by the Council's employer's liability insurance and is allowable in line with your own insurance and mortgage or tenancy agreements.
- Be in a role which is conducive to home and lone working.

If you have adjustments to your work equipment due to a disability or health condition this will need to be available for you to use at home. Please note that the Council may only supply one set of equipment for you to use.

What happens if my request to permanently work at home is approved?

You will be sent a revision to your contract to reflect your new permanent home working arrangements.

In accepting an offer to permanently work from home you will need to agree to the terms outlined below.

Terms that apply to home workers

Pay and hours of work

There will be no variation or enhancement to pay if you work from home for part or all of your working week. It is anticipated that, in the majority of cases, the costs of working from home will be offset by the savings in the cost and time of commuting to work.

You will have a basic working pattern that reflects your contractual hours in the HR system. This will be used to calculate any form of leave and as the basis upon which any agreement on your working hours is undertaken. You may vary your hours in accordance with the parameters set out in Working Flexibly: Our Approach.

Attendance at Council sites

You will be required, on request, to attend a Council site for purposes such as training, performance assessment and team briefings. You will be given reasonable notice of such requests.

Claims for travel to and/or from Council sites will only be paid by the Council on designated permanent home working days where you have exceeded the number of days required office attendance as set out in your homeworking agreement. Claims will only be paid where they are allowable in line with HMRC guidance. Please note that payment for travel will not be made for regular attendance at a reoccurring meetings where a pattern of required attendance can be established.

Visits to your home office location

We reserve the right to visit your home office location at agreed times for work-related purposes, including health and safety matters. It is a condition of any homeworking agreement that you agree to such visits, which will be for the purposes of:

- delivering and collecting work
- performance monitoring and feedback
- general discussions about work-related matters
- ensuring health, safety and security; and/or
- any other work-related purposes that we consider appropriate.

Reasonable notice of such visits will be made wherever possible.

Equipment and materials

You will be provided with the following equipment to support you in working from home.

- A laptop or other mobile computer device
- A keyboard
- A mouse
- A headset
- A monitor

You must ensure that proper care is taken of such equipment and materials and that they are stored securely.

You will be responsible for supplying all other equipment and materials (with the exception of stationery and postage) to enable you to work at home safely and effectively.

On termination of your employment for any reason, you must return any equipment, furniture, materials and documents belonging to the Council. We may also arrange for the collection of these items from your home at our own discretion. Return of any items should be done in person or via secure carriage.

No additional equipment will be provided for in office use so you will need to ensure that you bring any devices you use with you, should you be required to attend a Council office site, unless other arrangements have been made to meet an adjustment related to a disability.

Telephone and internet

You must arrange and pay for a secure and stable internet connection to work from home. No payments will be made for telephone or internet usage.

You must notify your line manager if you experience system or internet problems that prevent you from working.

Where the fault is due to Council owned equipment it must be reported to Digital Services.

If the fix of any issue is likely to exceed 2 hours you need to make arrangements with your manager to conduct alternative work or come into the office. If this is not possible then you will be required to take time off which may mean using annual leave, lieu time or unpaid leave.

If the fault is being experienced by all staff, a decision will be taken by your Service Manager (or line manager) as to whether you need to come into the office. This will depend on the nature of the fault.

Stationery and postage

Stationery can be requested from your line manager. This can be collected from the Council offices or delivered from one of the Council's approved suppliers, whichever is the most cost effective. You will be expected to co-ordinate collection with office attendance days where practicable. No mileage will be paid where the sole purpose is to collect stationary supplies.

Home printing should not be done unless absolutely necessary and due regard must be given to data storage and security. Larger printing jobs should be done at a Council site. If you need to arrange for an item to be posted, you should contact a member of the office-based team and arrange for postage from a Council site. Items should not be posted from your home location unless absolutely necessary. Where such postage is agreed you can claim back the cost of postage via petty cash.

Security

You are responsible for keeping all documents, equipment and information associated with the Council secure at all times and should ensure that you have read and are familiar with the Digital Services Remote Working Policy.

Homeworkers are under a duty to:

- 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
- arrange for any confidential hard copy data to be shredded and disposed of at a Council office site and to be kept securely until this can be done

Further, the computer and other equipment provided by us must not be used by any other member of the family or third party at any time or for any purpose.

Health and safety issues

We are legally obliged to ensure the health, safety and welfare of homeworkers is monitored and reviewed in the same way as office-based staff. We are therefore required to ensure that:

- all equipment is safe
- all articles and substances are handled and stored safely
- an assessment of your workstation is conducted
- information and training on the safe use of equipment, including display screen equipment, is provided; and
- relevant risk assessments are carried out and appropriate mitigations put in place before homeworking can commence.

Managers are responsible for ensuring that your home environment meets the minimum requirements and must ensure that the homeworking assessment, risk assessment and any relevant training have been completed prior to the commencement of home working. A copy of the completed H&S Checklist (Appendix 1), Homeworking Assessment (Appendix 2) and Risk Assessment (Appendix 3 – Example) must be sent to HR.

As part of the risk assessment, you will be required to conduct a DSE assessment for your home workstation, in consultation with your line manager. Any issues identified will need to be addressed by your manager, who should raise any further queries with Corporate Health and Safety. Please be aware that it may be necessary for a visit to be made to your home to ensure the assessment is correct and any agreed action has been completed.

All employees who work from home have a duty to ensure, insofar as is reasonably practicable, that they work in a safe manner and that they follow all health and safety instructions issued by us from time to time.

Accident reporting

If you have an accident at home, whilst you are working, this should be treated as an industrial accident and must be reported and recorded like any other accident at work. Further information on accident reporting is available on the intranet.

Moving house or home working location

The approval of any request to work from home will include an assessment of your proposed work location. Should you wish to move this site to another location you should discuss this with your line manager in advance. Your request to continue working from home may not be approved if the new location is deemed unsuitable.

Insurance

You are responsible for checking that all home and contents insurance policies provide adequate cover for the fact that you 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.

Changing roles

If you change the role that you do, your manager will need to determine whether it is still appropriate for you to work from home. You should ensure that you discuss this with your line manager (this should be the manager for the new role) before accepting any new role. If the role is not suitable for home working, then you will be required to attend the Council site most appropriate for that role.

Meeting clients or customers

You must not use your own home for meetings with service users or colleagues.

Childcare and caring responsibilities

Homeworking is advantageous for some as it can support childcare and caring arrangements.

However, no member of staff should be caring for others simultaneously whilst working.

Withdrawal of home working arrangement

The agreement to work from home may be withdrawn or suspended at any time if:

- your performance is not satisfactory
- your attendance is poor.
- it is recommended by occupational health
- there are allegations or findings of misconduct

During any period of time that your homeworking agreement is suspended, your contractual work location will become the Council office/site most appropriate for your role and no payments will be made for costs incurred to attend this site.

Should you no longer wish to work from home, then you must discuss this with your line manager in the first instance and submit a flexible working request.



Appendix 1

Health & Safety Checklist

Employee Name:	Line Manager:	Service:
-----------------------	----------------------	-----------------

Address & Contact Details (Location of Home Working)
Contact Phone Number:

Other Documents Attached		
Homeworking Assessment Form	<input type="checkbox"/>	Must be attached
Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Must be attached
Homeworking Risk Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Must be attached
DSE & Lone Working E-Learning Certificate	<input type="checkbox"/>	Must be attached
Special Procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable

<p style="text-align: center;">Confirmation</p> <p>This checklist has been completed by the employee and confirms that the home working environment meets the standards set out in the guidance. The employee's line manager has checked this record is complete, prior to the commencement of home working, and that any required action has been completed.</p> <p>Where there is uncertainty or where standards are not met, arrangements have been made by the line manager to resolve these matters.</p> <p>Signatures: _____ (Employee) _____ (Line Manager)</p> <p>Date: _____</p> <p>(checklists should be reviewed annually or earlier if changes occur)</p>

Appendix 2

Homeworking Assessment

Name of Homeworker	
Service	
Job Title	
Date of Assessment	

Employee Checklist

Workplace Environment	Yes	No	Comments
Is the environment in which you will work suitable for homeworking (e.g. good lighting, heating, ventilation, no glare)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is there sufficient space for working and storage, with security if confidential information is accessed/held?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Does the work area provide enough privacy and freedom from disturbances?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is there adequate segregation from non-workers (e.g. children, pets)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any slip or trip hazards?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Work Equipment	Yes	No	Comments
Is there any work equipment identified within the Homeworking Policy which will be required and has not been supplied?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you have sufficient broadband connection to enable connection to the Councils networks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Electrical Safety	Yes	No	Comments
Is your fixed electrical system in good condition (e.g. no damaged sockets or wiring)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is there a sufficient number of sockets to prevent overloading when using the equipment supplied?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is the electrical equipment supplied for homeworking in good condition and free from any visible defects, PAT tested or has a new equipment label?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are you aware of the PAT testing requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Safe Posture / Ergonomics	Yes	No	Comments
Have you completed the Display Screen Equipment (DSE) E-Learning module as part of your mandatory training?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Have you completed the DSE Homeworking Assessment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you understand that rest breaks of 5 minutes should be taken from DSE after every hour of use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you understand from the DSE E-Learning how to adjust your set up whilst at home to ensure you are comfortable for the tasks you need to complete?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you understand that if you develop any pain due to your DSE set up and you believe your set up is unsafe or uncomfortable, that you should contact your manager for guidance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Fire Safety	Yes	No	Comments
Are flammable materials (e.g. paper) and ignition sources (e.g. cigarettes) kept to a minimum?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is there a smoke detector or fire alarm in place that is regularly checked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you have an escape plan in case of fire?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Emergency Arrangements	Yes	No	Comments
Are you aware of how to get help from your manager or other team members using a computer or other equipment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you know how to report an Accident or Incident to you manager?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do you have first aid equipment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Lone Working/Stress	Yes	No	Comments
Have you completed the Lone Working E-Learning module as part of your mandatory training?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are you provided with an electronic device with suitable software to enable communication with your manager/team members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are you aware of arrangements for communicating with/reporting to the office/buddy when lone working at home and when undertaking site visits from home (if applicable)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are you aware of catch-up arrangements/meetings with you manager and other team members to discuss workloads etc.?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are you aware of the Employee Assistance Program?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<i>I declare that I will ensure my homeworking set up is comfortable and suitable for the tasks I will be completing.</i>			
Signed by Employee:		Date:	

Please send this form to your line manager for approval

Appendix 3

General Risk Assessment

Reference No: WFH
Version No: 1.0

H&S-F-003(a)
Version 1.0
February 2020

Task: Home Working – Joe Bloggs		Unit/Area/Plant: Address of Home		Service: Public Places	
Assessment Date: 21/12/21		Review Date: 21/12/22		Compiled By (Assessors): Managers Name	
Persons Consulted: Employees Name					
Description of task being assessed (including limitations): Working from home					

Common Hazards				Plant/Equipment/Vehicle/Machinery Hazards				Health Hazards	
Hazards	PA	Hazards	PA	Hazards	PA	Hazards	PA	Hazards	PA
Slips & Trips (Access/Egress/Walkways)	A	Falls from Height	A	Noise		Ejection		Chemicals (COSH RA)	A
Manual Handling (Lifting/Pushing/Pulling)	A	Falling Objects	A	Vibration (HAVS & WBVS)		Trapping or Drawing In		Heavy Metals	
Manual Handling (Repetitive Strain)		Deep Water		Pressure (Air or Liquid)		Crushing		Non-Conforming/ Hazardous Waste	
Ergonomics	A	Excavations (Subsidence)		Stored Energy		Impact		Dusts	
Inclement Weather (Sunlight/Ice/Snow/Wind)		Fire/Explosion	A	Electrical		Friction or Abrasion		Liquids from Waste	
Temperature/ Humidity		Electricity	A	Fire/Explosion		Entanglement		Noise	
Violence & Aggression	A	Sharp Objects		Thermal Hot/ Cold Surfaces		Shearing/Severing		Liquids	
Psychosocial Issues (Stress)	A	Oxygen Deficiency/ Enrichment		Radiation (Ionizing/Non-Ionizing)		Cutting/Severing		Gases	
Flammable Substances (COSH OR DSEAR RA)				Fumes Gases		Stabbing/ Puncturing		Solids	
				Steam		Fluid Injection		Bacterial/Parasites/ Viruses/ Bio Aerosols	
				Magnetic Fields				Herbicides/Insecticides/ Pesticides	

Persons Affected (PA):	A - Employees	B – Members of the Public	C - Customer	D – Children/Young Persons
	E – New/Expectant Mothers	F - Contractors	G - Visitors	H – All PA's

Hazard Description	Potential Risk	Existing Methods/Control Measures	Risk Rating			Risk (L/M/H)	Further Actions/Comments
			S	L	R		
Slips & Trips	Tripping over whilst working at home resulting in injury.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good housekeeping maintained in the home working environment. 	3	1	3	L	
Manual Handling	Lifting equipment provided to work from home resulting in musculoskeletal injury.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistance should be requested when installing any equipment provided by the Council to work from home, if is deemed too heavy by the employee. 	3	1	3	L	
Ergonomics	Injury from using display screen equipment whilst working from home.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DSE E-Learning undertaken. DSE Assessment undertaken, and any issues highlighted are addressed. DSE Assessment repeated annually or if there are changes to the working environment or concerns by the employee (i.e. new home, injury). Eye test provided on request. Separate keyboard and mouse issued on request. Suitable table and chair in place. 	2	1	2	L	
Violence & Aggression Psychosocial Issues	Physical or verbal abuse whilst lone working at home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lone Working E-Learning undertaken. Violence and aggression policy in place. No face-to-face meetings with non-council employees shall be held at your home. A communication device must be available at all times. Provision of staff available when support is required. Counselling service available, if required. 	2	2	4	L	
Psychosocial Issues (Stress)	Isolation and/or workload resulting in stress, anxiety or depression.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workload organised by management in consultation with employees. Workload monitored on an on-going basis for realistic achievability. Good communication arrangements with management and other team members. Open door policy regards to workload/work related stress. Mental health first aiders and Employee Assistance Program available. 	2	2	4	L	

Hazard Description	Potential Risk	Existing Methods/Control Measures	Risk Rating			Risk (L/M/H)	Further Actions/Comments
			S	L	R		
Falls from Height Falling Objects	Items falling onto or employee falling trying to reach work related stored items causing injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Items stored at home should be kept to a minimum. Items must be stored at a level that does not require the use of steps to reach them. The storage area should have sufficient space and be strong enough to hold the item(s). 	2	1	2	L	
Fire Electricity	Fire whilst homeworking is being carried out resulting in injury or death	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good housekeeping maintained within the home office working environment. Electrical appliances turned off after use. Home fixed electricals maintained in line with current standards. All electrical appliances checked prior to use. If defective, these should not be used. Minimal amounts of combustible materials stored in the office area. Smoke detector or fire alarm in place and working. 	5	1	5	L	
Electricity	Electric shock from appliances whilst home working.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visual inspection of electrical equipment and cables prior to use. All electrical equipment PAT tested in line with the Councils requirements. Home fixed electricals suitable for home working requirements and maintained in line with current standards. Sufficient plugs available to prevent overloading. All cables stored away from areas where they are likely to be damaged. 	5	1	5	L	
Chemicals	Injury caused by chemicals stored at home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No work-related chemicals shall be stored or used at home. 	2	1	2	L	

Summary of Internal Documentation (Procedures/Guidance/Safe Systems of Work/ <u>Tool Box</u> Talks etc. and parts thereof, used to train employees)		List other Risk Assessments linked to this one (i.e. Manual Handling)
Policies & Procedures Homeworking Policy - HR H&S-P-005 – Accident & Incident Reporting Procedure H&S-P-014 – Safe Use of Electricity Procedure H&S-P-021 – Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Procedure H&S-P-026 – Lone Working Procedure H&S-P-027 – Violence, Aggression & Threatening Behaviour Policy Training DSE E-Learning Lone Working E-Learning		DSE Assessment
<i>I confirm I am the person responsible for ensuring the control measures are being complied with, and for implementing additional controls.</i>		
Assessed/Reviewed By:	Signature:	Date: Click or tap to enter a date.
Communicated to Staff by:	Signature:	Date: Click or tap to enter a date.