

# **HOMEWORKING GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYEES**

## HOMWORKING GUIDANCE FOR EMPLOYEES

### 1. SUPPORTING FLEXIBLE WORKING

- 1.1 The following guidance should be read in conjunction with the Supporting Flexible Working Policy by employees in suitable posts who wish to work from home.
- 1.2 Each of the workstyle categories outlined in the Supporting Flexible Working Policy provide relevant employees with some opportunity for homeworking, whether that be for all hours worked or on an ad hoc basis.

### 2. HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLBEING

- 2.1 It is important that you take care of your own health and safety while working from home. Before any regular homeworking arrangement is agreed, your line manager will work with you to conduct a Homeworking Risk Assessment.

You should:

- Keep in regular contact with your line manager and tell them if you are feeling stressed or anxious;
- Keep in touch with colleagues to avoid feelings of isolation. This is particularly important for employees working all of their contracted hours from home.
- Where possible, get outside during your lunch break and do something physically active.
- Differentiate between work time and personal time by sticking to a routine and working your normal weekly hours. If you are on the flexi-time scheme, hours should normally be worked within the flexi-time bandwidths;
- If space allows, set aside a specific area in your home where you can work;
- Switch your computer off at the end of your working day and tidy all the papers away.

You must:

- Tell your line manager about any health and safety risks or any homeworking arrangements that need to change;
- Conduct a Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Workstation Assessment when instructed to do so using the DSE work station assessment tool provided. For further information see [Display Screen Equipment User Procedures and Guidance](#);
- Take regular breaks away from the computer, undertaking a non-screen related work task where possible;
- Report any work-related accidents that occur within your home, following normal [Accident Reporting](#) arrangements.
- Ensure that, if appropriate to your working hours, you take a minimum 30-minute lunch period, preferably away from your work space.
- For ad hoc homeworking, a [Homeworking Checklist](#) must be completed by the employee.

- 2.2 Where specialist equipment, for example an ergonomic chair, has been purchased to meet your needs and allow you to work safely, it may not be possible to provide secondary equipment for working from home. It may also not be appropriate to transport bulky items to your home on a regular basis to support homeworking. In such cases, homeworking may be considered unsuitable for you.

### **3. RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEPENDANTS**

- 3.1 While recognising that family members and dependants are likely to be in the home while an employee is working from home, it is important that you are not responsible for dependants while undertaking work for the council. There should be another responsible person available to attend to the needs of dependants during normal working hours.

### **4. INFORMATION SECURITY AND DATA PROTECTION**

- 4.1 While working from home you continue to be subject to the council's [Information Governance Policy](#) and you should familiarise yourself with the employee responsibilities included in this. Further information on [information security](#) and [data protection](#) is available on Mytoolkit. Any concerns relating to information security or data protection should be discussed with your line manager.
- 4.2 Work from home must be carried out using a council approved device to which only council employees have access. When away from your workstation, all PCs, laptops etc must be 'locked' when unattended. They can be locked using the standard keyboard combinations: 'CTL-ALT-DEL' then 'Lock Computer' or 'Windows' key  $\square$  + L. This ensures that information cannot be viewed and is password protected from unauthorised access.
- 4.3 Care should also be taken when conducting confidential discussions via video conferencing or telephone when other members of your household are at home. Use of headsets and appropriate video conferencing etiquette (e.g. muting when not speaking) should be the norm.

### **5. HOME INSURANCE, MORTGAGE OR RENTAL AGREEMENTS**

- 5.1 You should check with your home and contents insurance provider that you have cover for work from home and whether devices provided for work are covered.
- 5.2 You should check your mortgage or rental agreement to ensure you are allowed to work from home and obtain permission if necessary.

### **6. ALLOWANCES AND EXPENSES**

- 6.1 If you take advantage of the opportunity to work from home, it will not entitle you to receive additional allowances. Tax relief for working from home is only available where employees are required to work from home, you cannot claim tax relief if you choose to work from home.
- 6.2 There may be separate tax implications for employees working from a UK home address outside Scotland. Employees who live out with Scotland should contact payroll for further advise.
- 6.3 You are not expected to cover the expense of any stationery items required. Stationery required to carry out your work will be provided by the council and can be obtained from your council workplace in the same manner as when working from a council workplace.

## **7. IT SUPPORT**

- 7.1 IT Support for employees working from home will be provided by IT Services. If you experience hardware, software or network issues you should log a request with the IT Service Desk on the [IT self-service portal](#) or by contacting IT on 01506 282828.
- 7.2 If you experience connection problems you should make your colleagues aware by offline means, and you should carry out offline tasks where possible. If connection problems are expected to continue for an extended period you will be expected to work from your council workplace location.

## **8. SICKNESS ABSENCE**

- 8.1 If you are ill and unable to work on a day that you would normally work from home, you must follow normal sickness absence reporting procedures by contacting your line manager:
- At the earliest possible time on the first day of absence with due regard to local operational requirements;
  - On the 4<sup>th</sup> day of absence;
  - On the 7<sup>th</sup> day of absence;
  - Thereafter, you must maintain contact as agreed with your line manager.
- 8.2 A self-certificate will be required to cover the first 7 calendar days of absence. Absences continuing beyond 7 calendar days will require a GP certificate.

## **9. EQUALITY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 9.1 If due to a disability or any other special circumstances any adjustment to working arrangements is required, you should discuss your needs with your line manager.

## **10. LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

- 10.1 Your learning and development continues to be a priority while you are working from home. You can access your My Learning account [here](#).

You should:

- Take personal responsibility for your learning and development needs, putting yourself forward for opportunities to expand your knowledge and skills;
- Avoid professional isolation as a result of working from home by keeping abreast of what is happening in your team, your service and across the council.

You must:

- Complete any mandatory learning as directed;
- Discuss your learning and development needs with your line manager at your regular one to one meetings and at your annual Appraisal and Development Review.

- 10.2 Homeworking may not be suitable for you if you are new to the council or undertaking a new role for which in person support is required. Where this is the case, your line manager will discuss this with you and determine when homeworking might be considered in the future.

## **11. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT**

- 11.1 All terms and conditions of employment outlined in your contract of employment will continue to apply while working from home. You will remain subject to the council's policies and procedures and codes of conduct while working from home. All relevant HR policies can be accessed on [Mytoolkit](#).

## **12. KEEPING IN TOUCH**

- 12.1 It is important that you are in regular contact with your line manager and arrangements to hold regular one-to-ones by telephone or video conferencing should be agreed between you and your line manager. While the council's People Strategy recommends that one-to-ones are held at least every 4 weeks, it is recommended that contact with remote workers should be much more frequent, at least weekly.
- 12.2 It is also important to keep in touch with team members, other colleagues and wider contacts. Being in regular contact with colleagues will help to avoid feelings of isolation.
- 12.3 You should keep your diary and outlook 'out of office' function up to date with your work availability. Sharing your diary with colleagues will help your team to know your availability.

## **13. ATTENDING THE WORKPLACE**

- 13.1 A suitable council location will be identified as your contractual base, where you will be required to attend for team meetings or other necessary face to face contact as required and at least once per month.
- 13.2 Where a task or project would benefit from face to face collaboration you may be asked to attend the workplace at specific times or for a specific period to undertake such work.
- 13.3 In line with paragraph 5.6 of the Supporting Flexible Working Policy, if you move house, your individual suitability for homeworking will be re-assessed to determine whether you remain within an acceptable commutable distance ensuring your ability to attend the workplace as required.

## **14. BUSINESS TRAVEL**

- 14.1 Any travel undertaken to fulfil the requirement to attend a council location as your contractual base will be considered a normal commute and mileage allowances will not be payable.
- 14.2 In line with the [Policy on Business Travel and Subsistence](#), where you undertake business journeys starting from or returning to your homeworking location, you may claim travel expenses in excess of that which you would incur if travelling from home to your contractual base, irrespective of the time of day that journey occurs.
- 14.3 The principle of excess travel will also be applied to travel time. Where you undertake business journeys, starting from or returning to your home, only the excess journey time will count as working time, irrespective of the time of day that the journey occurs.

14.4 You are encouraged to plan your working day to minimise travel time and mileage, ensuring that normally a maximum of only one journey per day is conducted to or from your home.

**15. ACCESS TO YOUR HOME**

15.1 The council will not normally need access to your home. If for example however, there is a need to assess your work environment in person, maintain equipment that cannot be transported to a council workplace or carry out electrical equipment testing the council may need to agree with you arrangements to access your home.

**Human Resources  
6 February 2024**