

# Homeworking

## Guidelines for Homeworking

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## Guidelines for Homeworking

### 1 Introduction

1.1 For a variety of reasons, and with varying degrees of frequency, staff may undertake some of their duties away from their normal place of work at the University 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 line manager agree that it is mutually beneficial for that individual to work at home.

1.2 These guidelines define home working arrangements to perform University work, set out entitlements, eligibility criteria and other conditions that apply, and have been developed to provide a clear approach for dealing with home working on a regulated and frequent basis. They are not intended to address the ad hoc one off arrangements for home working for short periods to complete specific agreed pieces of work, nor are they intended to change existing arrangements or working practices.

1.3 The intention is that this will ensure fair treatment and consistency of approach, which is understood by all staff. It provides a standard framework for reporting, monitoring and managing home working in line with business and individual need.

1.4 These guidelines are underpinned by an expectation that there is no detriment to students' experience and impact on colleagues or provision of services and this is always a priority when considering applications and arrangements.

### 2 Purpose

2.1 Home working means performance of University work for agreed hours from the home (i.e. normally in the employee's private dwelling) or another remote location. The flexibility and productivity outcomes available from home working can be attractive to both the University and employees. The arrangements are based on a management philosophy of trust and mutual benefit. The employee will retain access to a University office workstation (or desk-sharing arrangement).

2.2 Working from home can save use of cars, fuel and commuting time and can ease car-parking requirements. Circumstances where working at home may be mutually beneficial usually arise where work needs to be done with minimum distraction or interruption, for example where increasingly staff are working in shared office space. Working from home should not create additional workload for other employees, or otherwise affect operational efficiency and effectiveness.

### 2.3 Working from home:

- Is granted at the University's discretion and requires the prior approval of the appropriate line manager following consultation and discussion with the employee; it will not alter an employee's general terms and conditions of employment;
- Is voluntary and is not intended to create a situation where staff feel obliged to work excessive hours;
- Will not attract subsidy since the benefits are seen as being mutual;
- Does not normally mean that equipment will be provided by the University for use at home, although routine supplies such as printer cartridges and paper may be provided at the discretion of line manager.
- It is expected that where home working arrangements are agreed that colleagues would be present on campus for meetings when required and for any Committees, Senate, Faculty, Team meetings.

## 3 Equality and diversity statement

3.1 This guidance should ensure an appropriate and equitable response to employee requests for home working, with decisions taken and communicated in an efficient and fair manner and will be implemented in conjunction with the University's commitments to diversity and equality.

## 4 Scope

4.1 These guidelines can be applied in principle to all University employees, regardless of contract type or duration, other than those employed on a casual basis, although it is recognised that because of the nature of some roles, home working would not be practical.

4.2 Positions with at least one of the following requirements will **not** normally be considered for home working:

- direct face to face contact on a frequent basis (for example reception duties for internal and external visitors);
- being a member of a team who needs to have face to face contact with other team members such as checking off or signing documents, providing cover during breaks;
- servicing and serving other University facilities or assets (e.g. security office, physical recreation assistant, grounds worker);
- Where there is a need for face to face supervision such as allocating work on an ongoing basis, dealing with queries, checking work, organising rotas.

## 5 Health and safety considerations

5.1 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.

5.2 The employee must refer to the standard on [Display Screen Equipment \(DSE\)](#) regarding the use of computer equipment and how to set up a workstation. Further information about working with computer workstations can be found at [HSE publications](#). For staff working at home on a permanent arrangement e.g. one day a week throughout the year, then they must undertake the [online DSE training module and self-assessment](#) for both their workstation on campus and at home. For staff who undertake occasional work at home using a computer e.g. a few times throughout the year perhaps when there is severe weather, then there is no need to complete an online DSE assessment for this activity provided they have completed the online training module and assessment for their workstation on campus. It is expected staff will adopt the same principles as used on campus with regard to setting up the workstation and taking regular breaks.

5.3 The employee must also read the guidance on ["Working Alone" leaflet](#) available at [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk).

## 6 Key information for employees

### 6.1 Equipment and technology

6.1.1 As the University campus remains a work base for the home worker and a desk and equipment is provided on campus, the University will not normally provide the home worker with additional IT equipment, phone, broadband connection or furniture to work from home. Only in exceptional circumstances where it is not possible for the University to provide suitable on campus accommodation and facilities will consideration be given to the provision of such items at home.

6.1.2 The home worker is responsible for ensuring that they have suitable telephone and broadband services where required, and for contacting the service provider in the event of any technical issues. It is not possible for the University to provide IT support for equipment owned by members of staff.

6.1.3 Home workers who are using University supplied and supported equipment can receive telephone support from IT Services, but if the issue cannot be resolved by telephone, they will be required to bring the equipment on-site, as home visits are not possible. This is also the case where upgrades, installations of new software or maintenance is required.

6.1.4 All staff are required to use their own and supplied equipment correctly and to take reasonable steps to maintain any equipment provided, removing defective equipment from use and reporting defects on supplied equipment to their line manager. University equipment may not be used by others i.e. family and friends etc.

6.1.5 IT services can provide appropriate software (such as Microsoft Office suite) for the use of home workers. Further information about available software is available in [Pegasus](#).

6.1.6 Appropriate security must be obtained for all University 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 University property and all University information, files, documents, data etc. within their possession, including both paper and electronic material. All employees who have off campus working arrangements are required to adhere to the University's policies and guidance on [data security](#). Further guidance on the use and access of University IT resources when working from home and the required security steps to be taken is available at [Remote Access - University of Strathclyde](#).

6.1.7 Any third party data storage solutions, such as Apple Dropbox and Apple iCloud should not be used without corporate data being encrypted first and ideally staff should only use the Microsoft SharePoint or web-drive solutions provided for data transfer.

### 6.2 Insurance

6.2.1 It is the employee's responsibility to assess the personal implications of home working with respect to taxation, insurance or leasing arrangements, though any University equipment would be covered by the University's own arrangements.

6.2.2 The University holds liability insurances that provide cover for the legal liabilities of the University and its employees whenever they are engaged in University business. This cover applies irrespective of where the activity is taking place.

### 6.3 Costs/ expenses

6.3.1 No contribution will be made by the University towards normal household expenses attached to home working, such as heating, lighting or council tax costs. When an employee is working at or from home, journeys made to the normal office base will not be reimbursed.

## 6.4 Communication

6.4.1 Good communication is an essential part of any successful home working arrangement. Provision must be made to allow effective communication with work colleagues and external clients during the working day.

6.4.2 If contact is required during set hours or at specific times the employee must ensure that they are contactable at these times (email/telephone). The arrangements for contact should be agreed prior to working from home and kept up to date.

6.4.3 The employee's home telephone number and home address and personal non work email address may not be divulged to third parties without their express permission.

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

6.4.5 Visits from University staff to a home worker's home should only take place under exceptional circumstances, such as welfare reasons or for security purposes.

## 7 Requests for home working

7.1 An employee should approach their line manager with a request for home working, and a rationale for why this request is being made. Normally this rationale will outline the benefits of working from home, the expected outcomes and how any implications will be managed.

7.2 A manager should aim to be as flexible as possible in accommodating such a request, but may refuse a request to work from home for legitimate business or logistical reasons.

## 8 Responsibilities

### 8.1 Line manager responsibilities:

- To consider and grant permission for home working at their discretion.
- To notify employees of relevant arrangements, and to provide the employee with a copy of this home working guidance.
- To ensure that the employee is aware of expectations and the required standard of work, including specific deliverables for each occasion of homeworking.
- To provide feedback and to discuss and evaluate the arrangement.
- To evaluate and review the arrangement on a regular basis (minimum annually) to ensure appropriate outcomes are being delivered.

### 8.2 Employee responsibilities:

- To abide by the requirements of this document.
- To give details of a mobile and/or home telephone number and email address to facilitate communication with the University as appropriate.
- To deliver the expected work outcomes.
- Understand and consider all the information within these guidelines, in particular their own responsibilities regarding health and safety, data security and confidentiality.

### 8.3 Human Resources responsibilities:

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

## 9 Other relevant guidelines

9.1 Some employees will have the legal right to request flexible work arrangements, i.e. if they have children aged under 17 (or 18 where the child has a disability) and have, or expect to have, responsibility for the child, or have responsibility for an adult in need of care. This is detailed in the University's guidelines for [Flexible Working](#).

9.2 In certain adverse conditions, home working may be a practical alternative to travel. Information about adverse weather will be communicated to staff as appropriate.

9.3 Homeworking may be requested as an adjustment to support staff with a disability. Managers who are considering requests from staff with as an adjustment for a disability should consult with their Human Resource contacts.

9.4 Homeworking may be an option in circumstances where someone has short-term mobility issues where they are unable to travel to work but are otherwise fit for work.

## 10 Application Process

10.1 A [homeworking request/ agreement form](#) should be completed by the employee and passed to the line manager.

10.2 The line manager should consider the request – perhaps meeting with the individual and discussing and or consulting with other relevant parties. The line manager should give the individual their decision within 15 working days. If they are unable to make a decision within this timescale then the employee should be informed of the reason for the delay and the date when decision will be advised.

10.3 A note of discussions and agreement (if either agreed or not agreed) should be made on the [request/ agreement form](#) and this should be passed to Human Resources where it will be held on the employee's personal file.

10.4 Where an application is not agreed a further application will not be considered for 6 months unless there have been significant changes to the employee's role/ job.