

To: **Employment Committee**  
**10 February 2021**

---

**Homeworking Policy**  
**Director of Resources**

**1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 Following the increase in homeworking as a result of the pandemic, a policy to address homeworking has been produced to formalise an increase in homeworking and the procedure for requests for extended homeworking i.e. over 80% of an employee's normal working hours spent at home.

Under the Council's constitution, new policies are brought to the Employment Committee for consideration and approval.

**2 Recommendation**

- 2.1 **That CMT / the Employment Committee approve the proposed Bracknell Forest Homeworking Policy.**

**3 Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1 There is no existing policy to formalise homeworking or to respond to requests for more extensive homeworking from employees.
- 3.2 The approach to homeworking has changed significantly as a result of the pandemic throughout which the majority of employees have been homeworking. The homeworking policy reflects the Council's new way of working post-pandemic which allows for an increase in the amount of time that employees may be asked to work from home to alleviate the demand on the Council's office space.
- 3.3 The Council are seeing an increase in requests from employees to work from home as they wish to relocate further away from their normal office locations. The homeworking policy lays down considerations and guidelines so that all requests are handled fairly and equitably.
- 3.4 The policy stipulates that permanently working from home without occasional visits to the employee's main place of work is not to be permitted, to ensure that some level of face to face contact is maintained and well-being can be regularly assessed.

**4 Alternative Options Considered**

- 4.1 Relying upon existing policies but these do not specifically deal with the issues associated with homeworking.

**5 Supporting Information**

- 5.1 Feedback from staff well-being surveys undertaken during 2020/21 shows that many roles do not need to be predominantly office based to function effectively and that there is a significantly increased preference amongst staff to work more regularly

from home on a permanent basis. Despite some initial concerns, it has also been clear during the period of enforced home working that there has not been a reduction in staff performance or service efficiencies. Within this overall situation, there is a recognition that for some staff and service areas the office is still the preferred workplace, for mental health, support and wellbeing reasons.

- 5.2 Requests are being received from our employees to work from home for the majority of their working time to support their desire to move to cheaper areas of the country to achieve better work/life balance. Whilst there are other policies which deal with flexible working, there is currently no policy that refers to homeworking. To ensure requests are treated fairly and consistently a formal procedure needs to be in place and a proposed Homeworking Policy is attached as Annex A to this report.
- 5.3 Senior managers and Unions have been consulted during the preparation of the Homeworking Policy and support its implementation.
- 5.4 The content of recruitment documents/employment contracts will be reviewed in relation to the homeworking policy and, where necessary, updated accordingly.
- 5.5 Related policies will also need to be reviewed to ensure they are consistent with the new ways of working outlined by the homeworking policy, eg. ECU, expenses, flexitime etc. Although it is not expected that any significant changes will need to be made

## **6 Consultation and Other Considerations**

### **6.1 Legal Advice**

The legal implications arising from the greater emphasis on homeworking proposed centre primarily around Health and Safety and Data Protection both of which are referenced in the report.

### **6.2 Financial Advice**

There are no direct financial implications arising from the proposals in this report. However, it is recognised that reduced demand from staff in the future for space at Time Square in particular opens up the potential to consider different options for use of the building that could release savings or generate additional income through working with partner agencies.

### **6.3 Other Consultation Responses**

Senior Managers and Trade Unions have been consulted on the proposed Homeworking policy. Their comments and feedback have been used to further refine the document.

### **6.4 Equalities Impact Assessment**

N/A

### **6.5 Strategic Risk Management Issues**

N/A

## **Background Papers**

Contact for further information

Trish Barnard, Assistant Director HR and OD - 01344 351904

[Trish.Barnard@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:Trish.Barnard@bracknell-forest.gov.uk)

Alison Beswick, Senior HR Advisor – 01344 351256

[Alison.beswick@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:Alison.beswick@bracknell-forest.gov.uk)

**BRACKNELL FOREST BOROUGH COUNCIL****HOMEWORKING POLICY****Table of Contents**

1.0	Introduction
2.0	General Principles
3.0	Scope
4.0	Definitions
5.0	Eligibility for Homeworking
6.0	Place of Work
6.1	Location
6.2	New Employees
6.3	Probation Periods
7.0	Access to Employee's Homes
8.0	Homeworking Guidelines
8.1	General
8.2	Availability
8.3	Working Hours
8.4	The Role of the Manager
8.5	The Responsibilities of the Homeworker
8.6	Managing the Homeworker
8.7	What to do if homeworking isn't working
8.8	Requests for Reduced Homeworking
9.0	Extended Homeworking
10.0	Pay & Expenses
10.1	Pay
10.2	Expenses
10.3	Travel Expenses
10.4	Tax Relief
11.0	Equipment – ICT/Chairs, etc
12.0	Health & Safety
12.1	Introduction
12.2	Health & Safety Training
12.3	Homeworking Self Assessment
12.4	The Role of the Unions
12.5	Accident Reporting
13.0	Absence
13.1	Sickness
13.2	Other Absence
14.0	Mortgages & Insurance
15.0	Loss/Damage to Council Equipment
16.0	Data Protection/GDPR
17.0	Review & Revision of Arrangements
18.0	Moving Home
19.0	How to Apply for Extended Homeworking

**Attachments**

Appendix A: Homeworking FAQs

**Related Guidance/Policy**

Appendix 1: Right to Request Flexible Working Policy

- Appendix 2: Expenses Policy for Employees
- Appendix 3: Claim tax relief for your job expenses
- Appendix 4: Homeworking Health & Safety Advice
- Appendix 5: Homeworking Self-Assessment Form
- Appendix 6: Incident Report Form
- Appendix 7: Flexible/Agile Working Policy
- Appendix 8: Flexitime Scheme Guidance
- Appendix 9: Lone Working Policy
- Appendix 10: Harmony Counselling
- Appendix 11: Employers Liability and Public Liability Insurance Cover

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Council is committed to improving the working lives of all staff (full time, part time or job share, regardless of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity/gender expression, age or personal circumstances) and aims help all employees achieve a work/life balance, which balances the demands of the job with their home life.

The homeworking policy is just one of the flexible working options available to Council staff, which allows employees to carry out their daily duties from home. However, it does not cover other aspects of flexible working, such as amendments to working hours, which are considered under the Right to Request Flexible Working Policy (Appendix 1).

There is recognition that many roles do not need to be predominantly based in offices to function effectively so, where business needs permit, the expectation is that employees will be working from home for the majority of their working week (up to 80% of their contracted hours). However, it is recognised that, for some staff, working from home is less positive and to support mental health and wellbeing there is flexibility for those employees who may wish to come into their office location for a higher percentage of time for personal reasons.

This policy outlines the guidelines for all employees working at home and sets out the procedure for requests for working at home for more than 80% of an employee's normal working week i.e. extended homeworking.

## 2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The key principles of the homeworking policy are that:

- Work is about what you do, not where you are. Regardless of where an employee is working, they should be available to communicate and collaborate in person, as required, during their working hours
- The technology available is used to ensure agile working is embraced fully, while maintaining the best level of service.

The overriding factor, when making a decision on the amount of time an employee works from home, office or different locations, will be business need.

This policy provides a framework for homeworking and also sets out the procedure in relation to requests for extended working from home i.e. when more than 80% of an employee's working week is spent at home. However, the nature of work in a team will affect the specific way in which the homeworking policy is applied.

The majority of roles within the Council allow for flexible working, this can be; at home, at the Council Offices or at another work location, whilst others would require all their work to be carried out at the office. Each work location or function will present different opportunities and limitations for homeworking, according to the needs of the service.

Whilst the homeworking policy allows for greater flexibility to work from home, it does not affect your normal place of work which will remain your assigned office, not your home.

Whilst some employees may want to request homeworking for the majority of their contracted hours, it should be noted that working from home on a permanent basis is not be permitted as employees will be required to attend their assigned office from time to time.

### 3. SCOPE

This document applies to all non-school based employees whose role and work location supports homeworking.

Working at home will not be permitted in the following cases:

- Employees being supported under the Performance Improvement/Capability Procedure, or employees for whom temporary close supervision is necessary to obtain data on work outputs.
- Employees subject to a formal Disciplinary warning for breaches of this procedure or other relevant misconduct.
- Work experience students not employed by the Council.

### 4. DEFINITIONS

The following are the definitions of the different types of homeworking that are covered by this policy:

<b>Workstyle</b>	<b>Description</b>
Homeworker	Employees who work from home up to 80% of their normal working week.
Extended Homeworker	An employee would be classified as an extended homeworker if they wish to work more than 80% of their working time from home – averaged across a 4 week period.

### 5. ELIGIBILITY FOR HOMEWORKING

- 5.1 All employees, who are able to work from home, may be required to do so for up to 80% of their normal working week, unless the needs of the business require the employee to work from an office or other location.
- 5.2 Any requests for extended homeworking will be reviewed by the employee's manager on their own merit before agreement is given. In circumstances where the Council cannot agree to a request, then the employee will be given the reasons for refusal in writing.
- 5.3 When making a decision on the amount of time to be spent homeworking, consideration will be given to the following:
- i. Will homeworking meet the Council's business needs as well as the employee's needs, so it is favourable to both?
  - ii. What will be the impact on customers, the department/organisation?
  - iii. Can the employee's job feasibly be done from home and how easy is it to perform the role from home?
  - iv. Does the employee have a suitable place to work from home? Homeworkers need a safe and reasonable space, security and privacy in which to work, and for office-type tasks an internet connection able to support work systems.
  - v. Has the appropriate training been completed?
  - vi. Has a DSE and homeworking risk assessment taken place?

- 5.4 The decision on the amount of time spent homeworking should not be based on a manager's personal preference or concerns over the ability to monitor home working.
- 5.5 Homeworking arrangements will be reviewed between the employee and their line manager on a regular basis to ascertain if the amount of time spent homeworking is successful for both the homeworker and the Council and to ensure that the amount of time working from home is not having a negative impact on the health and wellbeing of the employee. If the homeworking arrangements are not working satisfactorily they can be reduced or removed as outlined in 8.7.

## **6. PLACE OF WORK**

### **6.1 Location**

Whether employees work occasionally/regularly/or for extended periods from home, their official principal place of work will remain a specific office location (eg Time Square), although their contract of employment may also indicate that they may be required or permitted to work at any location within Bracknell Forest.

Employees will be required to attend their principal work location regularly, at times and for purposes agreed with their line manager, in line with business need.

### **6.2 New Employees**

For new employees, homeworking will be a contractual requirement unless the job is assessed as fixed (i.e. based in the office permanently). However, the ability for a potential employee to work at home should not affect the recruitment decision as other work locations could be used. The recruiting manager should assess and record any issues around the ability to work remotely.

### **6.3 Probationary Periods**

New employees, who are subject to a probationary period, may need to spend proportionally more time in the office to enable better training, induction, team-building and assistance but they should be encouraged to build up their time spent working away from the office so that, by the end of the probationary period, the manager can be confident of their ability to work under less direct supervision and their ability to work from home.

## **7. ACCESS TO EMPLOYEES' HOMES**

Should there be concerns over a homeworker's homeworking environment, the manager, or a representative of the Council, reserves the right to visit the homes of employees who are working from home. Should this be necessary, permission will be sought from the homeworker in advance and reasonable notice will be given, unless urgent access is necessary

Examples of reasons for a home visit could include the following (this list is not exhaustive):

- Initial set-up.
- Maintenance of equipment.
- Health and safety assessment.



## **8. HOMEWORKING GUIDELINES**

### **8.1 General**

Homeworking may mean increased flexibility in hours worked, as employees are not necessarily restricted by the opening hours of the office (please see section 8.2 below), unless there is a requirement to work fixed working hours to meet rota requirements. Homeworkers will generally be expected to complete their normal working hours between 7.30am and 7.30pm Monday to Friday to take account of the needs of the service and the availability of other colleagues, in line with the Flexible Working policy. Any request to extend these working hours must be agreed in advance by the employee's manager.

### **8.2 Availability**

Employees should be contactable whilst homeworking, so most working time should be at times when suppliers, managers and colleagues are also likely to be working and when customers will have an expectation of contacting a Council officer.

When working at home, employees are expected to log in to MS Teams, Jabber and Outlook and any other software used as a normal part of their role.

### **8.3 Working Hours**

Homeworkers should not work for longer than their usual hours in line with the Working Time Regulations 1998, and are required to take appropriate breaks as outlined in the flexitime policy.

### **8.4 The Role of the Manager**

It is important to establish what measure of control the manager has on how much work is done at home and when. This is because the boundary between home life and work life can become blurred, and also because the manager must ensure the interests of the service are not prejudiced. The following principles apply:

- i. To access the employee's home if required – see section 7. above.
- ii. At times, the manager may require the employee to work at the principal work location in the interests of the service. This might be required for example if there was a need for closer supervision; if the task can be completed more efficiently using the resources at work; for cover in the office; for meetings; for a short period for a particular task or project, or for operational reasons; or if the manager is not convinced that the homeworking environment is safe. The employee must always attend the office where the team is based when required, subject to reasonable notice. The employee may also be required to attend meetings, training, seminars etc at any appropriate location.
- iii. The manager may not insist that the home is used as a workplace if the employee is reasonably unable to do so.
- iv. The manager must ensure that staff have appropriate training in Information Security and should periodically check that standards are being adhered to and eLearning completed.
- v. Managers should agree core times at which employees should be contactable while working at home. They will be required to take a minimum of half an hour

lunch break (where working hours are more than 5 hours). The line manager may agree reasonable “time out” in core hours for caring responsibilities or to attend an appointment but these “time outs” should be agreed in advance and clearly indicated on the Outlook calendar as non-contact time. All hours worked, and breaks taken, must be recorded. The Council’s open calendar policy means that the Outlook Calendar should indicate availability clearly.

- vi. Managers should have a clear expectation of the output expected of an employee working from home and should monitor whether this level of output is being achieved. Normal performance management standards apply, and the Performance Improvement/Capability Procedure should be used if performance is not acceptable. The Disciplinary Procedure should be used to address misconduct issues. Remote working may be suspended to allow closer monitoring of work in these circumstances, with advice from HR if necessary.
- vii. Managers should arrange for any Homeworkers who work away from the office extensively to attend the office at least once per month, to ensure that they remain familiar with corporate systems and with the people they deal with at the office. Time should be devoted to regular communications, supervisions/one to ones, and team meetings, team building and team activities.
- viii. Induction for new employees should include them meeting and building working relationships with team members, including those who work outside the normal office location.
- ix. When employees are working from home it may not be as easy for managers to identify changes in their wellbeing. Managers should regularly check on the wellbeing of their team members by regularly asking how they are. If the manager has any concerns regarding the employee’s health or wellbeing, they should refer the employee to the support that is available i.e. Counselling, Occupational Health if there are adjustments that may need to be considered, or to HR if for a stress risk assessment if work related stress is an issue.
- x. To allow any employees who are being negatively affected by homeworking to work from an office base for a greater percentage of their working week, or permanently if needed.
- xi. To ensure that the set-up of the homeworker meets Health & Safety requirements.

### **8.5 The Responsibilities of the Homeworker**

- i. All staff that work from home should ensure they have a suitable and safe environment where they can focus on work and that permits prolonged periods of homeworking.
- ii. Homeworkers must undertake all relevant training in relation to health & safety and homeworking.
- iii. Homeworkers should not hold meetings/business visits at their home.
- iv. Homeworking must not be seen as a substitute for other care arrangements, and employees working from home should not do so whilst in sole charge of dependents requiring care and supervision unless as an agreed “time out”.

- v. On-line information should be used where possible and files containing sensitive personal information should not be removed from Council premises. Any sensitive information should be saved onto the Council network, and never on to non-Council computers.
- vi. Employees should not use personal email accounts for work purposes as these are not secure.
- vii. Printed materials should only be taken home on rare occasions and must be kept securely in line with Data Protection/GDPR legislation and returned to the office promptly or disposed of confidentially when no longer required.
- viii. A personal USB stick should never be used for holding Council data. Data should be shared using OneDrive, SharePoint, Teams or via Secure Email – only as a last resort should a USB stick be used, which should be supplied by ICT and password protected.
- ix. When the employee is working from home, they must be directly contactable. If they are temporarily unavailable (eg in a meeting or on a training course) there must be an appropriate way for messages to be left, and these messages should be checked once the employee is available.
- x. Proposed patterns of work must be discussed with the manager, as the manager is responsible for ensuring there is adequate cover whether in the office or from home. These patterns of work should, however, be flexible – for example on a day when the individual had planned to work at home, they may need to change their plans if needed for a meeting, for example.
- xi. Employees may be required to come into the office when they had planned to work from home, although an acceptable alternative attendance could be through using Teams where a face to face meeting is not necessary.
- xii. If you are working in a public place, please ensure others cannot read your screen or overhear your phone calls. Please see Cyber Security on the intranet.
- xiii. When working at home, if meetings and conversations will involve discussing personal and sensitive information, these should not be held where family members can overhear
- xiv. Employees working remotely should ensure passwords are changed in a timely manner when a prompt is received and not allowed to expire.
- xv. Employees should advise their manager if their health or wellbeing is being adversely affected by prolonged homeworking (See 8.8).

## **8.6 Managing the Homeworker**

The manager should manage all employees consistently, and a homeworker should be managed in the same way as office-based workers, with the same opportunities for training, development and career progression.

The manager should set out how frequently, for how long, where and for what reasons the employee's attendance at the organisation's premises will be required and ensure that this adhered to.

It is important to maintain contact with the employees who are homeworking to ensure that they are not being adversely affected by the homeworking arrangement. Whilst some individuals may prefer working from home, others may start to feel isolated, something that could potentially impact upon their performance. If any issues such as this do start to develop, it may be that the agreement needs to be reassessed and homeworkers reminded how to access the EAP and Counselling services

### **8.7 What to do if a homeworking arrangement does not work**

If the homeworking agreement is not working satisfactorily and attempts to rectify the situation haven't been successful for either the manager or the employee, if the office is accessible then either the manager or employee can request that the employee work more regularly from their office location.

If this is a management decision, reasons will be given and communicated to the employee in writing.

If the employee refuses to return to their office location without good reason, then this may need to be considered under the Disciplinary policy.

### **8.8 Requests for Reduced Homeworking**

Employees who wish to work from their nominated office base for a greater percentage of their working week for health and wellbeing reasons, should raise the request with their line manager in the first instance who should make every effort to consent to greater office based working.

## **9. EXTENDED HOMEWORKING**

- 9.1 Extended homeworking refers to requests to work from home for over 80% of the employee's normal working time.
- 9.2 Requests for extended homeworking should be made in writing to the line manager, outlining; the amount of time the employee wishes to work from home, the reasons why they want to work from home for an extended period of time, and what they consider the effects to be on their work and team.
- 9.3 All extended homeworking arrangements will be subject to a trial 3-month period to ascertain if this is the appropriate working arrangement for the employer and the employee and if the arrangements are successful both for the homeworker and the Council.
- 9.4 The extended homeworking arrangement will be reviewed between the employee and their line manager after 3 months and written confirmation of the outcome of the review will be sent to the employee within 5 working days. If an extended working from home arrangement is withdrawn after the trial-period, an explanation will be given by the manager and the employee will have the right to appeal the decision. The appeal will be heard by another manager (independent from the case) and the employee will have the right to be accompanied by their trade union representative or full time official to the appeal meeting. The appeal process concludes the employee's right to appeal and there will be no right to challenge the decision through the grievance process.
- 9.5 All requests for extended homeworking will require manager approval.

9.6 Regardless of the amount of time approved for homeworking, the homeworkers normal place of work will remain their office location.

## **10. PAY AND EXPENSES**

### **10.1 Pay**

Employees will receive no change to their pay regardless of their working location.

There is no incentive payment to participate and no change to the rate of pay for the job, as the job remains the same wherever and whenever it is done.

### **10.2 Expenses**

Normal expenses rules will apply, but employees should note that subsistence allowances will not be paid for people working from home or at their principal place of work.

### **10.3 Travel Expenses**

Journeys to an employee's principal place of work will still be regarded as normal home to work travel and will not be claimable. If the employee is required to travel in the borough for work purposes, the home-work mileage must be subtracted from the total miles travelled. Employees can then submit a claim for the difference. See Appendix 2 - Expenses Policy for Employees - for more information.

### **10.4 Tax Relief**

Employees working from home, may be eligible to claim tax relief against working from home by completing an HMRC form P87. See Appendix 3 - Claim tax relief for your job expenses.

## **11. EQUIPMENT - ICT/Chairs etc**

The obligations of the Council and the employee that will apply are:

- i. The Council will supply; a laptop with the facility to make & receive phone calls, a headset, which should be collected from their usual place of work. Monitors can also be supplied if required. Additional ICT equipment should be requested via TOTO.
- ii. In accordance with the Health & Safety Risk Assessment, the Council will provide chairs and desks if deemed necessary from the risk assessment, subject to costs being reasonable.
- iii. Any ICT equipment issued to the homeworker will remain the property and responsibility of the Council at all times. Some minor incidental personal use is permitted (such as during lunchtimes) but personal documents and images should not be stored on a Council device. ICT equipment should not be used by friends or members of the family.
- iv. The homeworker will be expected to be responsible for; internet access/broadband suitable for home working, heating and lighting.
- v. The Council will not be responsible for paying for any installation or other costs associated with working from home. If the employee does not have a broadband connection, they will need to provide at their own expense or work from the offices.

- vi. All equipment should be returned to the Council on leaving employment.
- vii. ICT equipment issued is primarily for business purposes.
- viii. In the exceptional circumstance where a Council device is taken overseas (with permission), it should only be used via a WI-FI connection.

## **12. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **12.1 Introduction**

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 states that an employer shall ensure, so far as it is reasonably practical, the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees – this also extends to home workers. The Council's duty of care towards the health, safety and wellbeing of our employees extends to those who work from home. Therefore, before allowing any employee to enter into a homeworking agreement the Council needs to ensure that the employee's home environment is suitable for homeworking.

However, as the control that can be exercised over a member of staff working from home is limited, the employee is also obligated to ensure that they and other persons, including members of the household (as well as the public) are not endangered by work activities undertaken at home.

Please see Appendix 4 - Homeworking Health & Safety Advice, for general principles.

### **12.2 Health & Safety Training**

Employees working at home must complete all relevant Health & Safety Training and Assessments, in relation to Agile Working.

### **12.3 Homeworking Self-Assessment**

The employee will be asked to fill in a Homeworking Self-Assessment Form (Appendix 5) and return it to their manager, who will use it to assess any risks and the measures necessary to control them. If issues are identified arising from this, a home visit may be necessary for the manager, Health & Safety Manger or their representative, to complete a full risk assessment on site to ensure a safe and healthy working space at the employee's home.

If the manager feels the working area is not satisfactory then they may require the employee to work from their designated office location until the home area is satisfactory.

It should be noted that laptops are not intended for protracted use if they are not used seated at a table.

If specialised equipment is required (e.g. special chair, a special screen), consult HR for advice on a case by case basis; it may be that a return to fixed working is required, especially if special equipment would otherwise be required at multiple locations.

### **12.4 The Role of the Unions**

An employee can request that a union representative accompany the health and safety manager if they are conducting a risk assessment of the home-based office.

## **12.5 Accident Reporting**

An accident which occurs whilst working must be reported in the normal way, irrespective of where the accident occurs (at work, at home, at another location) using the Incident Report Form (Appendix 6).

## **13. ABSENCE**

### **13.1 Sickness**

If a homeworker is sick, or unable to work, this must be reported to their line manager in accordance with their contractual obligations.

Employees are not under an obligation to perform any work-related tasks while sick at home.

### **13.2 Other Absence**

All other absences should be requested and recorded in the normal way.

## **14. MORTGAGES AND INSURANCE**

Employees who are working at home are advised to notify their Mortgage Providers and Home Insurance Companies in writing that they will occasionally work at home, and that the Council arranges third party public and private liability insurance. This is highly unlikely to affect payments/premiums but if the company is not informed it may invalidate the policy or mortgage agreement.

ICT equipment issued is insured on the Council's policy and the Council will normally bear the cost if lost or damaged, provided the employee can show reasonable care has been taken. If reasonable care is not taken, then the Council may initiate a Disciplinary Investigation and may take disciplinary action. The Council's insurance will not cover equipment if the laptop or other mobile device is left visible and unattended in a car. If the employee has to take the device with them as they travel, they should either take it with them when they leave the car or lock it out of sight in the boot.

## **15. LOSS/DAMAGE TO COUNCIL EQUIPMENT**

Loss of, or damage to, equipment must be reported promptly both to the manager and to ICT via TOTO. ICT will contact the Information Security Officer. If the equipment is stolen it should be reported to the police and a crime number obtained and reported to ICT Helpdesk.

## **16. DATA PROTECTION/GDPR**

Employees working from home are responsible for complying with data protection law and for keeping all documents and information associated with the organisation secure at all times.

If the homeworker is likely, in the course of their work, to obtain or use personal information about individuals/service users they should be fully trained in the requirements of the GDPR and DPA Acts relevant to data security, issuing or re-issuing the data protection policy is advisable.

## **17. REVIEW AND REVISION OF ARRANGEMENTS**

Homeworking arrangements should be kept under regular review and revised as necessary, to ensure that the employee, the manager and the service all continue to derive benefit from the working arrangements.

## **18. MOVING HOME**

If a homeworker moves house, it is their responsibility to arrange for the transfer of any Council issued equipment at their own cost. A new risk assessment will need to be completed to reflect the homeworking arrangements at the new homeworking location.

## **19. HOW TO APPLY FOR EXTENDED HOMEWORKING**

Requests for extended homeworking should be submitted in writing by the employee to their line manager. The request should include:

- i. How much time the employee wants to work at home
- ii. The reason for the request
- iii. Confirmation from the employee that they have completed a DSE and Risk Assessment and all relevant E-Learning.

### **Essential E-Learning:**

GDPR

Cyber Security

Display Screen Equipment



## **APPENDIX A:      HOMEWORKING FAQs**

### **1.      Do I need to insure my BFC equipment against theft?**

The Council does not expect employees to take responsibility for insuring the work equipment that they have been supplied with in order to facilitate working from home. All work equipment will continue to be covered under the Council's insurance arrangements. However, employees should take reasonable precautions to prevent or mitigate incidents from occurring. It should be noted that, should a claim be made, there is a £250 excess per claim which is chargeable to the department (not the employee directly).

### **2.      What is an employee's insurance liability when working from home?**

The Council's liability insurance will continue to provide an indemnity to employees who work from home. If needed, this is a generic letter of Insurance you can use – Appendix 11.

### **3.      Will my car insurance increase if I work from home?**

Employees are advised to check with their own vehicle insurers in respect of the classification of business use under the terms and conditions of their motor insurance cover, as insurance policies vary greatly. However, adding business use to a private motor insurance policy does not usually result in an increase in premium.

### **4.      What do I need to do before I start working from home?**

Complete a Homeworking Self-Assessment (Appendix 5) and all essential e-Learning.

### **5.      If I have an accident at home do I need to report it?**

Any accident which occurs whilst at work must be reported in the normal way, irrespective of where the accident occurs (at work, at home, at another location).

### **6.      What equipment will the Council supply me with?**

Employees will be provided with essential equipment to facilitate homeworking, this includes such items as; laptops, monitors, keyboards, mouse.

The equipment supplied remains the property of the Council and must be checked periodically. Any defects in equipment must be reported promptly for managers to take steps to rectify the faults

### **7.      What about desks/chairs?**

The Council will provide chairs and desks, subject to costs being reasonable.

If you need a specialist chair, then this will be supplied either for use in the office or home – whichever is the greatest need. Any requirements should be discussed with your line manager prior to homeworking commencing.

### **8.      How can I obtain stationery?**

Employees will need to collect any stationery they need when they are in the office.

### **9.      Can I/my family use my Council provided equipment for personal use?**

The Council supplied equipment is solely for business purposes. Under no circumstances should other household/family members use your Council laptop. Any information stored on the homemaker's computers/hard copies should always be stored securely in line with GDPR regulations.

**10. Will the Council pay for my Broadband/supply a dongle, etc?**

No, these are the responsibility of the homemaker.

**11. Will I be reimbursed for the costs of heating, lighting, phone/broadband etc?**

No, however, homeworkers may be eligible to claim tax relief against working from home by completing an HMRC form P87. See Claim tax relief for your job expenses: Working from home - GOV.UK (Appendix 3)

**12. What are the tax implications of homeworking?**

As the Council is not providing any equipment that can be used extensively for private use, it is unlikely that there will be any tax applied for homeworking

**13. Will my manager/a Council representative need to access my home?**

This may be necessary if there are issues with setting up equipment or concerns regarding a homemaker's homeworking environment. Should a home visit be deemed necessary then permission will be sought in advance from the homemaker and notice given. A health and safety assessment may also be required should the home working self-assessment raise any issues.

**14. I want to move away from the area, what are the implications on coming into the office. Will I be able to claim commuting costs?**

No, any travel to your office location will be at your own expense and outside normal paid working hours.

**15. What happens if I move home?**

If you move home, all moving costs of Council equipment will be the responsibility of the employee.

**16. Can I work flexibly whilst homeworking?**

Employees working from home are expected to work within the flexible working policy in terms of start and finish times and taking breaks and to adhere to Working Time Regulations. Some roles will operate outside the flexible working policy and therefore should work in line with their departmental arrangements

**17. Will homeworking effect my professional development?**

Training and Development opportunities will be discussed during 1:1s/Supervision sessions to identify areas for development and career progression.

**18. Who can work from home?**

A role can be classified as eligible for homeworking if the job role is assessed and identified as one that can be performed just as well away from the usual place of work.

**19. How many days may I be required to work from home each week?**

This will be decided in conjunction with your manager, dependent upon your personal requirements to work in the office against your ability to work at home.

Attendance at your office location will depend on the needs of the business and will be discussed with you by your manager. There is an expectation that you will be required to attend the office to attend; team meetings, carry out interviews, attend training; appraisals/1:1s/supervisions or to provide essential cover as and when required on the request of your manager.

**20. Can I work from home permanently?**

No, Homeworking on a permanent basis is not permitted.

**21. Will my contract be changed to reflect the fact that my working style is homeworking?**

The majority of contracts are classified as Home-Flex or Free so already allow for homeworking. If you still have a contract which is classified as 'Fixed' and you participate in homeworking, then you will receive written notification of the change to a Home-Flex/Free working arrangement.

**22. Do I need to tell my mortgage provider/landlord and home insurer that I am working from home?**

Yes, you should check that there isn't anything preventing you from working at home in your mortgage agreement, lease or home insurance. You should check with your home insurer whether you are covered should work equipment cause damage and for claims from third parties.

**23. Will I need planning permission to work at home?**

It is unlikely that you will need planning consent to work from home, if your home is primarily used as a home and not a business. However, where your home is primarily used as a business premises it is probable that permission will be needed.

**24. Will I need to pay business rates?**

If the room you are using to work at home is also used privately then this is unlikely.