

Reviewed: May 2024

HOMWORKING POLICY

PURPOSE

Homeworking can be beneficial for both individuals and organisations. Homeworking means working from home on an occasional, temporary or permanent basis. It could be a one-off day, a new pattern of working partly from home or entirely working from home for a fixed period or indefinitely.

Homeworking does not entitle you to choose when and how you work. It simply means you do your job from home. Your contractual obligations, including your core working hours continue to apply. Any changes would need to be agreed with your line manager.

If you are permitted or required to work from home for a short period, or on certain occasions, your contract of employment will not be changed, and your normal place of work will continue to be the Organisation's premises. However, if the Organisation agrees to change your working arrangements, so that your location of work will become your home, this will constitute a permanent change to your terms and conditions.

SCOPE

This policy sets out the guidelines that are expected from both the Organisation and employees with regards to the management of working at home arrangements.

It also covers the practical arrangements that make homeworking a success.

Occasional homeworking

There are various reasons why you might want or need to work from home on a particular day or for a short period. These could include:

- logistical difficulties in getting to work, for example on a snow day;
- needing to concentrate on a piece of work in a quiet environment.

This policy does not focus on occasional homeworking, although we do touch on it. It is aimed more at homeworking arrangements that form or change your contractual 'place of work'.

Homeworking that changes your 'place of work'

This is when you have agreed a new working arrangement with us. It is where your home becomes your working base for at least some of the week, temporarily or permanently.

PROCEDURE

1 Setting up the Home Working Arrangement

- 1.1 Depending on whether you are working from home on a temporary or permanent basis and your domestic circumstances, the Organisation will review the availability of IT and telephone equipment and make a decision regarding the necessary equipment to facilitate working from home.
- 1.2 If a PC and internet connection is already in place, you will be expected to make use of these existing arrangements. Alternatively, if IT facilities are not already in place, the Organisation, at its discretion, may help establish the home working IT facilities, which may include installing a separate dedicated internet connection for you, depending on your current arrangements and organisational needs.
- 1.3 Any office furniture and equipment provided to assist you working from home, remains the property of the Organisation and must be looked after and maintained properly. At the end of your employment it must be returned in good working order. The Organisation reserves the right to deduct monies from salary payments to cover the cost of lost or misused

equipment if they were lost or misused due to your negligence, or for any property not returned in good condition, subject to the principle of fair wear and tear. You may not use the equipment or other property we provide for personal/family use.

- 1.4 You will be expected to cover the cost of utilities including heating and electricity necessary for your homeworking.
- 1.5 You are responsible for making sure that your mortgage or lease and home insurance do not restrict or prevent your home being used for work.
- 1.6 You should discuss with your home insurer any changes that may need to be made to your policy to ensure that you are fully protected while working from home. You are responsible for any additional premiums.
- 1.7 There may be tax implications to homeworking. You should get specific advice on this.

2 Health & Safety

- 2.1 Prior to commencing working from home, you will need to confirm that there is a suitable, safe and secure place available for you to work. You should check for any hazards such as trailing cables and complete a DSE Homeworker Assessment to assist you with setting up your workstation as ergonomically as possible. This assessment will need to be repeated following any significant changes to your equipment, workspace or health. You should contact the Health & Safety Manager if you need advice on setting up a workstation safely.
- 2.2 In order to advise you on safe homeworking, along with any other periodic checks that the Organisation may need to make, you may be required to grant permission for an authorised person from the Organisation to access your home as necessary, this may occasionally be with very little, or no prior warning.

- 2.3 If you are working from home, you have a duty of care to yourself, to be responsible for your own safety and to be vigilant regarding any risks that may appear over time. If, in the unfortunate event that you have an accident or incident whilst working from home, you must immediately report this to your line manager and H&S Manager in line with our Health & Safety Policy.
- 2.4 An employee who works from home using Age UKCAP equipment or furniture must also agree not to smoke in the room where the work is carried out.
- 2.5 It will not be appropriate to meet or conduct work-related meetings in your home with service users, or to give out personal details like your address. If you are unsure about any aspect of this, contact your line manager.
- 2.6 Lone working at home can increase the risk of work-related stress due to the lack of direct supervision and reduced face to face contact with colleagues. Your line manager will make regular contact with you to make sure you are healthy and safe and to monitor for early warning signs of stress. You are strongly encouraged to maintain frequent interaction with colleagues to reduce feelings of isolation or disconnection and to be open and honest about how you are feeling so that you can be supported appropriately. In your line manager's absence, you will be told who to contact should you require support. Further details on lone working arrangements are available in the Lone Working Service Specific Procedures.

3 Management Guidelines for Working at Home

- 3.1 The Organisation recognises that communication and management can be more difficult when employees are working from home, and therefore the following guidelines have been drafted to ensure that there is no confusion in respect of the Organisation's expectations:

- 3.2 Employees who work from home are subject to the same rules, procedures and expected standard of conduct and performance as all other employees. Contractual obligations, duties and responsibilities remain in place, as do our workplace policies.
- 3.3 Hours of work should be the same as your usual contractual hours of work, unless any other agreement or arrangements have been made. During your agreed working times, you should be easily contactable by the Organisation via phone and/or email and should devote the whole of your time and attention to your work, in the same way you would if you were working in an office environment.
- 3.4 Work and personal lives must be kept separate as far as is reasonably practicable. If you are responsible for the care of dependants you are expected to make alternative arrangements for carers to be in place, so that you may carry out your normal working duties when working from home. Similarly, if you are sick you should report your absence in the normal way according to our Absence Policy.
- 3.5 If you are working from home you should ensure that you are in regular communication with your colleagues and manager to discuss your workload and whereabouts, objectives and achievements. Please bear in mind that due to the diminished face to face interaction, you may need to be more explicit than usual regarding the details and evidence of reports & documentation relating to your workload, achievements etc.
- 3.6 You are expected to attend any formal or informal meetings or other work commitments that you have, irrespective of any working from home arrangements the organisation has agreed.
- 3.7 Management should plan and regularly monitor workloads with employees who are working from home, agreeing objectives and targets to be achieved.

- 3.8 Working from home may feel isolating; therefore, employees are encouraged to keep up to date with relevant organisational information and news.
- 3.9 Where an IT or other problem prevents you from working effectively from home, you should contact your line manager straightaway. We may need you to come into one of our offices until the issue has been resolved.

If the Organisation finds that an employee is not adhering to the guidelines detailed above or has misled the Organisation in any way regarding their time, achievements and so on, disciplinary action will be taken, which may result in dismissal.

4 Expenses

- 4.1 We will reimburse you for reasonable postage, photocopying and printing costs, but wherever possible this should be carried out within one of our offices. We will cover reasonable travelling costs in respect of meetings with us and with service users in line with our Mileage Policy.
- 4.2 You should email your expenses claim form to your line manager at the end of each month.

5 Security, confidentiality and data protection

- 5.1 The same standards of confidentiality, data protection and security apply if you are working at home, as those that would usually apply when working in the office.
- 5.2 It is your responsibility to take measures to protect the information you have from unauthorised loss, access or amendment whilst stored at home. In particular, care should be taken to make sure that work is kept confidential from other household members; therefore, you need to ensure that you, solely, have access to your computer and work files/papers and that access to your work files on your computer are password protected.

- 5.3 For security reasons, when working from home, all work should be undertaken and completed on equipment that we have authorised for use, and under no circumstances should work files be stored or saved directly on to a computer, instead all work documents and files should be saved directly on to the Organisation's Sharepoint functionality.
- 5.4 Particular care must be taken when transporting paper or electronic devices/documents between locations to ensure that appropriate security measures have been taken to protect devices and data.
- 5.5 You must report any actual or potential breach of security, confidentiality or data protection to your line manager immediately.
- 5.6 If you are unsure about any aspect of security, confidentiality or data protection, you must speak with your line manager.
- 5.7 Breach of security, confidentiality and/or data protection is a very serious issue and may be treated as gross misconduct which may lead to dismissal.

6 Accessing your home

- 6.1 We may need to access your home to set up the homeworking and to carry out risk assessments, checks, and repairs to our equipment.
- 6.2 We may also need access in order to retrieve our property, whether during the homeworking, at the end of the homeworking arrangement, or when your employment ends.
- 6.3 We will give you as much notice as possible that we need to enter your home and you must cooperate with our reasonable requests.

7 What if you move house?

- 7.1 We will reassess the homeworking arrangement.

7.2 If we consider that the house move would make, or has made, homeworking unsuitable, we will discuss this with you and we may decide to bring the homeworking to an end. If that happens you will usually be able to return to an office based contractual place of work, although that cannot be guaranteed.

8 How to do I apply for homeworking?

8.1 Occasional homeworking usually needs to be arranged at short notice. That might be because your child wakes up unwell (in which case you should also consider your right to take time off to care for a dependant), or where poor weather makes it advisable for you to stay at home. In those types of situations, you should contact your line manager as soon as you think you will need to work from home. They will decide whether or not to authorise homeworking on that occasion.

8.2 If you would like to make homeworking a normal part of your contract, you should discuss this with your line manager as a first step. If you then decide to make a formal request for homeworking under this policy, send an application letter or email to your line manager and Chief People Officer.

8.3 It is important that we have enough time to consider your request properly, so please send any request to us in plenty of time in advance of when you would like the homeworking to begin.

8.4 If you are applying for homeworking as a flexible working request (which has a special formal process set by employment law) you must be clear about that and follow our Flexible Working Policy.

9 When we receive your request

9.1 We will meet with you as soon as possible to discuss your proposed homeworking.

9.2 We may want to visit your home (possibly more than once) to assess its suitability, which may include carrying out a health and safety risk assessment. We may require you to arrange and pay for any necessary modifications and may refuse your homeworking request if those modifications are not made

within a reasonable timeframe, or if they do not rectify any health and safety risk(s) identified.

- 9.3 We may also want to carry out a data protection risk assessment before deciding whether or not to agree to the homeworking.
- 9.4 We will write to you to let you know whether we agree to the homeworking. Each request is considered on its own merits. Even if we have approved a similar request in the past, we are not tied to doing the same in the future.
- 9.5 If your request is approved we will probably want you to complete a trial period. If that trial period is unsuccessful, you may need to return to the previous contractual position, unless some other arrangement can be agreed.
- 9.6 If you are unhappy with a refusal of your request under this policy, you should write to the Chief Executive within 5 working days of our decision, explaining your reasons.

MONITORING

This policy will be reviewed every 12 months.

Homeworking Policy approved: July 2024



Signed by Chair of Trustees