

HOME WORKING GUIDANCE

1.0 **THE PRINCIPLES**

- 1.1 Homeworking is a type of flexible working which, depending on the agreement between employer and employee, can also be used in conjunction with other arrangements such as flexible hours, working part-time, term-time working or the employer's core hours.
- 1.2 Home working for the purposes of this guidance refers to time spent by an employee working at home for part of their contracted hours rather than on Trust premises.
- 1.3 Home working may be considered as a long or short term arrangement, it may be considered if an employee is unable to attend Trust premises for some reason or as part of a "return to work" process.
- 1.4 In accordance with legislation the Trust must seriously consider any application made for home working by following a fair procedure.
- 1.5 This guidance should be read in conjunction with the Flexible Working Guidance and any subsequent application for regular Home working must be considered in accordance with the principles and process outlined in the Flexible Working Guidance.
- 1.6 The Home Working Guidance outlines points to consider upon receipt of a flexible working application specifically for home working and the subsequent management if a request is approved.
- 1.7 It is accepted that not all job roles may be suitable for home working (e.g. receptionists, domestic and clinical posts). Many other managerial, administrative, secretarial or personal assistant posts may be suitable. However, home working may be particularly difficult in the following circumstances:
- Managing a team of staff
 - Working in a team where significant 'hard copy' resources need to be shared with others
 - Acting as a secretary or PA to more than one manager
- 1.6 Requests must be considered objectively and can only be refused if there is a clear business reason for doing so. These reasons are set out in Section 7.2 of the Flexible

Working Guidance. Advice must be sought from senior managers and Human Resources for all regular home working requests.

- 1.7 Home working should not be seen as a substitute for suitable care arrangements. If necessary, alternative care arrangements should be in place to cover the time when the employee is working.
- 1.8 In the event of an infection outbreak, flu pandemic or major incident, the Trust recognises that it may not be possible to adhere to all aspects of this document. In such circumstances staff should take advice from their manager and all possible action must be taken to maintain ongoing patient and staff safety.

2.0 TYPES OF HOME WORKING

- 2.1 For the purpose of this guide there are two types of home working arrangement; occasional home working and regular home working.
 - **Occasional home working:** work is carried out, typically on an ad hoc basis, from home to complete a particular piece of work. The employee will spend the majority of their time in the workplace.
 - **Regular home working:** an employee spends a regular and substantial amount of their working time using his/her home as a place of work. Employees who routinely work from home for the majority of their working time and on a limited basis work on site.

3.0 OCCASIONAL HOME WORKING

- 3.1. If an employee believes that they have a piece of work which would benefit from being produced away from their day to day working environment, they should approach their line manager to request a period of time to work from home.
- 3.2 The manager should receive such a request with adequate notice, so that appropriate consideration can be given to the needs of the service and cover can be arranged if necessary.
- 3.3 Work carried out at home will not be paid as 'overtime'. In addition, should an employee negotiate working from home out of hours (e.g. at a weekend) but is not normally required to undertake the work at that time, enhanced rates of pay will not apply.
- 3.4 Employees at Senior Manager level or above may request a 'blanket' permission to work at home when they consider it necessary for a particular task. This may be subject to an agreed limit of a number of occasions per week.
- 3.5 The manager may wish to agree specific objectives and feedback arrangements with the individual.

4.0 REGULAR HOMEWORKING

- 4.1 If the individual is already employed by the Trust and expresses an interest in routinely working from home, the employee should initially discuss the proposal with her/his line manager. The request must then be put in writing using the Flexible Working Application Form at Appendix 2 of the Flexible Working Guidance. The checklist at Appendix A of this document should also be completed and attached to the Flexible Working application.
- 4.2 The manager will discuss the request with a member of the Human Resources department and the appropriate Senior Manager and respond to the employee in accordance with the timescales and process outlined in the Flexible Working Guidance.
- 4.3 The final agreement to support regular home working will rest with the line manager, who is responsible for ensuring that all relevant issues are properly addressed.
- 4.4 Regular Home working will only be authorised upon completion of a satisfactory risk assessment by both the manager and the employee.
- 4.5 Details of the regular home working arrangements must be confirmed in writing using both Appendix A of this document and Appendix 3 of the Flexible Working Guidance.
- 4.6 The application for flexible working should only be refused if there are clear business grounds as set out in law. These grounds are explained in section 7.2 of the Flexible Working Guidance.
- 4.7 Approved regular home working arrangements will be subject to a 3 month trial period before final agreement. During this period, either side may terminate the arrangement giving reasonable notice.
- 4.8 Regular home working arrangements will be monitored and reviewed as part of normal supervision and 1:1 meetings at regular intervals by the line manager to ensure their continued effectiveness, particularly in terms of service delivery and impact on colleagues. As jobs change it may be that a role that was previously approved as a home working role may no longer be suitable for home working and should become office based. In these situations an employee may be required to stop home working and return to standard working practise.
- 4.9 Formal monitoring of the agreement should be under taken at no more than 12 monthly intervals and may be withdrawn at any time by either the employee or the Trust, giving reasonable notice.

4.10 Homeworking arrangements will also be withdrawn if the home worker fails to observe and maintain their home working agreement, including compliance with all associated policies.

4.11 Performance issues will be dealt with in accordance with the appropriate Trust policies and procedures.

5.0 EQUIPMENT

5.1 Depending on the amount of time the employee is likely to spend working at home, and what the budget is, the Trust may agree to any of the following:

- Agree with the employee how a laptop is to be used and that work may be limited to a certain number of hours per day.
- Purchase and install a similar workstation, chair and desktop computer to those used in the Trust's offices.
- Provide furniture and IT equipment from stock already in the Trust.
- Give the employee a budget and allow them to select items from an approved NHS supplier.
- Where appropriate, individuals may be issued with VPN access which enables connection to their NHS/UHSussex account as if they were physically working from the Trust.

5.2 An adequate internet connection remains the responsibility of the employee to ensure that appropriate networks etc. are available to provide access to UHSussex systems.

5.3 Any equipment provided or purchased by the Trust for homeworking remains the property of the Trust and must be returned. The Trust reserves the right to make a deduction from the employee's salary for the market value of the equipment should it not be returned to the Trust.

5.4 After assessment, it may be concluded that the home is not suitable for work due to lack of space or other issues.

5.5 The Trust does not undertake to supply any equipment as a result of occasional homeworking. However, it may at its discretion supply equipment such as a laptop computer to enable/enhance mobile working either on a short or long-term basis.

5.6 If the employee uses their own equipment whilst at home, they are responsible for the insurance, maintenance of equipment and software used (virus checking for example).

5.7 Employees are reminded that it is not permissible to use Trust owned equipment for private use or use by others.

5.8 The Trust will not reimburse any costs incurred whilst home working.

6.0 SECURITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- 6.1 It is essential that employees working from home maintain confidentiality to the same high standard that would be required on-site.
- 6.2 Patients' medical case notes must not be taken home under any circumstances.
- 6.3 It is the individuals own responsibility to ensure that they are able to fulfil the confidentiality clause within their contract of employment and related codes of practice and Trust policy.
- 6.4 Employees are responsible for ensuring that all UHSussex property and all UHSussex information, files, documents etc within their possession are kept secure, including all NHS property in transit.
- 6.5 The Trusts Information Governance and Security Policy and Mobile Computing Equipment Policy will apply.
- 6.6 Employees must not permit confidential UHSussex documents or patient/staff identifiable data to be accessed by unauthorised persons. Personal identifiable data must not be stored on or uploaded to a non UHSussex computer. Relevant risk assessments, accessed via the SHE software must be undertaken and consideration given to the layout of the workplace to ensure the above. Employees are responsible for keeping all documents and information associated with Trust business secure at all times, ensuring that they are locked away in a filing cabinet or drawer when not in use.
- 6.7 The Trust will require the employee to certify that they are able to maintain the security and confidentiality of documents within the home and comply with IT security and data protection requirements.
- 6.8 Any loss of information or breach of confidentiality must be reported to the relevant line manager straight away and a Datix incident form completed. Any incidents involving theft must also be reported to the police. The Trust reserves the right to take all reasonable steps necessary to verify this. A condition for home working is that the Trust will have the right of access to the premises for this purpose. Any breaches will be dealt with under the Trusts disciplinary policy.
- 6.9 In the interests of data security all home workers must ensure they have appropriate security equipment recommended by the IT department e.g. encrypted memory/safesticks to ensure the safe transfer of data between the Trust and home. Confidential information must not be sent via personal (non NHS.NET/UHSussex) e-mail accounts.
- 6.10 Employees must not save documents to their own PC's.

7.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 7.1 Under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HSWA), employers have a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees. The Trust therefore has a duty to assess risks to home workers. .
- 7.2 Relevant risk assessments must be completed by the employee and reviewed by their line manager prior to home working commencing in order to ensure that Health and Safety requirements and security and confidentiality requirements are met. These risk assessments include: Home working, Display Screen Equipment (DSE) and Lone Working and can be accessed via the SHE system. In addition the Trust is required to ensure that all equipment used by people for work is suitable and safe and that adequate training has been given. Further guidance is provided at Appendix B.
- 7.3 Employees also have responsibilities under health and safety legislation and have a duty:
- to take reasonable care of their own health and safety, and that of other people who may be affected by their activities at work
 - to co-operate with the Trust in order to comply with health and safety duties
 - to use all work items provided by the Trust in accordance with the training and instructions they receive to enable them to use the items safely
 - to inform the Trust of any work situation that could present a serious danger to health and safety or of any shortcomings in the Trust's health and safety arrangements.

8.0 COMMUNICATION

- 8.1 Employees working from home will be expected to visit the offices of the Trust whenever required during their normal working hours (and in any event at least once each week). The purpose of such meetings will include, but will not be limited to, attendance at relevant internal meetings on any of the hospitals sites or external meetings. Attendance at mandatory training courses will also be required.
- 8.2 It is essential that all working arrangements, including (for example) availability, messaging, visiting the 'office', how work is to be transferred between the Trust and home and the disposal of confidential waste are fully discussed and agreed between all relevant parties before home working is commenced. Reference should be made to the Information Governance and Security Policies.

9.0 ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS

- 9.1 Employees working at home must inform their manager in the event of an accident/incident. Initial reports should be by telephone and a Datix form completed.

10.0 HOURS OF WORK

- 10.1 The hours and working pattern must be agreed with the line manager prior to commencement of home working ensuring that the employee does not work in

excess of their normal working hours during home working and are in line with Work Time Regulations 1998.

11.0 BASE LOCATION

- 11.1 Where an employee works from home on a regular basis their base location will remain the same. The employee will be required to visit the appropriate Trust office on a regular basis for which travel expenses will not be paid. No permanent workstation will be maintained at the Trust but the employee will be entitled to hot desk.

12.0 INSURANCE

- 12.1 It is the responsibility of the home worker to provide adequate home buildings and contents insurance. The employee will need to inform their insurance company that they work from home and of any equipment owned by the Trust that is kept there.
- 12.2 Similarly the home worker must inform their landlord or mortgage lender if they are working from home on a regular basis as there may be restrictive covenants, lease terms or similar legal restrictions preventing the use of an employee's home for business use.
- 12.3 The Trust will not reimburse any extra costs as a result of the above and will not accept liability for damage caused to the home or its contents.

13.0 COUNCIL TAX

- 13.1 Business use could potentially render the property business rateable. The employee has the responsibility for verifying the position on this in individual circumstances. Any costs associated with this will be met by the employee.

14.0 TAXATION

- 14.1 Any employee who chooses to work from home will not be entitled to any tax relief on additional outgoings. The position changes if there is a requirement to work from home where there could be tax relief on a proportion of costs for heating, lighting and rent on room use for business purposes (Inland Revenue leaflet IR 104). However the Trust will not reimburse any extra costs as a result of this.

15.0 SUPPORT

- 15.1 Employees working from home on a regular basis must recognise the possibility of ill health arising from this model of working (associated with isolation, reduced workplace contact etc), and must notify their manager of any concerns about such issues as soon as possible. Staff can access the confidential counselling service on 01243 831624 (St Richards Hospital) or 01903 205111 extn 85356 (Worthing Hospital).

16.0 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

16.1 Employees undertaking occasional or regular home working must adhere to the following:

- Employees must be contactable at home throughout normal working hours by the line manager/supervisor and other UHSussex colleagues. The employee must inform appropriate colleagues of how and when they might be contacted.
- Employees must ensure they meet Health and Safety regulations and must be up to date with their statutory and mandatory training.
- Employees must advise their manager if they in the process of moving house to ensure that documents and equipment are safely transported to the new home and that a new risk assessment is conducted to determine the continued suitability of the home working arrangement.
- Employees must also ensure they meet the requirements in relation to security and confidentiality i.e. the Data Protection Act and related Trust Policies.
- Employees will be available to attend meetings or training courses as required by their line manager.
- Working from home will not create additional workloads for other employees or otherwise affect operational efficiency and effectiveness.
- Trust absence and sickness reporting procedures will continue to apply.

17.0 LINE MANAGERS RESPONSIBILITIES

17.1 Where occasional or regular Home working is under consideration, line managers need to give detailed attention to the following issues:

- The suitability and compatibility of the job, the role and the home;
- The health and safety, security, financial, HR and IT issues involved;
- The impact of the level of service delivery, efficiency or effectiveness;
- How the employee's performance will be monitored, including appropriate output measures, formal supervision through management guidance and appraisal process.
- Ownership and maintenance arrangements for the equipment to be used; when the risk assessments will be taking place; and how often the equipment will be checked.
- The home workers responsibility in terms of equipment insurance, for notifying the institution who has arranged a mortgage on the property, notifying a landlord,

checking with the Local Authority their position in terms of business rates or personal community charge

- The home workers responsibility for fulfilling the confidentiality clause within their Contract of Employment
- An appropriate communication system is put in place to enable management of the home worker and keeping them informed of all relevant departmental and corporate developments which impact on their work and them as a UHSussex employee.
- How the employee will keep in touch with the organisation and colleagues so they avoid isolation
- That the employee will be required to visit the offices of the Trust whenever required (and in any event at least once each week).
- Ensure the employee has undertaken relevant training (e.g. Information Governance) and organise any further training that may be required e.g. Health and Safety aspects of work at home and the management of time.
- To ensure there is an audit trail of all equipment issued to the homeworker as well as documentation removed from the Trust (a sign out process etc).
- Regularly monitoring and reviewing the homeworking arrangements.
- To ensure when homeworking ceases that all equipment has been returned and accounted for.

Appendix A – Checklist and Agreement for Regular Home working

This document should be used to help determine whether regular home working meets the needs of the service and as a record to support any subsequent agreement.

This document should be completed in conjunction with the flexible working application form contained within the Flexible Working Guidance.

Name:	
Job title:	
Department:	
Line manager:	
Date of request:	
I wish to work at home on a permanent basis on the following days: Every Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday/Friday (<i>delete as appropriate</i>)	
Arrangements for dealing with phone calls, emails, letters and other correspondence:	
Arrangements for contact with the line manager:	
Arrangements for maintaining confidentiality and security of Trust information:	
Arrangements for attendance at Trust premises:	
Any specific arrangements applicable to the role:	
Declaration	
I understand that the Trust will not pay any costs of working from home other than those previously agreed and itemised above.	
I understand that the agreement can be terminated at any time by either party, giving reasonable notice.	
I have read, understood and agree to the Trust's guidance on home working.	
I confirm that I am up to date with my statutory and mandatory training (including Information Governance)	
I confirm that I have adequate insurance for working from home	

I confirm that I have told my mortgage provider/landlord of my plan to work from home and checked that I am allowed to under my mortgage/rent agreement.		
I confirm that relevant risk assessments have been completed and signed off using the SHE system (Home working, Display Screen Equipment and Lone Working)		
I confirm that I must return any equipment provided in a reasonable condition, allowing for reasonable wear and tear over the period of the homeworking agreement or I must repay the market value of the equipment. In the case of the latter, the Trust will make reasonable efforts to resolve this through discussion with you but reserves the right to make a deduction from your salary for the market value of the equipment.		
Signed by (employee):	Date:	
Authorised by (line manager):	Date:	
Authorised by (Director):	Date:	

Appendix B – Health and Safety Guidance Notes

Employer responsibilities

1. Under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, employers have a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees. Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, employers are required to assess all significant risks, which include risks to home workers. Employers must also make adequate arrangements for managing their control measures.
2. In addition, under the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992, employers are required to assess display screen equipment risks, ensure that workstations meet the minimum requirements, inform users, plan work for changes of activity/breaks, provide eye tests and provide health and safety training. The employer must also arrange a workstation assessment of all display screen equipment users, including those working at home.
3. Under the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER), employers are required to ensure that all equipment used by people for work is suitable and safe and, importantly, that adequate training has been given.

Employee responsibilities

1. It is not only the employer who has responsibilities under health and safety legislation. Under the HSWA, employees have a duty to:
 - take reasonable care of their own health and safety, and that of other people who may be affected by their activities at work
 - co-operate with their employer to enable the employer to comply with health and safety duties
 - use all work items provided by their employer in accordance with the training and instructions they receive to enable them to use the items safely
 - inform their employer of any work situation that could present a serious danger to health and safety or of any shortcomings in the employer's health and safety arrangements.

Risk assessment

1. In most cases, the employee's home office will require control measures to be put in place following the risk assessment. What the employer does then depends on factors such as how much time the employee is likely to spend working at home, and what the budget is.

2. The home worker must have received training in good ergonomic and safe working practices.
3. Relevant risk assessments, including Home working, Display Screen Equipment (DSE) and Lone Working must be completed by the employee via the SHE system and reviewed by the line manager prior to commencing home working.

Practical steps to home worker safety

1. Perhaps the single most important contributor to healthy working at home is the way the employee's workstation is set up. Many people already have a room or part of a room kitted out with desk and computer, but it is unlikely to satisfy a health and safety assessment. Additionally, many people assume it is acceptable to work on a laptop at the dining table, or sitting on a sofa. Although ergonomics and display screen equipment hazards are important, there are other risks present to home workers that are not always obvious.
2. **Lighting** - adequate lighting is very important if people are to avoid eye strain. Natural daylight is vastly preferable to artificial light. Adjustable task lighting should also be considered if good natural light is not present and for cloudy or dark days. Managers should remember that the older the employee is, the more light they will need. Vertical window blinds are good for eliminating glare on sunny days and avoiding unnecessary heat gain. Workstations should be positioned side-on to the main source of natural light. Facing a window will expose the user to glare and put the keyboard and monitor in shadow, while sitting with a window behind will cause glare on the screen.
3. **Dehydration** - Home workers will not have the advantage of chilled water fountains like many of their work-based colleagues, but taking sufficient fluid is very important if people are to maintain their mental capacity. Remind home workers to keep a bottle of water on the desk and to ensure they drink at least two litres of water each day, or more in hot weather. Homes are often kept warmer than offices in winter and employees should be advised on how to ensure the atmosphere is not too dry.
4. **Noise** - Environmental and background noise is often an issue in the home. Other members of the family may be at home while the employee is working, so music and loud conversation are possibilities. Traffic and aircraft noise may be a nuisance and neighbours may also cause noise. Some compromise needs to be reached, especially if the individual needs to concentrate on detailed work or use the telephone a lot. Otherwise it may simply not be possible for the employee to work at home.
5. **Lone working** - An aspect of home working that many people fail to appreciate is that in most cases the employee will be working alone. Lone working in many scenarios is recognised as a risk that needs to be controlled. Employers of social workers, district nurses, housing officers, people working in petrol stations and those who work outside normal hours, like cleaners or security guards, are today much more aware of the need to assess these risks. But home workers also face hazards due to working alone. What if the individual becomes ill during the working day, falls

down the stairs or receives an electric shock? A formal 'keep in touch' process (depending on the type of risk assessed) should be negotiated alongside new employment contracts or prior to the employee starting home working. See the chapter on lone working.

6. **Stress** - both employer and employee need to understand and discuss possible downsides before any agreement to work at home is reached, certainly on any long-term plan to work from home. In order to avoid unnecessary stress, discussions should cover points such as the following:

- is the individual able to cope with the isolation of working without day-to-day support from colleagues and supervisor?
- how able is the employee to solve routine problems thrown up by IT, telephone calls, the work itself?
- will the home situation impact on their ability to do the job? Discuss partners, childcare, elder care, pets, neighbours, environmental noise
- what agreement is to be reached on hours? Will the individual be expected to work specific hours, and will it be acceptable for the employer to contact them out of those hours?
- will work be controlled by automatic means, say by software? How much control will the individual have over the pace of work? This can be a significant cause of stress
- how will the work and the individual's performance be assessed? Are both parties happy with the arrangements?
- what training will the individual need?

On an ongoing basis, much stress can be avoided by maintaining good contact with home workers. Managers can do this in a number of ways, such as:

- remembering home workers when setting up team meetings, briefings and training days
- including home workers on training courses
- emailing and telephoning home workers every day, ensuring there are reasons for permanent home workers to come into the office regularly so they maintain informal contact with their colleagues.

More information

Health and Safety Executive – www.hse.gov.uk