



reconstruct

Home Working Policy

Working from Home

Introduction

This document is a statement of the Company's Home Working policy. The details are below. This policy is not part of your employment contract and it is not legally binding except where it is a statement of the law. You must be aware of this policy and procedure and apply it accordingly; failure to do so may result in disciplinary action being taken against you. You should consult your manager if there is anything that is not clear to you or if you are unsure about any aspect of this policy.

Policy Statement

The Company is committed to promoting flexible working where it is appropriate for the efficient working of the Company and its employees. As part of this, the Company is willing to agree to employees working from home where such an arrangement is appropriate and suitable and where this will assist in improving efficient working. This policy outlines the circumstances under which the Company will allow employees to work from home.

Definition

Home working is when an employee is based at home for the purposes of work, rather than working at a Company location. This can be either on a long term or short term basis.

An employee who is a home worker, whether on a short or long term basis, is treated as an employee in every way as if the employee were based and working permanently on Company premises. Accordingly, all the Company's expectations of performance and conduct of an employee apply to a home working employee, as do all Company policies, procedures, rules and regulations.

A typical long term arrangement would be where all or the majority of the employee's work is undertaken at, or from, their home and where the employee has a dedicated workstation or location in their home which has been formally approved for home working. In these circumstances, it would be expected that there would be a formal home working agreement in place which would normally include the Company and employee agreeing a Home Working Contract of Employment and abiding by the terms of this Home Working Policy.

A typical short term arrangement would be where the employee works a small proportion of the employee's time at home, on an agreed or ad hoc basis. This may be necessitated by an immediate or emergency situation occurring either at work or at home or, for example, extreme weather or where it would be advantageous to complete a specific task or assignment. In these circumstances, it would not be expected that there would be a formal home working agreement in place, other than the employee agreeing with their line manager or other designated Company employee/manager/director, that the employee may work from home for a limited, short period.

This Home Working Policy has been prepared on the basis of a long term home working arrangement. In the event of a short term home working arrangement, all terms of this Home Working Policy will apply except where the content is considered by the Company to be inappropriate for a short term home working arrangement.

Suitability of Home Working

The Company will give serious consideration to any application by an employee to work from home either on a long or short term basis. Any agreement to an employee working from home, either on a long term or short term basis will be dependent on the employee's job, the reason for the home working and the business need for home working. It should be noted that there is no "right" to home working and every case will be assessed on its merits, which may include a formal assessment.

As a general principle, when considering an application for long term home working, the following aspects of an employee's job will be taken into account, although this is NOT an exhaustive list and other aspects, relevant to the particular, case may be considered. Thus, home working will be considered where the job:

- does not require to be carried out permanently at Company premises
- does not require the employee to use specific equipment or carry out face-to-face customer care located at Company premises
- has defined output tasks,
- is relatively autonomous,
- requires frequent travelling
- requires long periods of concentration.

In addition, the Company will also take into account other factors, such as the impact that any home working would have on the interrelationships of the employee with others with whom they have to work, access to or by work colleagues, access to information and the implication of home working on costs to the Company and technology needs. For example, being located in a Company based work environment may benefit work dynamics and information flow, or help training and performance improvement and provide opportunities for asking for help or advice on an informal basis, especially in the case of new or inexperienced employees who might benefit from working alongside more experienced employees.

Moreover, not all employees may find home working is suitable for them. It is likely that employees who show the majority of following attributes are more likely to find that home working is appropriate for them:

- Are self-motivated
- Are self-disciplined
- Enjoy the challenge of working on their own
- Are able to adopt a flexible approach to working
- Are able to organise working time effectively
- Are able to work without direct supervision
- Do not need day to day social interaction with work colleagues
- Are able to travel easily to meetings and other workplaces
- Are able to "switch off" from work when not working
- Are able to maintain an appropriate work/life balance.

Location of Home Working

When the Company agrees that an employee may work from home, whether on a short or long term basis, it is explicitly understood that the work will be undertaken or be based at the employee's home. The location of the home working will be explicitly agreed between the Company and the employee, and in the case of a long term home working agreement, will be specified in the employee's Contract of Employment. Thus, home working must never be undertaken at any other location away from the employee's home, including a "neutral" location such as another person's house or a library for example, except by agreement with the Company or in extreme circumstances. In addition, home working should never be undertaken in a coffee shop, food shop or other such or similar location, other than where the job requirements demand significant travelling and the employee has stopped for a brief rest break whilst travelling.

The Home Working Environment

In the case of a brief period of short term home working, the employee's line manager will ensure that appropriate arrangements are in line with the "Location of Home Working" described above and, where appropriate, the details below for a long term homeworking arrangement.

Where the Company agrees that an employee can undertake home working on a long term basis, the following requirements must be met.

Whilst it is most likely that an employee who is undertaking long term home working will be office based, this need not necessarily be the case and other types of jobs, including some “manual” jobs might be appropriately undertaken at home. Accordingly, the home working environment should:

- provide a suitable space for the relevant work to be undertaken which should ideally be in a separate room within the home but could be, if considered appropriate by the Company, a dedicated area within the home.
- provide freedom from interruptions and distractions.
- meet all required health and safety requirements.
- meet all required security requirements.
- meet all communication requirements.
- meet all equipment, facilities and material requirements.

In addition, it is crucial that an employee who undertakes home working has in place the necessary home buildings and contents insurance cover and informs their insurance company that they are working from home.

Furthermore, it is also crucial that the employee checks any mortgage and rental agreements and local authority planning rules, to ensure that they fully comply with any relevant requirements and conditions within such agreements and, where express permission is required under those agreements and where appropriate, such permissions are obtained. In addition, the employee should check their house deeds for any covenants that may be impacted by home working.

With regard to health and safety, a home worker is a “lone worker” and is afforded the same protection under health and safety legislation as an employee who works on Company premises as a lone worker. As such, all the Company’s health and safety policies and procedures apply to home workers and the home working environment would be inspected by Company representatives prior to commencing home working and at regular intervals thereafter to ensure that all required health and safety requirements are in place. In particular, the Company will take appropriate steps to ensure that:

- the actual workspace is checked to ensure that it is adequate for the employee’s needs,
- all equipment and systems of work in the employees’ home are safe,
- all articles and substances are safely handled and stored,
- a risk assessment and hazard identification of the workspace and workstation is conducted,
- information and training are provided on the safe use of any equipment that the employee will be using, including computer equipment and display screen equipment.

In addition, home working employees must report any work-related accidents.

Where it is agreed that an employee can work from home, the employee has a duty of care and is responsible for their own health and safety and the health and safety of others, as if they were working on Company premises. As such a home working employee must work in a safe manner, follow all Company health and safety policies and procedures, use any protective equipment or clothing provided by the Company and always act in a way that would not in any way endanger the employee or anyone else.

With regard to security, it is imperative that the employee keeps all information, documents, computers and computer media secure and applies the Company’s policies and procedures with regard to IT equipment, email, internet, telephone and messaging. In particular, the employee must ensure that:

- No paper documents containing personal data (that is not your own) to be held at home addresses.
- all computer equipment uses unique passwords according to Company policies which are never shared with any other person.
- All equipment are only used by the employee and cannot be used or accessed by anyone else who may live in the employee's home or may have access to it as a result of being in or visiting the employee's home.
- all computer equipment has up-to-date antivirus software and ensure that all operating systems and software have the latest security and product updates.
- complete confidentiality is implemented at all times and in particular that no-one can see information on computer screens or overhear telephone conversations.
- particular care is taken to apply Company IT, email and internet policies with regard to the email and internet use and to be alert to possible phishing and malware attacks in any computer or internet usage. In addition, the employee should note that all email and messaging undertaken by the employee whilst home working will be subject to monitoring, in accordance with the Company's IT, email and internet policies, as is applicable when working on Company premises.
- personal computers, laptops, pads, mobile phones, storage media are never used for Company work or data storage.
- All access to the home is secure and kept locked and that all windows can be locked.
- the Company's Data Protection and Privacy Policies are strictly applied and adhered to. Under no circumstances should the employee disclose personal data to anyone other than those to whom they are authorised to disclose such data and must ensure that whenever data is sent to another person from the employee's computer, by any media including on a portable computer, disk or memory stick, that it is passworded and encrypted, in accordance with Company policies.

With regard to communication requirements, it is imperative that the employee has in place the necessary telephone, broadband and internet facilities to enable the required communication between the employee working at their home and the Company and anyone else that the employee needs to contact for their work. Where the Company operates a Virtual Private Network (VPN) for external communications, it is essential that the communication arrangements that the home working employee puts in place will support working within the Company's VPN, especially for data security and encryption purposes. Where instructed to do so, the employee must use the Company's VPN or other prescribed security facilities and arrangements for all appropriate communication.

With regard to equipment and facilities requirements, the Company will provide such equipment and facilities for the employee to work at home, as if the employee were working at Company premises. The Company will also provide the employee with the materials that the employee needs to undertake their job, such as stationery, or where appropriate, production equipment and materials. It is the responsibility of the employee to take proper care of Company equipment and materials and inform the Company of any loss or damage and to request replacement if required. Any equipment provided to the employee for the purposes of home working remains the property of the Company, may not be removed from the employee's home without the express written permission of the Company and may only be used for Company purposes. At the termination of the home working agreement and/or the employee's employment, the Company will visit the employee to collect any Company property such as equipment, documents, materials and furniture.

Costs associated with Home Working

Any home working arrangement would typically be of advantage to the employee and as such, the employee would be expected to absorb some reasonable additional costs to enable home working to be implemented. Other than providing equipment and facilities as described in this policy, the

Company will not reimburse the employee for any additional costs associated with home working. In particular, the Company will not reimburse any costs for additional gas, electricity, water, telephone or broadband consumption associated with the home working.

Home Alterations and Building Work

It should be noted that under no circumstances will the Company be prepared to pay for or contribute whatsoever towards any alterations of the employee's home. If the employee is contemplating alterations to their home, this is entirely their decision and at their cost. It should further be noted that, where there is a home working agreement in place, if an employee decides to undertake any alterations or building work at their home, this must not impact on the employee's ability to undertake their job from home normally. If, as a result of alterations or building work undertaken at an employee's home, the working arrangements for home working have changed, the Company reserves the right to visit the employee's home and carry out any health and safety, security, IT and any other type of inspection to ensure that the new arrangements comply with Company requirements.

Working Hours

The working hours of an employee who is home working will be agreed at the time of agreeing the home working arrangement. In the normal course of events, the Company will agree weekly contracted hours. Whilst it might be agreed that the contracted hours could be worked on a more flexible arrangement than would be the case on Company premises, any home working arrangement will include defined "core period" when the employee must be working and contactable, unless the employee is on agreed absence or holiday or has informed the Company that they are sick. The contracted hours and, where applicable, core hours will be defined in the Contract of Employment.

To ensure that the Company complies with the Working Time Regulations, all working time and breaks must be recorded as prescribed by the Company.

Holidays, Sickness and Absence from Work

All Company policies and procedures related to holidays, absence from work or sickness apply to all short or long term home working employees and must be implemented as if the employee were working on Company premises, whether it is requesting and obtaining authorisation for holidays or reporting absence from work or sickness, including all notification and documentary requirements.

Company Visits to Employee's Home

From time-to-time, the Company will need to visit the employee at their home to discuss matters related to work. This will normally be by prior arrangement but there may be occasions when notice of such meetings may be short depending on the requirements of the business. It is a condition of any home working agreement that the employee agrees to such meetings taking place at their home which may be, for example:

- to discuss work,
- communicate work developments,
- deliver or collect work or work materials,
- ensure that the working arrangements remain at the required standards of health and safety and security,
- to resolve IT issues which affect the employee's ability to communicate effectively with the Company or others for company business,
- bring, set up, repair or retrieve equipment
- any other matter that the Company may decide requires a meeting.

Meetings

From time-to-time, home working employees will be required travel to Company premises to attend meetings, such as for training, performance discussions or team briefings. This will normally be by prior arrangement but there may be occasions when notice of such meetings may be short depending on the requirements of the business.

Under no circumstances should the employee hold business meetings, other than with Company employees, as noted above, at their home. In particular, the employee should never meet clients, customers, service users or suppliers at their home.

For the employee's safety, the employee should never share their home address, contact details such as personal email address or phone number with anyone outside their immediate work colleagues and then only as necessary.

Contact with the Company

The employee will be expected to maintain normal contact with the Company and their work colleagues as required to undertake their job. In addition, it will be expected that the employee will contact their line manager on an agreed basis, typically daily.

Moving Home

The employee must inform their line manager at the earliest opportunity if they are planning to move home. At this point, the Company will review the home working arrangement and decide, at its absolute discretion, whether home working can continue at a new address. This decision will be based on a wide range of factors, including

- the nature of the employee's job
- the employee's proposed new location,
- the home working arrangements that the employee plans on implementing at their new home
- the effectiveness of the current arrangements
- future Company requirements
- any other factors that the Company considers are appropriate.

If the Company agrees to the continuation of the home working agreement at the employee's new home location, a new home working agreement will be implemented upon the completion of the house move, including ratification of all health and safety, security and IT and any other Company requirements in the new location.

In addition, to any discussions regarding home working, the employee will need to complete any Company procedures regarding their house move such as completing Human Resources documentation regarding their new address and contact details.

Expenses

Car mileage or travel costs for travel to and from the employee's home to their Company administrative base location will not be reimbursed. All other expenses will be reimbursed according to the Company's Expenses Policy.

Dependent Care

It is a condition of any short or long term home working agreement that arrangements for dependent care are made to ensure that the employee can work to the required standards and normally without disruption. If dependent care arrangements change, particularly potentially on a long term basis, such that they will materially affect the ability of the employee to work to the required standards and normally without disruption, the employee must inform their line manager immediately and any home

working agreement would automatically be reviewed as to whether it should continue in the changed circumstances.

Review of Home Working Agreement

All home working agreements will be subject to a minimum of an annual review to allow the Company and employee to assess whether the arrangements are still appropriate and working to the satisfaction of both the Company and the employee.

Termination of Home Working Agreement

A long term home working agreement may be terminated by the Company or the employee by giving a minimum notice of three months. Where this would impact on the employee's Contract of Employment, such a termination would trigger a review of the employee's Contract to ensure that any HR and employment law implications are appropriately addressed both from the employee's and Company's perspective. Upon termination of a home working agreement, the employee would, under normal circumstances, return to working permanently on Company premises.

Probationary or Trial Period

Any agreement for long term home working may include a probationary or trial period, during which either the employee or the Company may decide to terminate the arrangement, subject to an agreed notice period of not less than four weeks.

Data protection

To operate and administrate the Home Working policy, the Company needs to collect and process personal data. This personal data will be processed in accordance with the Company's Data Protection Policy and Employee Privacy Notice. Where it is necessary for the Company to collect and process information which is called Special Categories of personal data, such personal data will be collected in accordance with the Company's Data Protection Policy and Employee Privacy Notice related to the processing of special categories of personal data. The Company has a legitimate interest and/or a legal obligation in processing this personal data to ensure that the Holiday policy is complied with and correctly managed.

All personal data collected and processed by the Company is held securely and only accessed or disclosed to those individuals who require such information for the purposes for which it was collected. Any inappropriate access or disclosure of personal data is treated as a data breach. You should immediately report any such inappropriate access or disclosure to the person responsible for data protection as shown in, and in accordance with, the Company's Data Protection Policy. Such a breach will be investigated and dealt with under the Company's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Meetings

Any reference to a meeting in this policy refers to a face to face meeting where possible, which is always preferable. However, situations can occur which can make face to face meetings extremely difficult or impossible such as where one or more of the participants is not able to meet in person for reasons of location or health or because of a public health emergency or as required by a local, regional or national government directive. If this is the case, an alternative means of meeting will be agreed by those taking part, to enable the meeting to take place, such as by video or a telephone conference call. Where this is the case and a record of the meeting needs to be made, the Company will prepare such a record, including digitally recording the meeting, if this is considered appropriate. If the Company is making a digital recording of the meeting, all those taking part in the meeting will be expressly informed of this. Other than any Company digital record of the meeting, the digital recording of the meeting or of a video meeting or telephone conference call is expressly forbidden by any other party to the meeting.

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