

Appendix D

HOME WORKING - MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE

This document must be read by managers in conjunction with the Policy

1. Service delivery considerations for a home working arrangement:

- Is the work/task/project suitable for being performed from home?
- Is there a need for some of the team to be office based and if so, how will it be achieved?
- How will service needs or customer demands be affected?
- What impact will home working have on the efficiency of the office and service?
- Is it possible for the individual's work to be done in the home environment – what will the impact be on the family and other residents of the home?
- What are the implications for supervision/monitoring of the employee's work – is the individual self disciplined and able to work without close supervision?
- Does the employee have suitable accommodation at home – free from distraction?
- Does the employee have suitable IT equipment at home (NB remote access to the Trust network cannot be provided from personally owned devices) or will the Department need to supply the necessary equipment? Equipment supplied by the Trust will be subject to the same policy provisions (Acceptable use of Information etc – see main policy) as equipment used in the workplace.
- Are there suitable facilities available for connection to be made to a broadband link? If there is already a broadband link to the employee's home it may be possible to allow a connection to work from home – further information should be obtained from the Informatics department.
- Does the employee need access to files which cannot be taken home?
- Is working closely with the team or colleagues in other Departments a key element of the individual's work?
- Is the work of a confidential nature so that secure storage arrangements are required?
- What are the implications for work colleagues?
- Will the individual's work activities have to be reviewed/changed in order to accommodate home working and what implications will that have?
- What arrangements will need to be in place to contact the employee?
- What are the individual's reasons/motivation for working from home on a regular basis?
- What are the health and safety implications for the Trust and the home worker?

The qualities of the individual:

- The ability to complete work using initiative and within established guidelines
- The ability to cope with the social isolation of home working and be self reliant
- Self-motivation and self-direction to meet deadlines
- The ability to manage their time effectively
- The ability to work without direct supervision
- The ability to communicate well by telephone and in writing

Other issues

- Can a good business case be made for home working taking into account the costs of IMT etc.?
- The home worker must be clear that working at home is not an alternative to regular or frequent paid dependant care or any other domestic arrangements.

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2. Terms and conditions of employment

There are a number of circumstances where it may be appropriate for an employee to work from home on an occasional basis, which suits both the Trust and the member of staff. These may include when a member of staff:

- Needs a quiet time to write reports/papers
- Has a backlog of administrative tasks
- Has difficulty in getting to work because of a public transport dispute or adverse weather conditions
- Has a vehicle that is needed for work which will be unavailable, because it is being serviced or having an MOT.
- Is fit to work but may be contagious or unable to travel to work due to physical incapacity
- Can travel to their calls/visits from home rather than the Trust offices
- Has a sick relative at home for whom they must be present in emergency situations, or they need to be present for a few days while the individual is recovering from an operation*
- Has child care arrangements which have broken down at short notice*

**see the Trust's Leave policy*

Whilst managers will be as flexible as possible to accommodate the employee in such circumstances, the Trust reserves the right to refuse requests to work from home on an occasional basis. If employees are unhappy about the reasons given they have recourse to the Trust's grievance procedure. In these circumstances there will be no need to change their terms and conditions of employment.

If the individual is to be a home worker (Their main base) then they will be issued with an appropriate employment contract and terms and conditions of service.

3. Annual leave

Requests for annual leave must be sent to and agreed by the line manager using the application form at Appendix 1.

4. Flexible working

Individuals working from home will still be part of any flexible working scheme.

5. Sickness absence

Individuals working from home will be subject to the normal Management of Attendance policy, therefore if they are unable to work they should contact their line manager on the first day of the sickness (see Management of Attendance Policy and Procedure).

6. Health and Safety

The Trust has a responsibility to ensure, so far as it is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of staff, wherever they work. Employees working at home have the same duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 as all other employees. They must take care of their own health and safety and that of anyone else who might be affected by their actions and co-operate with the Trust on all health and safety matters.

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Line managers need to be satisfied as to the suitability of the employee's home situation, which will include the following: -

(i) For a homeworker, an initial home working risk assessment and an annual update must be carried out by the employee. This risk assessment will need to be reviewed if it becomes invalid or on an annual basis by the employee using a self assessment form. Copies of the completed self assessment document should be sent to the home workers' Line Manager for filing in their personal file. The manager may want to seek expert advice from H&S. It is the responsibility of the home worker and their Line Manager to ensure that an annual assessment is carried out and recorded.

(ii) The provision of suitable space for working and storage, including maintaining required standards of security and confidentiality of information.

(iii) The home has appropriate furniture, IMT equipment, provided by the employing department (a laptop is not suitable equipment unless a separate keyboard and mouse are provided) and materials to enable all aspects of the job to be carried out satisfactorily and safely.

There are five steps to take to make sure that a proper risk assessment is carried out.

1. Identify any hazards
2. Decide who may be harmed and how
3. Assess the risk and take appropriate action to remove or minimize
4. Record the findings, and
5. Check the risks annually and if there are any changes to the environment and take further steps if needed.

This process should include the assessment of any risks arising from the work to be carried out, the working area, any equipment used, any manual handling and any personal security issues.

Employees must ensure that all reasonable care has been taken to ensure that they work in a safe working environment and in a comfortable, ergonomic, position. Breaks must be taken to prevent undue tiredness or injury. Employees should also not work in excess of their contractual hours, and must ensure that a minimum of half an hour break is taken if working over 6 hours per day.

Personal Safety - employees should not invite other members of staff or clients to their home for business meetings. Members of staff should not reveal that an employee is working from home or that the business number is their home number.

If a work related accident or injury occurs while working at home, the employee must notify their line manager without delay to allow an investigation to take place and this is recorded on Datix.

To reflect the importance of these considerations, failure to comply with the health and safety provisions may result in the withdrawal of the home working arrangements and disciplinary action may be taken.

7. Electrical and other Equipment

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Electrical sockets and other parts of the domestic electrical system are the employee's responsibility.

Where equipment is provided, employees must :

- Take good care of it
- Use it only for official purposes
- Use it only in accordance with any operating instructions
- Return it to Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust when requested
- Arrange for electrical equipment to be PAT tested at the Trusts declared frequency (equipment to be taken to Trust for testing)

Managers should liaise with the Informatics Department regarding any specialist equipment needs, to check anticipated costs, support needs, compatibility of home equipment or to set up connections. Any cost incurred in checking equipment/connections will be born by the employing department.

8. IT Equipment and Security

Documents should not be retained at home any longer than necessary, and should be returned to the workplace as soon as they are no longer required so that they may be stored or disposed of in accordance with departmental guidelines. Staff working at home occasionally should comply with relevant IM&T policies as updated from time to time.

Where staff work from home regularly as part of their working week the Trust will provide computer equipment to be located at home. In such cases the computer will be set up as a Trust computer with access to required software and networks. In these cases the computer should be used exclusively for Trust business. A broadband connection must be available to facilitate this.

Whilst it would be expected that staff will bring their equipment into the Trust's offices for maintenance and support, the Informatics Department will need access to office equipment installed in the home for maintenance and the updating of software programs etc, in agreement with the homeworker.

Any equipment such as portable computers must be kept in a secure place at home and special care given to their security while travelling. In particular Trust confidential material must be kept securely at all times. Line managers must be satisfied that all reasonable precautions are taken to maintain confidentiality of material in accordance with the Trust's Data Protection Policy; staff will be required to confirm these arrangements to the line manager.

9. Telephones

Mobile phones will be provided as appropriate by the employee's department, for use on Trust business. The cost of renting a personal land line will not be refunded by the Trust, although business calls made from this line will be refunded by the Trust on production of an itemised bill. If it is necessary for a broadband connection to be made the cost of this initial connection may be funded by the Trust at the Manager's discretion.

Under no circumstances is the individual's personal phone number to be given out as a contact number. If the employee uses their own phone to make phone calls they are advised to prefix the call with 141 to ensure their phone number is not disclosed.

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Arrangements must be put in place so that work related calls are received or dealt with inside the employee's normal working hours in agreement with the Line Manager so as to make best use of a flexible working arrangement, supported by Voicemail/answer phone etc.

10. Furniture and other necessary equipment

For regular home workers, where it is necessary to purchase suitable office furniture i.e. a desk, chair or storage or filing cupboard they will be funded/provided by the Trust. Replacement items will only be purchased subject to normal use and fair wear and tear. Staff leaving the Trust's employment will return the furniture and equipment supplied.

11. Meetings and Training

Employees working from home should always make themselves available for meetings with their line managers, team meetings and any training sessions or courses.

Under no circumstances are arrangements to be made for clients or representatives to meet with the individual at their home. All such meetings should be carried out at the Trust's offices in order to maintain the necessary level of professionalism. However where a member of staff is working from home and has the necessary amenities, meetings with other staff may be conducted from their home where this would save money or allow the meeting to take place more expeditiously.

12. Reimbursement of Costs

The Trust does not reimburse normal household costs in relation to home working. Employees may seek further advice from the Inland Revenue regarding Tax benefits as working from home.

When an employee is working from home, journeys made to the normal office base will not be reimbursed. For staff who work at home but are required to undertake other work related journeys (for example to attend a seminar or conference), travel expenses will be reimbursed as appropriate.

Where a regular home working arrangement exists, the number of visits required to the office or work base, for team meetings, appraisal for example, should be agreed in advance. Any stationery or printer needs should be met from office stocks and only in approved cases will staff be reimbursed for the purchase of such items.

NOTE The next 3 points only have a significant interest if you are declaring your home a workplace and working exclusively from there. There are also issues of planning consent and change of use requirements. It is worthwhile getting expert advice. For those who are occasionally working from home and still use the Trust as a base, then the following probably won't apply.

13. Insurance

Working at or from home may affect the home and contents insurance policies of the householder. Employees are advised that they must inform and make any necessary arrangements with their insurers before commencing home working.

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If it is necessary to take any equipment in the car it should be stored out of sight in the boot, at all times and the car must be locked when left. Failure to take adequate precautions to ensure the safety of the equipment may result in the employee being liable for the replacement cost of the equipment.

The Trust's Employer's Liability insurance will give cover if the Trust is held to be legally liable in respect of injury arising out of and in the course of employment at home, provided the work has been authorised by the employee's line manager. However an employee working at home would be primarily responsible for his/her own working environment.

Although covered by the Trust's Employer's Liability Policy, employees working at or from home are advised to ensure their house contents policy has Public Liability cover for at least £1 million. This is a standard clause in most home insurance policies. If an employee does not have such cover then they must notify his/her manager who should seek appropriate advice from the Risk Management Department.

14. Mortgage and Tenancy Agreements

Employees working at or from home on a regular basis must inform anyone with an interest in the property e.g. their building society, bank or landlord.

15. Trust tax, business rates and capital gains tax

It is unlikely that there will be any change to an individuals council tax or any liability to business rates as they will not be running a business from home and the business use of a the house is likely to be subsidiary to the domestic use e.g. a work area in the spare bedroom or living room.

Working from home may affect an employee's liability to capital gains tax if they sell their home. This will only apply if part of the house has been used exclusively for employment purposes.