

Home and Remote Working Guidance

Academic Year 2022-2025



Compliance

All staff members and contractors or others with access to Trust information must comply with this policy. Anyone who is found to have breached this policy could be subject to the Trust disciplinary policy and serious breaches of this policy could be regarded as gross misconduct.

If you do not understand the implications of this or how it may apply to you, seek advice from your line manager or Human Resources.

Introduction

For the purpose of this guidance, the term homeworking applies equally to remote and mobile working.

Home working may be considered either as a long-term arrangement or to cover a short-term difficulty. It may also be considered if someone is unable to get to work - e.g. because of accident or injury - or as part of a 'return to work' policy. It should not be used where medical opinion is that the person is unfit for work.

To enable the Trust to maximise its employee's effectiveness and productivity but at the same time giving more flexibility in their working lives, the Trust is committed to supporting homeworking.

The Trust, in support of homeworking, will provide the environment and tools to reap the benefits of adopting flexible working practices that meet the needs of the business, the team and the individual.

This will maximise our ability to provide the highest quality of service whilst at the same time managing our operating costs. This in the long term may contribute to better use of office space and our car parking facilities. The Trust believes that having high quality, motivated, highly effective staff is the best route to achieving its goals.

The Trust will ensure that all users who work from home or remotely are aware of the acceptable use of portable computer devices and remote working opportunities. Portable computing devices are provided to assist users to conduct official Trust business efficiently and effectively. This equipment and any information stored on it should be recognised as valuable organisational information assets and safeguarded appropriately.

The Trust is committed to its duty to fulfil the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Where reasonable adjustments are already made at an employee display screen workstation, such as ergonomic and/or personalised equipment, that same help, support and protection shall be afforded to homeworkers.

1.0 Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this policy is to establish the standards, working practices and supported configurations of remote working solutions.

The Trust's aim is to recruit and retain key personnel with the necessary skills and knowledge to assist in meeting its overall objectives. The Trust therefore supports homeworking where an employee's

effectiveness, productivity and efficiency can be enhanced by working from home on specific projects, or for other specific reasons where possible and practical. Homeworking can also be a benefit to the employee allowing them to have flexibility for an equivalent or enhanced service to the Trust.

The Trust is also committed to adopting a flexible approach to working arrangements and homeworking may therefore, be part of the employees working pattern or may be carried out as and when required as is appropriate.

2.0 Scope

This guidance applies to all members of staff within the Trust who have access to Trust information, information systems or IT equipment and intend to store any information on removable media devices.

It is appreciated that this concept may not be suitable for many types of work, but a wide range of posts could be considered for homeworking. In assessing the suitability of a post for home working, consideration will be given to:

- the cost implications;
- the suitability of the job;
- the suitability of the work location within the home;
- public facing role.

The decision about whether an employee or group of employees should be allowed to work at home will rest with the Headteacher or CEO. It is not an employee's right to work from home. Home working should not be viewed as an alternative to paid dependent care.

The one area of the workforce that is not suited for homeworking is when the post requires a high element of continued face-to-face public/customer contact.

3.0 Two Tier System

This policy is split into two separate categories:

- (i) Hot Desking - where the employee wishes to work at home on an ad hoc basis, which is to the benefit of the employee allowing flexibility and meets the business needs, whilst also minimising the need for on-site accommodation.
- (ii) Home or Remote Working - Employees who may request to work from home and who are contracted to work a certain number of hours at home as part of their contract.

4.0 Definition

This guidance should be adhered to at all times whenever any user makes use of computing devices. This policy applies to all users' use of the Trust's IT equipment and personal IT equipment when working on official Trust business away from the Trust's premises (i.e. working remotely).

The guidance also applies to all users' use of Trust IT equipment and personal IT equipment to access Trust information systems.

Portable computing devices include, but are not restricted to, the following:

- Laptop/ computers
- Tablets
- Mobile phones inc. Smart phones
- Wireless technologies

For both Hot Desking and Homeworking, it is essential that those undertaking work from home are able to make available a room or area of their home for use as an office/working area. The employees work location, however, will remain with the Trust as included in the terms of their contract of employment.

The Trust is not responsible for the maintenance, replacement, or repair of any personal equipment that is used.

5.0 Expectations

5.1 Expectations of home working employees:

Employees should be able to demonstrate they can:

- Work independently and on their own initiative;
- Motivate themselves;
- Complete projects within set deadlines;
- Manage workload effectively;
- Cope well under any new pressure posed by working at home;
- Adjust to new work practices;
- Maintain contact with all affected by own work.

5.2 Expectations of Managers:

Managers need to determine how work will be monitored, produced and delivered

- Homeworkers should have comparable induction, appraisal communications, access to learning and development and career development opportunities and team events as other Council employees.
- Clear work objectives with measurable outputs must be established and documented, in advance of the arrangement commencing. These objectives will be reviewed through 1 to1s. The line manager will need to establish how the employee will be kept informed of matters that affect them or their work.
- For homeworking to take place it must be established that the work to be done at home can be completed without regular/frequent face to face contact or direct supervision.
- The manager must make clear, (in writing) how productivity and performance management issues will be assessed.

6.0 Health and Safety

All employees who work at home have duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act in the same way as other employees. Managers will be responsible for ensuring appropriate risk assessments are undertaken. Human Resources have details of the safety checks to be carried out.

For an employee who is contracted to work at home, homeworking will only be possible where;

- (i) An appropriate risk assessment has been undertaken; and
- (ii) It has been established that such working will not unreasonably impact on the employee's health and safety; and
- (iii) There are suitable facilities at the employees' home to effectively carry out the role;
- (iv) Effective mechanisms for communication and support are in place.

A homeworking risk assessment checklist must therefore be completed, and further assessments may be carried out to ensure the employees' health and safety.

6.1 Looking after employee's mental health

It's important for employees to take regular breaks, for example to avoid sitting at a computer for too long.

Employees should also try to do other things to stay mentally and physically active outside of their working hours. This might include things like cooking, exercise, watching favourite TV programmes or other hobbies.

All employees have access to a free, confidential employee assistance programme from Health Assured via the Perkbox app.

The Education Support Partnership, a UK charity, offers a dedicated service to support the mental health and wellbeing of education staff via telephone or text. Please call 08000 532 561 should you wish to access this service.

The Trust operate an 'open door' policy so please do not hesitate to get in contact with the Headteacher, Chief Executive Officer or line manager if there is anything you would like to discuss.

More information about looking after your mental health can be found:

<https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/>

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/>

6.2 Risk Assessment

Where the employee is only working from home on an ad hoc basis the employee may carry out a self-assessment at home.

7.0 Telephone

Where appropriate the Trust will provide access to a telephony system. If the employee uses their own telephone line, charges for business calls (excluding line rental) will only be reimbursed if clearly identified on an itemised bill and agreed with the Manager.

8.0 Other Expenses

If the employee has requested to work from home expenses for heating, lighting etc. will not be reimbursed.

Stationery will be provided by the Trust, but employees should notify their line manager of all stationery taken out of the office.

9.0 Security

For both Hot Desking and Homeworking, employees are responsible for the security of all data, whether held on disc/encrypted memory stick or paper and must ensure it is stored securely to maintain confidentiality of information from members of the family or visitors.

Sensitive material or personal data must be disposed of by recognised methods using office based shredding equipment or other means.

It is the user's responsibility to ensure that the following points are adhered to at all times:

- Users must take due care and attention of portable computer devices when moving between home and another business site
- Due to the high incidence of car thefts laptops or other portable equipment must never be left unattended in cars or taken into vulnerable areas.
- Users will not install or update any software onto a Trust owned portable computer device
- Users will not install any screen savers onto a Trust owned portable computer device
- Users will connect with a wired connection wherever possible. Where a wired connection is not possible and a wireless connection is used, this should be a secure connection.
- Users will not install any hardware to or inside any Trust owned portable computer device, unless authorised by the Trust's IT Services
- Users will allow the installation and maintenance of the Trust's installed Anti-Virus updates immediately
- Users will inform the IT Services of any Trust owned portable computer device message relating to configuration changes
- All faults must be reported to the IT Services
- Users must not remove or deface any asset registration number
- The user must ensure that reasonable care is taken of the Trust equipment supplied

The Trust may at any time, and without notice, request a software and hardware audit and may be required to remove any equipment at the time of the audit for further inspection. All users must co-operate fully with any such audit

10.0 Remote and Mobile Working Arrangements

Users should be aware of the physical security dangers and risk associated with working within any remote office or mobile working location.

Equipment should not be left where it would attract the interests of the opportunist thief. In the home it should also be located out of sight of the casual visitor. For home working it is recommended that the office area of the house should be kept separate from the rest of the house.

It is essential that access to all information is controlled. This can be done through physical controls, such as locking the home office or locking the computer's keyboard. Alternatively, or in addition, this can be done logically such as by password or user login controls.

Portable computer devices should be switched off, logged off, or the keyboard locked when left unattended, even if only for a few minutes.

11.0 Communication

It is essential that good communication is maintained at all times between the employee and their line manager. The line manager and employee should plan and agree how they will communicate effectively with each other. These arrangements should be agreed and regularly reviewed in light of operational experience.

The employee must agree arrangements with their line manager so that every week the line manager is informed of their whereabouts and knows what they are doing. The line manager will inform the employee of meetings, training sessions and other events they would expect them to attend and will also ensure that the employee is kept up-to-date with information relevant to their work.

12.0 Hours Worked

For employees who work at home on an ad hoc basis the number of hours to be worked at home will be agreed and monitored by the employee's manager.

The hours may be stated within the employees contract of employment, or if a more flexible arrangement has been specified the number of hours to be worked at home will be agreed and monitored by the employee's manager. Where the agreed working pattern allows for flexibility, both manager and employee should monitor to ensure excessive hours are not being worked. It is important that working patterns and hours are not detrimental to the employee's health, and comply with the Working Time Regulations.

For homeworking purposes, the Manager can agree with the employee when they will be "at work" and it may be possible for some work to be completed in the evenings or at weekends.

13.0 Learning and Development

Working from home is a very different way of working, which requires the employee to adapt quickly to working independently and on their own for most of their working day. There will be less support from colleagues and daily contact with their Line Manager (although regular communication is essential). Recommended learning and development include:

- Induction - It is good practice for new employees to spend some time in the office environment to familiarise themselves with the organisation and with colleagues before working from home. The manager will arrange for the home worker to spend a suitable period in the office during their induction period.
- Health and Safety Awareness - As a minimum, homeworkers must have attended health and safety training on home working which will include DSE assessment. Before agreeing to homeworking, Managers should consider what further training may be necessary.

Other training requirements may include:

- Appropriate IT skills
- Communications and time management skills
- Cultural change and contact with others
- Personal development for employees working at home
- First aid, fire safety and accident reporting
- Managing stress
- Information security awareness
- Lone working