



1.1 Home and Tele-Working Policy

1.1.1 Policy Statement

The Company has provision to operate home and tele-working, as this makes it possible to attract and retain the best possible staff. In particular rigid adherence to traditional patterns and methods of working may discriminate against staff that do not wish or are unable to conform to more conventional ways of working. Flexibility in employment is therefore regarded as being a key factor in demonstrating Company's commitment to fair and equal treatment inside the workplace.

1.1.2 Definitions

- **Home-workers:** Employees who, for a defined part, or all of their contractual hours, are based at home for the purpose of carrying out their work with the agreement the Company, and are designated as 'home workers'.
- **Tele-workers:** A person working from a distance where the work involves using information and Communication Technologies, such as VPN access etc.

1.1.3 General Principles

This policy applies to the companies employees who wish to be considered for any kind of Flexible working arrangement. The decision to accept an application for Flexible working will be based on an objective assessment to determine the extent to which the position and the individual is suitable to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

- Every employee may request a flexible working arrangement in writing to their Line Manager
- Line Managers will seriously consider all requests and discuss any impact with any additional consultative resources, such as Human Resources Department, that they see fit in order make an informed decision on the request.
- The applicant will be informed in person and in writing of the decision made and any reasons for rejection where applicable
- A home or tele-working agreement will need to be signed by both parties
- Where an employee wishes to work from home on an ad hoc, occasional and informal basis, this may be agreed between the employee and their Line Manager without reference to the formal application process. However all colleagues or departments that may be impact by the decision will need to be notified.

1.1.4 Particular Considerations

- **Work and Caring Commitments:** Flexible working arrangement **MUST** remain separate from domestic and work activities and commitments as far as is practicably possible. Individuals with caring



responsibilities will be required to produce a written statement outlining the care arrangements for the dependant person in the Home working agreement.

- Lone worker implications: Health and Safety considerations will be risk assessed on an individual basis, where deemed necessary
- The Employee must inform the Line Manager as soon as practicably possible of any changes to caring arrangements, which have implications for the work being undertaken from home.

1.12 Home and Tele-working & Health and Safety

1.12.1 Agreement

Every applicant who makes a formal application for a Flexible working arrangement will need to agree to allowing the company to carry out relevant health and safety risk assessment in order to identify any adjustments or equipment that may be necessary for the employee to carry out the work in a safe environment.

1.12.2 Risk considerations

Listed below is not an exhaustive list of considerations the company has to make prior to any home and tele-working request being authorised:

- Access to and from the premises (including the use of card entry systems e.g. to computer suites)
- Is there a safe way in and a way out for one person?
- Can any temporary equipment which is necessary for the role be safely handled by one person?
- Foreseeable emergency situations e.g. fire, illness, accident, equipment failure etc.
- The process or work being performed - Does the workplace present a special risk to the lone worker?
- Consider whether the work involves lifting objects too large for one person or whether more than one person is needed to operate essential controls for the safe running of equipment.
- Is there a risk of violence - is there likely to be contact with people who may become violent?
- Are women especially at risk if they work alone?
- Are young workers especially at risk if they work alone?
- What level and type of supervision is required?
- The fitness and medical history of the person
- The operation of dangerous machinery or use of flammable, toxic or explosive substance
- The use of electricity or supply to issued company devices
- The length of the working shift
- The provision of facilities for meals and drinks
- The presence of automatic fire systems - e.g. deluge systems
- Reporting systems for problems

- Training required e.g. for emergencies in unusual situations
- Provision of first aid kits for mobile workers
- Safe transport to and from the workplace



1.12.3 Equipment

The Company will provide the equipment needed to carry out the work. This may include IT equipment, an additional telephone line and a desk, chair or cabinet where required. This will be discussed and agreed at application.

1.12.4 Timescales

It may take a number of months etc. to establish the home or tele-working working patterns and final arrangement; due to risk analysis that would need to be considered or business impact.

Regular meetings will be held in a mutually agreeable place to ensure all home or tele-working workers are kept up to date and informed of any relevant changes which may effect the employee.

1.12.5 Terms and Conditions of Service

Any employee who has been accept as a home or tele-worker, will receive the same terms and conditions of service as employees who carry out the same or similar work inside the workplace

As this method of working can cause rise to some major health and safety concerns for both the company and its employee, a decision to allow an employee to undertake home or tele-working arrangement may not always be practicable, and the company reserves the right to rescind the agreement should any incidents or concerns arise that required further investigation.



1.13 Working from Home

Not all employees will have, or want, the opportunity to work from home but most will spend time at a home computer either recreationally or socially. While the responsibility of the company does not extend to your private lives we do have a duty of care when it involves work done at home. Notwithstanding that, the basic steps below should be followed by anybody who spends time at a computer in their homes.

Also not all people are emotionally equipped for working from home and may find the reduced social interaction, lack of discipline, and the solitude disturbing. There may, however, well be over-riding reasons for wishing to work from home such as convenience, temporary care arrangements or physical incapacity.

The employee's line manager is responsible for confirming themselves satisfied with their suitability for working from home. This should include their assurance that the individual has the necessary personal qualities to successfully do this. The individual should also be aware of health and safety issues such as the need to adhere to time restrictions – workloads should be managed and deadlines met but the individual should also be aware of the dangers of overworking and should take regular breaks.

The employee must be contactable when working from home. They are responsible for distributing their contact details to colleagues as necessary.

This is a safety measure, not an intrusion on your privacy.

1.13.1 Health and Safety Risk Assessment

If you use your home as your workplace, the law says that a health and safety risk assessment to identify any possible hazards to yourself, workers, visitors and other members of your household should be carried out. This is quite simple and involves no more than commonsense. However, the company is responsible and needs to confirm that it is done. If you are unsure then our Health & Safety Advisor will carry out an assessment at your convenience. A risk assessment involves defining the hazards, looking at who is at risk and putting steps in place to control the risk. Possible hazards include:

- using work equipment at home, including electrical appliances
- your workstation set-up
- handling loads
- psychological hazards, such as stress or loneliness
- fire, slips, trips and falls
- excessive noise or vibration

You need to evaluate whether a hazard is significant and if it is, whether you have taken enough precautions to make the risk as low as you reasonably can.

1.13.2 Using electrical equipment for work at home

If homeworkers use electrical equipment provided by the employer as part of their work, the employer is responsible for its maintenance. **But** employers are only responsible for the equipment **they** supply. Personal equipment, electrical sockets and other parts of the homeworkers' domestic electrical system are their own responsibility.



When using electrical equipment at home:

- Ensure electrical equipment is turned off before it is checked
- Check that plugs are not damaged
- Check the domestic electrical systems are adequate for electrical equipment
- Check plugs are correctly wired and maintained
- Check that the outer covering of the cable or wire is gripped where it enters the plug or the equipment
- Check that the outer cover of the equipment is not damaged, for example look for loose parts or screws
- Check leads, wires or cables for damage to the outer covering
- Check for burn marks or staining that suggests overheating
- Repair electrical equipment that may cause harm or injury to the homeworker
- Check that there are no trailing wires; if there are, tuck them out of the way, for example under a desk or table, to prevent accidents

Working with VDUs

Employers have a duty to make sure that the display screen equipment used by homeworkers is safe and does not affect the user's health. There is a training presentation available covering this. Please contact your supervisor or H&S Consultant.

When working with VDUs it is important for homeworkers to adjust their work station to a comfortable position and take breaks from work. This will help prevent undue tiredness.

Remembering to stretch and change position regularly can help to reduce tiredness and prevent pains in the hands, wrists, arms, neck, shoulders or back.

VDUs need to be placed in a position where lighting will not cause reflections or glare on the screen.

It is also important for homeworkers to view the screen comfortably. They may need different spectacles for this. Homeworkers should consult their GP or an optician if in doubt. VDU users can request an eye examination and eye test from their employer.

Here is a checklist of points that employers need to be aware of when their homeworkers use VDUs:

- Is the screen clear and readable, and without flicker?
- Is the screen free from glare and reflections?
- Are the 'brightness' and 'contrast' controls properly adjusted to prevent eyestrain?
- Is there suitable lighting so that the fine detail on the screen can be seen and read?
- Is the keyboard placed in the right position to allow the homeworker to work comfortably?
- Is the screen and computer clean; is it free from dust and dirt?
- Can the chair be adjusted to the right height so that work can be done comfortably?
- Is the VDU placed at the right angle on the desk to allow work to be done comfortably, for example without having to make any awkward movements?
- Is there enough space under the desk to allow free movement?
- Is there enough space in general so that the homeworker can move freely between the work on the desk and the VDU?
- Make sure that your work equipment is safe and that other members of your household, especially small children, can't be harmed by it.



- You also need to protect your work from other occupants of your home.
- If you have to share a computer make sure you back up your work regularly and that your work is password protected.

Employers have a duty to ensure that they find out about accidents, injuries, diseases or dangerous occurrences arising from work-related activities. This means that you must report any incidents to the company which may arise from work activities.

Please review what is written here in light of your own computer at home. Many people spend even longer at a computer screen at home than they do at work. The hazards don't disappear just because there isn't an employer to blame!

User Disclaimer:

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