



## Homeworking Policy

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## Version History

Date	Author	Version	Comment
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## 1. Introduction

For a variety of reason, and with varying degrees of frequency, some employees may undertake some of their duties away from their normal place of work at the Trust or academy premises. Whilst there is an expectation that normally staff will be in the workplace, it is accepted that occasionally there will be circumstances where an individual and the relevant manager agree that it is mutually beneficial for that individual to work from home.

This document defines homebased work arrangements to perform Trust work, sets out entitlements, eligibility criteria and other conditions that apply. Furthermore, it has been developed to provide a clear procedure for dealing with homeworking that ensures fair treatment and consistency of approach which is understood by all leaders and employees. It provides a standard framework for reporting, monitoring and managing homeworking.

Note: within this policy 'Trust work' refers to work completed for, or directly by the Trust, or the individual academy.

## **2. Policy statement**

No employees of the Trust are expressly homeworkers. Some roles within the Trust do however suit occasional working from home. The Trust is mindful that working from home can save the use of cars, fuel and commuting time, The most common instance in which working from home is beneficial is when work arises that needs to be completed with minimum distraction or interruption working from home should never create additional workloads for other employees, or otherwise affect operational efficiency or effectiveness, and should never be undertaken in a way that increased the operational and security risks to the Trust, including the risk of data breaches.

Working from home:

- is not a contractual right through either express or implied terms
- is granted at the Trust's discretion and requires the prior approval of the appropriate line manager following consultation and discussion with the employee
- does not alter an employee's terms and conditions of employment
- is voluntary and is not intended to create a situation where staff feel obliged to work excessive hours
- does not attract subsidy since the benefits are seen as being mutual
- does not normally mean that equipment will be provided by the Trust for use at home.

## **3. Equality and Diversity Statement**

It is the aim of the Trust to provide guidance which ensures appropriate and equitable responses to employee requests for home working in an efficient and fair manner. This document takes into account current employment legislation and must be implemented in conjunction with Equal Opportunities guidance.

## **4. Eligibility**

This procedure can, in principle, be applied to all employees of the Trust regardless of contract type or duration, although it is recognised that because of the nature of some roles, working from home will often not be practical.

## **5. Health and Safety Requirements**

Most of the work that staff would undertake at home is paper-based work, or work on a computer, and in general such work is not high risk. Nevertheless, the Trust has responsibilities under health and safety legislation when staff are working from home, including the requirement to undertake appropriate risk assessments of work activities, ensuring that any equipment provided by the Trust is safe, and ensuring that there is a suitable safe place for the employee to work. Employees are responsible for undertaking the risk assessment on their own working environment and must seek advice and guidance from the Trust's Health and Safety Officer if required. The employee must ensure that their work space is suitable and enables them to have a clear delineation of when they are working or not working.

All employees must be aware of the relevant health and safety policies. Whilst working from home, employees must still abide by all Trust policies, procedures and reporting systems. Accidents or incidents should still be reported using the standard process that would be used, should you be in school when the incident occurred.

All staff who work from home whether on an occasional or regular basis are required to undertake a self-assessment of their homeworking provision which should be sent to the Academy Business Manager for recording. This also includes completion of a self-assessment Display Screen Equipment inspection checklist. Any concerns, whether by the Academy Business Manager, line manager or employee, should be reported to the Trust's Health and Safety Officer.

Any particular medical requirements should also be considered. There is specific legislation relating to new and expectant mothers who work, and this applies equally to those who work at home. Where an employee with a disability or health problem requires adjustments and where an employee with a disability requires reasonable adjustment and/or specialist equipment, then the line manager should liaise with the Trust Estates Officer, as self-assessment of the work station in the home may not be sufficient in this case.

Failure to comply with health and safety requirements may result in the home-based work arrangement being terminated.

Guidance specifically related to working from home is provided in leaflet INDG226 published by the Health and safety Executive (HSE).

## **6. Key information for Homeworking**

## **i. Equipment and technology**

The Trust will not normally provide the homeworker with additional IT equipment to enable working from home. Employees are expected to utilise academy equipment at all times and academy information should never be used, processed or stored on personal computers.

The employee working from home is responsible for ensuring that they are contactable during their working hours, and that they have suitable and secure telephone and broadband services where required.

Employees working from home who are using Trust supplied and supported equipment can receive telephone support from the IT provider, but if the issue cannot be resolved by telephone, they will be required to bring the equipment on-site. It is not possible for the Trust to provide IT support for equipment owned by members of staff and as such personal equipment must never be used for any work that is confidential in any way. This includes any information that identifies individual staff members, pupils or other stakeholders. Trust equipment must not be used by others i.e. family or friends.

Appropriate security must be obtained for all Trust information stored on a computer (including back-up arrangements) and there must be secure storage for any confidential information. Employees are responsible for ensuring the security of Trust property and all Trust information, files, documents, data etc. within their possession, including both paper and electronic material. Staff should discuss the security implications of working from home with their academy leaders and IT leads. All homeworkers are required to adhere to the Trust's Information Governance Policy and Acceptable Use Policy.

Employees working from home must be aware that recent legal challenge means that any data breaches that occur whilst the employee is working from home may result in the employee being held personally liable for this breach, inclusive of any fines that are subsequently issued.

Employees working from home must ensure that no information is transported using a memory stick, and paper-based information must not be taken home if it includes confidential or sensitive information. Any information identifying individuals must not be taken from the academy and should only be accessed via a legitimate secure network.

## **ii. Insurance**

As employees of the Trust opting to work from home on an occasional basis are not classed as homeworkers, it is not expected that there will be any implications in relation to taxation, insurance or leasing arrangements. However, employees are expected to investigate their personal situation themselves and undertake any appropriate measures to ensure that their own insurances will not be impacted by the decision to work from home. The employee must advise their insurers if they are working from home and using the premises and certain equipment, e.g. computers, for professional purposes on a regular basis. This could be considered a material fact by insurers and failure to notify this change could invalidate insurances.

Any Trust equipment would be covered by the Trust's own insurance.

### **iii. Costs/expenses**

No contribution will be made by the Trust towards normal household expenses attached to working from home, such as heating, lighting, or council tax costs.

### **iv. Communication**

As working from home arrangements should be occasional rather than regular, it is not expected that additional effort or arrangements should need to be put in place to ensure the mutual agreement is effective. However, provision should be made to allow effective communication with work colleagues and external clients during the working day. Employees must be contactable at home throughout normal working hours. If the employee does not have a work telephone, the arrangements for contact should be agreed prior to working from home.

The employee's home phone number and home address may not be divulged without their express permission and their address in particular must never be divulged to anyone external to the Trust.

Under no circumstances are arrangements to be made for clients or representatives to meet with the employee at their home. All such meetings should be carried out at the Trust site or a similar professional setting in order to maintain the necessary level of professionalism and safety.

## **7. Responsibilities**

### **i. Principal responsibilities**

- To grant permission for working from home at their discretion.
- To notify employees of relevant arrangements, and to provide the employee with a copy of this homeworking guidance.

### **ii. Manager/supervisor responsibilities**

- To ensure that the employee is aware of expectations and the required standard of work.
- To ensure that the appropriate health and safety risk assessments are carried out and recorded on file, and advice sought from Jamie McGuire, Estates Manager, if and when required.

### **iii. Employee responsibilities**

- To abide by the requirements of this document.
- To abide by the requirements of the Information Governance Policy.
- To give details of a mobile and/or home telephone number and to facilitate communication with the relevant line manager or Academy Business Manager.

### **iv. Human Resources responsibilities**

- To provide advice and guidance to managers and employees on how to effectively deal with homeworking at departmental or individual level.
- To assist managers with the fair and consistent application of the procedures.

### **v. Trust Health and Safety Officer responsibilities**

- To receive, monitor and advise on any health and safety issues raised by managers or employees.
- To conduct an assessment for home-based working if requested and required.

### **vi. IT responsibilities**

- Ensure homeworking solutions are up and available.

## **8. Appendix 1. Homeworking Self-assessment Checklist**

This form should be completed initially by the employee and returned to the line manager. Any matters of concern should be resolved before working from home commences.

Name:

Academy:

Address of homeworking site:

Please sign at the bottom of this page to confirm you will or have carried out the necessary actions as detailed below:

- I wish to work from home and confirm that I have read and understood the Trust/Academy policy and procedure on homeworking.
- I will maintain the working environment to the agreed health and safety standards.
- I agree to complete a self-assessment Display Screen Equipment inspection checklist and return the outcome/summary to the Academy Business Manager. It is the line manager's responsibility to ensure that all management actions arising from the health and safety inspection have been completed prior to commencement of homeworking.
- I will inform my manager of changes to my home or personal circumstances, which could affect the health and safety inspection.
- I understand that it is my responsibility to explore with my landlord, mortgage provider and/or insurance companies any potential impacts of working from home.
- I agree to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and security of Trust equipment and data, where appropriate, and to inform my manager of any material changes to security measures at my home.
- I am aware and understand my responsibility to notify my manager when I am absent from work due to sickness or any other reason.
- I understand and agree that I must read the Information Governance Policy before beginning to work from home.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_