



Homeworking Assessment Guidance for Managers

**Human Resources
23 February 2022**

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This Guidance will set out the process for employees to participate in the homeworking or hybrid working arrangements as part of the Supporting Flexible Working Pilot and in line with the relevant post categorisation.
- 1.2 Employees in posts categorised as suitable for homeworking or hybrid working will not be required to work from home but may take the opportunity to do so.
- 1.3 Even where their post is categorised as suitable for homeworking, not all employees will be suited to homeworking or will have a suitable homeworking environment. Therefore, managers must review the suitability of each employee who wants to work from home as part of the Supporting Flexible Working Pilot.

2. RIGHT TO REQUEST FLEXIBLE WORKING

- 2.1 Any review of an employee's suitability for working from home should be carried out in accordance with the principles of the statutory right to request flexible working.
- 2.2 Reasons for rejecting must be objective and demonstrable, rather than an opinion. A request should only be rejected where homeworking will:
 - cause an unreasonable burden of additional cost to the council;
 - have a detrimental effect on the council's ability to meet customer demand;
 - make it impossible to organise work within the existing staff resources;
 - have a detrimental impact on quality of service; or
 - have a detrimental impact on service performance.
- 2.3 The reasons above have been considered in relation to posts as part of the workstyle categorisation exercise undertaken by Heads of Service. These reasons have not been considered in relation to individual employees.
- 2.4 Additional cost, ability to meet customer demand, organising work, impact on quality of service and impact on service performance should therefore be the key concerns when reviewing individual employees and their homeworking environment.

3. ASSESSMENT PROCESS

- 3.1 Service Managers will be responsible for ensuring a thorough process is conducted to ensure that employees who wish to take advantage of the opportunity to work from home are able to undertake homeworking in an effective, efficient and safe way. The following steps should be followed in conducting a review:

Step 1

- 3.2 Service Managers will be required to inform employees in their service of the workstyle categorisation that is applicable to their post.
- 3.4 Employees in posts that have been categorised as suitable for homeworking or hybrid working will also be informed of the option to work from home for all or part of their working week in accordance with the Supporting Flexible Working Pilot.

Step 2

- 3.5 Relevant employees will be asked to consider the arrangements for homeworking and hybrid working as outlined in the Supporting Flexible Working Pilot along with the Homeworking Guidance and indicate whether they wish to participate.

Step 3

- 3.6 Service Managers will arrange for an appropriate manager to discuss potential homeworking arrangements with each employee that wants to participate in the pilot.

- 3.7 The manager will discuss with the employee:

- the attributes of homeworkers and the employee's suitability;
- the employee's homeworking environment; and
- the homeworking risk assessment.

4. ATTRIBUTES OF HOMEWORKERS

- 4.1 A key requirement of homeworking is that the role should be performed just as well away from the workplace by the employee working on their own. To be successful, an employee working from home needs attributes to cope with working on their own and the following should be considered as part of the review process.

- 4.2 Is the employee:

- Comfortable spending long periods working on their own;
- Self-disciplined and self-motivated
- Confident working without direct supervision;
- Able to separate work from home life

- 4.3 The employee's experience of forced homeworking arrangements as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic will be a relevant consideration, as will the employee's ability to effectively and efficiently undertake the duties of their post during this time.

- 4.4 The manager should also discuss with the employee whether working from home as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic has had any negative impact on the employee's wellbeing.

- 4.5 The manager should ensure that the employee has read the Homeworking Guidance and that they understand and have considered all aspects of the homeworking arrangement.

5. HOMEWORKING ENVIRONMENT

- 5.1 A key consideration in reviewing the employee's homeworking environment is safety, as addressed in section 6 below by the Homeworking Risk Assessment. In addition to safety however, the following should be considered:

- Does the employee have a reasonable space, security and privacy to work?
- Does the employee live within an acceptable UK commutable distance allowing them to attend work as required for their role as set out in paragraphs 5.6 and 5.7 of the Supporting Flexible Working Pilot?

- Does the employee have internet connectivity able to support access to council systems?
- What arrangements does the employee have in place for dependants at home during normal working hours in accordance with paragraph 3.1 of the Homeworking Guidance?

6. HOMEWORKING RISK ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 The council has a duty of care to employees whether they are working from a council workplace or from home. To ensure that any health and safety risks are identified and addressed, the employee should complete a Homeworking Risk Assessment in preparation for discussion with their manager.
- 6.2 Any identified risks should be discussed, and consideration should be given to how any risks can be eliminated or mitigated to an acceptable degree. Managers should consult with their service Health and Safety Adviser as appropriate.
- 6.3 Where identified risks cannot reasonably be eliminated or mitigated, it may be necessary to determine that homeworking is not suitable for the employee concerned.
- 6.4 Where home working is appropriate, managers should discuss safe working procedures, such as, arrangements to ensure that the whereabouts of staff who work from home alone and go out to visit clients/customers are known. For example, team members notifying colleagues of when they are leaving home, arriving on site, heading home or arriving home. Location details for appointments should be noted on outlook calendars or another shared system.
- 6.5 For many home workers it will not be essential to have a lone working device, but where an employee is deemed to require such a device, the employee should be advised of the importance of using it and know how to use it.
- 6.6 The manager should update any existing risk assessments or existing lone working risk assessments in [Sphera](#) to reflect individual arrangements and the addition of home based working.

7. RECORDING ASSESSMENT DECISIONS

- 7.1 Each service will be required to record the details of employees who wish to work from home as part of the Supporting Flexible Working Pilot on the Homeworking and Hybrid Working Record.
- 7.2 The Homeworking and Hybrid Working Record will also provide a record of the review of individual employee suitability for homeworking and the outcome of the review.
- 7.3 The Homeworking and Hybrid Working Record and all associated Homeworking Risk Assessments should be retained by the service.

8. APPEAL PROCESS

- 8.1 Where an employee is dissatisfied with the outcome of their individual assessment for homeworking, they may appeal the decision in writing to the Head of Service. The Head of Service decision will be final with no further recourse.

8. REVIEW

- 8.1 The decision to allow homeworking as part of the Supporting Flexible Working Pilot for any employee will remain under review throughout the period of the pilot.
- 8.2 As employee circumstances change or the employee's role develops or changes, it may be necessary to re-assess homeworking arrangements.
- 8.3 All homeworking arrangements will be reviewed on conclusion of the Supporting Flexible Working Pilot and any future arrangements will be taken forward in line with agreed policy.

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