

HOMEWORKING POLICY

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Home working is defined as an employee undertaking all or a proportion of their duties in their own home.
- 1.2 The policy is designed to allow an employee who is based primarily in an office to work from home in exceptional circumstances.
- 1.3 With prior approval from their Manager after agreement at Senior Management Team and reviewed at least every six months for long term homeworking agreements.

2. Eligibility

- 2.1 The arrangements set out in this policy will apply equally to all employees and all applications will be considered.
- 2.2 All homeworking arrangements must be agreed in advance and all Risk Assessments must be carried out prior to homeworking being undertaken.
- 2.3 Employees must discuss the possibility of homeworking with their manager and formally submit a request (Appendix 1). Management supporting a home working request will be required to demonstrate that the arrangement maintains efficient and effective service provision.
- 2.4 The Manager will prepare a business case to support the request and submit to Senior Management Team to consider the request on its own merits in the context of the impact on the efficiency and operational requirements of the employing department within a reasonable timescale. The requirement to deliver a quality service and to maintain customer service standards must be the paramount consideration. An exception can be agreed with the HR Manager due to health grounds following a recommendation by Occupational Health.
- 2.5 The decision whether or not to accept a request for home working will in each case be based on an objective assessment of the extent to which the post and/or the employee's circumstances are suitable for home working.
- 2.6 Any appeal against a decision will be heard by the Chief Executive, and this decision will be final.
- 2.7 The Chief Executive will have the discretion to approve homeworking to an employee that does not meet the above criteria.
- 2.8 Any home working arrangement may constitute a change to an employee's contract of employment, and in these circumstances no arrangement will commence until formal written agreement to this effect has been confirmed by both the Council and the employee.

- 2.9 A homeworking risk assessment must be carried out, using the home working risk assessment hazard checklist (Appendix 2) and any identified risk control measures acted on before homeworking may be approved. A copy of the assessment should be sent to the Corporate Health and Safety Advisor, who is available to provide support, guidance and advice. The risk assessment should be reviewed on an annual basis and forwarded to Corporate Health and Safety Advisor.
- 2.10 It is a condition of the homeworking agreement that arrangements for dependent care have been made in order to allow the employee to work from home without disruption. Any changes to dependent care arrangements that will impact on an employee working from home must be reported to People and Policy immediately and could lead to a review of the agreement.

3. Management Arrangements

- 3.1 Home working requires a level of trust between the manager and the employee. If this is abused by either party, particularly in relation to hours worked, outputs achieved or security of information it may lead to disciplinary action. The manager must ensure that the employee is managed and supervised appropriately. It is imperative that:
- Clear objectives and targets are agreed between managers and employees.
 - Work and projects are planned properly.
 - Monitoring of the home working arrangement is regular throughout the agreed period.
 - There is an opportunity for feedback on the arrangement to Senior Management Team to assess the success of home working.
 - Contractual hours are met. All hours worked must be recorded via The Council's Time and Attendance system and adjustments authorised by the employee's manager.
- 3.2 Monitoring and feedback mechanisms should be linked closely to the Councils Supervisory Policy, available on the intranet or from People and Policy.
- 3.3 Management must ensure that adequate arrangements are in place for communication to be maintained with home working employees. Management must also ensure that these arrangements are communicated to other staff.
- 3.4 Dealing with external customers must be agreed in advance. Home telephone numbers should not be given out.
- 3.5 Reporting procedures for absence and sickness must be followed for employees working at home and all other policies and procedures of the Council that apply to office based employees will apply equally to home workers.
- 3.6 Meetings between home workers and third parties must not be carried out at the home worker's personal address.

- 3.7 A full working day for home working will be 7.24 hours unless otherwise negotiated and agreed with the employee's manager.
- 3.8 Home working must be made up of either half or full days (not ad hoc hours) of the employees contractual working hours.

4. Confidentiality and Security

- 4.1 The removal of information of a sensitive nature required to be worked on at home must first be approved by management.
- 4.2 Where agreement has been reached, it is the responsibility of the employee to keep the information confidential and secure at all times. All sensitive documents must be kept in a secure, lockable cabinet. This cabinet should be stored in an area covered by an intrude alarm wherever possible.
- 4.3 In all cases the Data Protection Act (General Data Protection Regulations due to come into force 25th May 2018) and other such legislation must be complied with. All reasonable steps must be taken in order to protect equipment and any documents
- 4.4 Documents must not be retained at home for longer than is necessary and should be returned to the workplace immediately when no longer required.
- 4.5 In line with the Council's ICT Security Policy no emails should be sent to personal emails.

5. Information Technology and Insurance Cover

- 5.1 Employees who are approved to work at home are covered by the Council's insurance arrangements for employers' liability during the business hours.
- 5.2 Home workers are required to contact their own insurance company to advise that they will be working at home. The Council will not reimburse any increase in premium should this occur.
- 5.3 Before commencing home working employees should also advise their mortgagees or landlords that they intend to work at home. The Council will not be responsible for any additional costs as a result.
- 5.4 IT would be considered a necessity for home working and the employee's responsibility to ensure any home working is in-line with the Council's IT Security Policy.
- 5.5 Laptop and RSA token will be funded by the respective service area.

6. Travel Allowances

- 6.1 Where an employee is working at home, ad hoc journeys made to the normal working base will not be reimbursed.

- 6.2 Where the employee is homeworking, reimbursement will be based on the cost of travel to the venue from the employee's home or workplace, whichever is the shorter, where the employee is required to visit other workplaces.
- 6.3 All travel allowance claims must be submitted in accordance with the Council's Travel at Work Policy which is available on the intranet or from People and Policy.

7. Scheme Monitoring

- 7.1 The home working scheme will be monitored by People and Policy and details of how the scheme is operating will be reported to Senior Management Team on an annual basis.

8. Termination of the Arrangement

- 8.1 If the home working arrangements are not operating satisfactorily and fail to deliver the benefits outlined in the original application, the manager will require the employee to return to conventional working. This must be discussed fully with the individual and confirmed in writing clearly stating the agreed date conventional working will recommence.
- 8.2 The employee will receive a minimum of one week's notice of termination for any home working agreement.
- 8.3 If problems are experienced by managers or employees with regard to returning to conventional working, advice must be sought from People and Policy.

9. Equality Considerations

- 9.1 Service Managers are responsible for ensuring that they operate the policy in line with the Council's Equality Policy to provide equality of opportunity for all employees.
- 9.2 The Council is committed to ensuring that no-one is discriminated against, disadvantaged or given preference, through membership of any group, particularly based on age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership. The policy will be equally applied to all employees irrespective of their background.
- 9.3 In addition, in line with the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (TULRCA) Part 3, the Council is committed to ensure that employees are not disadvantaged or discriminated against by virtue of their trade union membership in the application of this policy.

10. Further Information

- 9.1 It remains the responsibility of the employee to detail any tax implications of the Home working arrangements. Further information can be found from the HMRC.
- 9.2 Further information and advice is available from People and Policy.

HOMWORKING APPLICATION FORM

Name	
Job Title	
Department	
Manager	

Current Days and Hours of Work:

I wish to apply to be considered for home working and propose the following working arrangements:

Address at which home working would take place:

This application is for a permanent/temporary * period *delete as necessary

If the application is for a temporary period, please state the relevant dates:

Do you feel your homeworking would have an impact on the service you provide or the colleagues in your team? If so, how can this be minimised?

Home working is not suitable for employees who have caring responsibilities at home during normal working hours. By submitting this application you are confirming that you are not planning to combine home working with caring commitments

Signed: Date:
Please submit this form to your Manager for consideration.

HOMWORKING RISK ASSESSMENT – CHECKLIST

Any RBC employee intending to use their home address as their place of work is required to complete this hazard checklist and submit it to their line manager before approval for homeworking can be considered. Any difficulties must be resolved by the employee and line manager before permission for homeworking can be approved. The Health & Safety Manager may be contacted for help and advice.

Section A – Details of the Homeworker & Tasks Involved

Name of Homeworker:	Telephone No.
Address where homework is to be carried out:	Job Title:
	Section/Dept
	Line Manager’s name
	Telephone No.
	Contracted homework hours
Homeworker:	
Brief description of homework task(s). Include any work equipment that will be used:	
Manager:	
Confirmation of homeworking tasks. Include any work equipment that will be used.	

All questions in the following sections should be answered. In the event that the home-worker/assessor answers “No”, any risk must be eliminated/reduced/controlled to the lowest level – so far as is reasonably practicable – and the risk control measures must be discussed with the line manager. Risk controls should be recorded.

Section B – The Physical Working Environment

	Yes	No	N/A
Is the proposed working area in a separate room/building at the homeworking address?			
Is there sufficient personal working space (at least 11m ³) in the work area you are proposing to use for homeworking?			
Is there adequate space for storage of any materials required?			
Are the floors/floor coverings in the area where your workstation is located, and the access routes to it, sound and free from tripping hazards such as worn/damaged floor coverings, trailing wires/cables, stored materials etc?			
Is there adequate lighting for all your workstation / work area tasks? (Where possible, good natural lighting is preferable.)			
Is the access route to your work area sufficiently well lit to enable you to see any potential slipping or tripping hazards?			
If necessary, have you got task lighting such as a desk lamp?			
Is your work area adequately heated/cooled to provide a comfortable working temperature, and ventilated to enable a supply of fresh air to circulate your work area? (This is particularly important if the work-area is located in an attic or cellar area.)			
Is the work area free from excessive or distracting noise?			

Record of any actions taken to improve the physical working environment

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Section C – Assessment of the Workstation (Ergonomic Issues)

	Yes	No	N/A
Is there sufficient leg room beneath your workstation?			
Are you able to gain access to work equipment without stretching or over-reaching?			
Do you have adequate foot support/foot-rest provision?			
Do you have sufficient workspace for all equipment and documents?			
Do you have sufficient space for postural change (including absence of obstacles under the workstation/desk)?			
Is there sufficient space on the workstation/desk to rest/support your hands/wrists during pauses in keying/typing?			
Are you able to keep your forearms approximately horizontal to the keyboard when keying/typing?			

Record of any actions taken to improve Workstation Ergonomic Issues

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Section D – Assessment of the Workstation (Fixtures & Fittings)

	Yes	No	N/A
Are you able to adjust your chair for comfort?			
Does your chair have a supportive back-rest?			
Is your workstation/desk free from jagged edges?			
Are workstation/desk drawers difficult to open?			

Record of any actions taken to improve Fixtures & Fittings

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Section E – Assessment of the Workstation (Display Screen Equipment)

	Yes	No	N/A
Do you have access to a desk-top personal computer/ (Note: laptops are not generally suitable for prolonged frequent use.)			
Are you able to adjust the angle of your computer screen?			
Is your computer screen free from glare/reflection?			
Are you able to adjust the brightness/contrast of your computer screen?			
Are images on the computer screen stable and clear?			
Are keyboard symbols clear?			
Is the computer screen and keyboard cleaned regularly?			
Are you able to take regular breaks from keying/typing activities?			
Do you have a computer screen cleaning kit?			
Are you able to arrange your working day/time and activities to ensure that you take regular breaks from keyboard activity/looking at a computer screen?			
Have you been made aware of the Council's eye-care policy (for DSE users) and any entitlement you might have to free eye and eyesight tests?			

Record of any actions taken to improve Workstation (DSE) issues

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Section F – Electrical Safety

	Yes	No	N/A
If you have installed your own DSE equipment, have you followed the manufacturer’s instructions regarding assembly and connection?			
Are any wires or cables safely tucked out of the way, for example, under a desk or table to prevent tripping accidents?			
Are electrical leads/plugs/items free from obvious signs of damage and/or wear?			
Are there sufficient plug sockets to accommodate all leads without the need for adaptors?			
Have you been provided with any electrical equipment for homeworking purposes? and, if so, have you been told about the arrangements for inspection and testing?			

Record of any actions taken to improve Electrical Safety

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Section G - Manual Handling

	Yes	No	N/A
Does your homeworking task require any significant manual handling (eg lifting, carrying, pushing, pulling, moving) of materials or equipment from one level to another, up or down stairs or over long distances or involve excessive bending, twisting or stooping? If 'yes', it may be necessary for a separate manual handling risk assessment to be carried out. This should be discussed with your line manager			

Record of any actions taken to improve Manual Handling

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Section H – Visitors/Children/Pets

	Yes	No	N/A
Is your homeworking area segregated from more general areas used by other family members, children, etc?			
Do you have an effective strategy for keeping young children away from your work area whilst you are working?			
Do you have an effective strategy for keeping pets away from your work area whilst you are working?			
Do you have an effective strategy for ensuring that you are not distracted by callers (personal and telephone) to your home whilst you are working?			

Record of any actions taken to deal with Visitors/Children/Pets

Section I – Communication/Consultation/Lone Working

	Yes	No	N/A
Are you able to contact your line manager/colleagues easily and quickly in the event of any problems/queries arising from your homeworking task?			
Is your homeworking address included on the circulation list for information bulletins/newsletters/general e-mail messages, etc?			
Does the nature of your homeworking task enable you to keep in touch with 'the office' eg through personal visits?			
Have you been given a copy of the HSE leaflet "Health and Safety Law – What you should know"?			
Have you been given a copy of the HSE leaflet "Homeworking – Guidance for employers and employees on Health & Safety"?			
Do you have any concerns regarding your personal safety / security if you are working alone at your homeworking address? If "yes", you should discuss these concerns with your line manager.			

Record of any actions taken to deal with Communication/Lone Working issues

Section J – Emergency Procedures

	Yes	No	N/A
Are you aware of the procedure for reporting accidents that arise out of or in connection with your homeworking task?			
Have you been made aware of any first aid arrangements for your homeworking task?			
Have you considered and dealt with any potential fire safety risks, including emergency evacuation?			

Record of any actions taken to deal with Emergency procedures

To be completed by the homeworker

Signed: Date:

To be completed by the homeworker’s line manager.

I have checked the responses to this homeworking hazard checklist and am satisfied that the actions taken are sufficient to, so far as is reasonably practicable, eliminate any identified hazards, or reduce them to the lowest possible level.

Signed: Date:

A copy of this assessment should be given to and discussed with the employee. A copy should be forwarded to the Health & Safety Manager. The original assessment should be retained by the line manager and placed in the Health & Safety Manual/File.

Date when this assessment will be reviewed: