



Home Working Policy

1. Introduction

Home working is a type of employment arrangement where staff members can do work at home instead of their workplace. It is an increasingly popular arrangement in the UK and realising the potential benefits from it, many employers operate it on various conditions.

There are two types of home working:

- **Contractual** home workers are employees based at home on a regular basis either for all their working week or part of it.
- **Occasional** home workers spend the majority of their time at their workplace but now and then may work from home, normally to perform a specific non-routine task that requires a high level of concentration with minimum interruptions. It can also be used in specific circumstances where an employee cannot get to their workplace but could still do the work (for instance an injury or bad weather). It is up to the employer to set parameters for occasional home working and determine each request on its own merit. This type of arrangement does not require contractual change and it can be withdrawn at any time.

ng homes recognises that occasional home working is a much more common arrangement and the flexibility and benefits it can bring to both the employer and the employee.

2. Principles

- 2.1 Benefit the business from creative solutions, ideas and projects by giving staff the opportunity to do these at home, without interruptions
- 2.2 Not to compromise the usual level of service offered to our customers
- 2.3 Set out the parameters to ensure the above conditions are met
- 2.4 Home working is not a substitute for suitable care arrangements

3. Home Working Parameters

For occasional home working the number of days working at home requires to be agreed with the line manager and HR. This will allow for consistency and fairness across the Association. Any request for home working must include detailed reasons for the request and the benefits to the Association.

When considering each request the line manager will assess this against this policy and also take into account any business pressures at that time.

Communication

Home working is a form of lone working. This means that there may be a risk that staff members may not have immediate access to another person for assistance or supervision if circumstances require.

To mitigate against this risk, staff that are working from home are required to:

- Keep their work calendar up-to-date so colleagues know where they are;
- Agree a schedule or protocol for keeping in touch with their manager. This would normally be on a daily basis. This is particularly important for ensuring the health and wellbeing of staff, especially staff that live alone;
- Be contactable by phone during working hours

Employees Who Are Carers

Home working is not a substitute for suitable care arrangements. Staff members with dependents who need to be looked after by someone other than the employee when they are working should ensure that suitable care arrangements are in place to cover the time when they are working from home.

Performance Management

Working from home presents a particular challenge to normal management controls but the risk of potential abuse can still be managed. To ensure ng homes gets value for money, home working will be managed by results (rather than managing time and the way the task is done). The line manager will therefore agree with the staff member the outcomes of work to be produced at home and expect those to be delivered. As long as it brings the desired benefits to the business, it would not matter how many hours or at what time of the day the work is done.

Breaches of the policy will lead to the home working arrangement being withdrawn and potentially formal disciplinary action.

Health & Safety

A health and safety assessment will be carried out according to ng homes' health and safety checklist (Appendix 1) and a DSE assessment (Appendix 2) which covers VDU risks and general precautions for householder electrical safety. Domestic electrical supply configurations are outwith the control of the employer and are the responsibility of the staff member as home-owner/tenant. **Staff will be asked to perform their own assessments and results will then be validated by their line manager during a discussion or home visit.** Staff can use the attached Appendix 3 which has been taken from the Gov.uk website to assist in creating their own workspace and staying healthy at home.

The employee will be expected to report any changes that may affect the arrangements in the future (in which case another assessment may be necessary).

ng homes would not normally provide office furniture (e.g. desks and chairs) to enable home working.

Technical Support

ng homes' IT infrastructure is capable of supporting this concept and gives employees remote access to calendars, mails and documents. Staff who ask their manager's approval to work from home on a particular piece of work would be expected to have their own computers and broadband already in place. ng homes does not commit to provide the installation of equipment and/or software to allow people to work from home. ng homes will be able to supply mobile devices (e.g. smart phones or such like) to allow some employees to keep in touch when not in the office. This means that ng homes would not need to pay for installation of telephones or the bills, as the employees would be able to use the mobile devices provided for them.

It will be required that staff have basic fire wall and anti virus software installed on their home computers, in order to protect ng homes' office IT system from any harm.

Costs/Allowances

No allowance for paper/ink/subsistence/internet service/wear and tear on equipment will be considered or paid. It is considered that the saving in time and money getting to/from work is a reasonable notional offset to any personal cost of working from home.

Insurance

It is the employee's responsibility to assess the personal implications of home working with respect to household insurance.

Recording the days of working from home

All staff members must record all days worked from home on CIPHR.

ng homes reserves the right to withdraw the home working arrangement for business reasons at any time, with immediate affect.

Terms and Conditions

Staff members who work from home are still governed by the same terms and conditions of their contract of employment. The Staff Code of Conduct and all other ng homes policies, procedures and associated guidance remain in place and should be adhered to during any period of home working.

Staff members who are unwell during a home working day must inform their line manager, following the normal absence reporting procedure.

4. Home Working during Emergency Situations e.g. Covid-19

In response to any emergency situations which require our offices to close e.g. Covid-19, following Scottish Government guidance, the default position should be to work from home where possible. Staff members that cannot work from home should discuss their circumstances with their line manager to determine the next steps.

Such situations are temporary, will be continually assessed and managed appropriately in consultation with the Board and staff.

Whilst undertaking caring responsibilities while working from home would not normally be considered possible, ng homes recognises the exceptional circumstances facing the Association and its employees. If you are required to provide care, you should discuss the arrangements with your line manager including what the impact on outputs will be and/or the hours that you are able to work. It may be appropriate for other leave to be considered and this should be discussed with the line manager.

For clarity, home-based work or working from home means performance of your duties, from a home or private setting. Ordinarily, working from home:

- Does not alter an employee's terms and conditions of employment.
- Does not attract subsidy.
- Does not normally mean that equipment will be provided by ng homes for use at home.

5. Other Related Policies

- Terms and Conditions of Employment
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Equality & Diversity
- Attendance and Absence Management
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Lone Working Policy
- Discipline and Grievance Procedures
- Health & Safety Manual
- Dignity At Work Policy
- Stress Management

6. General Data Protection Regulations

ng homes will treat your personal data in line with our obligations under the current data protection regulations and our own Data Protection Policy. Information regarding how your data will be used and the basis for processing your data is provided in our employee fair processing notice.

7. Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier in line with regulatory or legislative guidance/changes or good practice guidelines.

8. Equality Impact Assessment

This Policy is equally applicable to all and has no impact on protected characteristic groups.

Appendix 1

ng homes' health & safety checklist for employees working from home. This list is not exhaustive and should be used in conjunction with section 3.20 of the Health and Safety Manual.

Electrical Equipment

The safety and maintenance of the domestic electrical supply/installation is the responsibility of the house-holder. ng homes will only take maintenance responsibility for any equipment it directly supplies.

Householder checklist:

- Ensure electrical equipment is turned off when not in use and before performing any checks
- Check plugs are not damaged
- Check domestic electrical supply is suitable for the equipment in use
- Check plugs are properly wired and that the outer cable covering is gripped at the point it enters the plug or equipment.
- Check outer covers of equipment are sound and have no loose parts or missing screws
- Check all leads and cables routinely against damage to the outer covers
- Check for burn marks or other signs of overheating
- Repair any electrical equipment with potential to harm
- Check and secure all trailing wires – the best way is to use power outlets nearest to the equipment. Where this is not possible tuck trailing wires securely under desks etc and out of normal walkways
- Do not have young children unsupervised in any area where you are using electrical equipment

Appendix 2




DSE Risk Assessment


Note: This Assessment may be used by a Competent Person to assess the risks associated with each DSE User's working practices or by the DSE User as an initial 'Self-Assessment', followed by review by a Competent Person where problem areas or uncertainties are identified.


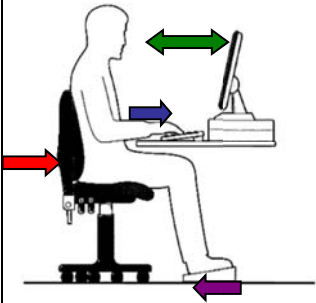
STAGE 1 – ASSESSMENT DETAILS			
Name of DSE user		Date of self-assessment	
Location of workstation		Desktop or laptop?	
Name of assessor		Date of assessment	
Signature of assessor		Review date	

STAGE 2 – DSE ACTIVITIES
Provide a summary of DSE activities – e.g. type of use; number of hours used each day, length of continuous use, etc.

STAGE 3 – PHOTOGRAPHS OF WORKSTATION (at time of Assessment)					
STAGE 4 – ASSESSMENT AND ACTION PLAN					
	Question	Self-Assessment – to be completed by the DSE User	Comp. Person Assessment – comments (including actions taken)	Further Actions Required	Actions Completed (person and date)
1	Do you feel any pain, discomfort or stiffness in your neck, shoulders, arms or hand(s) during or after using IT equipment?				
2	Have you have felt any of the above when working with IT equipment in the past (e.g. at another workstation or during previous employment)?				
3	Do you/have you had any health problems that could affect your work with IT equipment? (For example: epilepsy, back problems, poor circulation)				

4	Are the words on your screen clear, easy and comfortable to read?					
5	Is the image on the screen stable and flicker- free?					
6	Can you adjust the brightness and/or contrast?					
7	<p>Does your screen:</p> 	Swivel?				
		Tilt?				
8	Are there any reflections on the screen? (For example from windows or lights)					
9	Is the keyboard separate to the screen?					
10	Can you tilt the keyboard?					
11	Can you easily read the letters, numbers and symbols on the keyboard?					
12	Do you have a comfortable keying position?					
13	Is the mouse suitable for your needs?					

14	When using a mouse do you:					
	a) Keep it close to the keyboard?					
	b) Have a straight wrist and relaxed hand?					
	c) Take your hand off the mouse when you are not using it, i.e. type using both hands?					
	d) Support your wrist and forearm while using the mouse?					
15	Does the mouse work smoothly at a speed that suits you?					
16	Is the software you use suitable and can you use it comfortably?					
17	Is your work surface large enough?					
18	Can you comfortably reach and use the equipment/papers etc. on your desk?					
19	Are your work surfaces free from reflections? (For example from windows or lights)					
20	a) Can you adjust your seat's: 	Back height?				
		Back tilt?				

		Seat height?				
	b) Does your seat have wheels/glides?					
21		The small of your back supported?				
		Forearms horizontal?				
		Eyes level with the top of the screen?				
		Feet flat on the floor without too much pressure from the seat on the backs of the legs?				
22	Do you have enough room under your desk to move your legs and change position?					
23	How long do you work at a computer before taking a break?					
24	How often do you have an eyesight test?					
25	When was your last eyesight test?					
26	Do you wear glasses only when you are working with IT					

	equipment?				
27	Do you feel that the lighting levels are suitable?				
28	Do you have comfortable levels of ventilation?				
29	Is the workplace at a comfortable temperature?				
30	Are there comfortable noise levels in the workplace?				
31	Do you have any other concerns or comments regarding your workstation or DSE use?				
32	Have you received adequate information, instruction and training on DSE use, hazards, risks, control measures, reporting faults and injuries and in the use of hardware and software?				

Home working and staying healthy

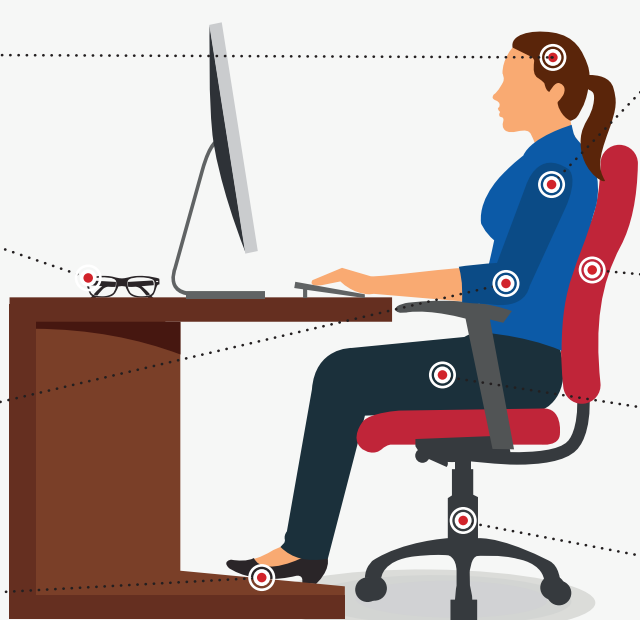
Setting up your workspace

Look **STRAIGHT AHEAD**, monitor at eye level or just below and an arm's length away. If using multiple monitors, angle them inwards to reduce neck rotation.

Give your **EYES** a break. Every 20 minutes, look 20 feet away for 20 seconds. 20-20-20.

ELBOWS and **FOREARMS** level with the desk surface, shoulders are down and relaxed. Adjust chair height or prop yourself up with additional cushions.

FEET planted on the floor. A footrest is ideal; alternatively, use a box.



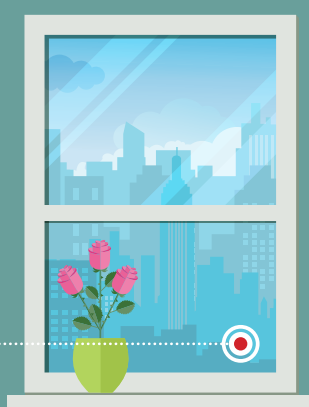
Keyboard and mouse positioned close to the edge of the desk to avoid unnecessary stretching. Don't shrug **SHOULDERS** when typing and mousing; lower the work surface or adjust your chair height to avoid this.

Sit **BACK** taking full backrest support. Adjustable chairs are ideal. For more lumbar support, place a cushion or rolled up towel behind you.

Keep **THIGHS** parallel to the floor, knees slightly lower than the hips.

Regular **MOVEMENT** is key. Get up from your chair 2-3 times an hour for 30-60 seconds or 5-10 minutes every hour. Add dynamic stretches to daily routines as well as walking.

Creating the right environment



We spend 90% of our time indoors so consider air quality. Let fresh air in, clean **WINDOWS** regularly to avoid dust build up and consider the cleaning products you are using. Air purifiers should be considered.

Observe the **TEMPERATURE** in your work area. When too cold, you may feel more distracted and lose some dexterity in your hands and fingers. If you are feeling cold, you may not be moving regularly enough. When you're too warm, you can be uncomfortable and tire more quickly. Aim for between 21 and 24°C (ideally 22°C).



ADD A LAMP to your desk to increase light levels if required. Illuminate the work area and documents as opposed to the screen as the screen already emits light.

Try to create a workspace away from your living space to reduce noise distraction. If you can't, wear earphones or headphones to take calls. Make sure these are fitted well. Adding **MUSIC** to the background or white noise can also help keep you productive.



CREATE A GOOD ATMOSPHERE around your work area including natural light, plants, flowers and artwork. Increasing the connection to nature around your work area improves productivity.

Navigating your home

WORKING FROM A SOFA: Plant feet firmly on the floor and sit back in the seat. Put your laptop on a book / magazine on a cushion to raise the screen slightly and improve neck posture. Place a cushion behind you for better lower back support. Keep shoulders down and relaxed, elbows by your side and wrists straight. Take a break every 15-20 minutes.

INTERRUPT SITTING: Stand occasionally to work. An adjustable height ironing board is ideal. Alternatively, put the laptop on any flat surface at a standing height. A good regime could be 20 minutes sitting, eight minutes standing, two minutes moving.

WORKING AT A DINING TABLE: Plant feet firmly on the floor and sit back in the seat. Add a cushion to the backrest if needed. Move the chair close to the table and bring the laptop near to the edge. Try to lift the laptop to eye level and connect a separate keyboard and mouse to encourage a more neutral posture.



***These tips are offered on a temporary basis, when you do not have the means to set yourself up in an ideal ergonomic position.

Staying mentally fit

DON'T BE TOO HARD ON YOURSELF: You may be trying to work around childcare, home schooling, and other commitments. If you are struggling, talk to your line manager or HR department. If you are feeling anxious or low, there are a number of free apps that help support mental health wellbeing, e.g. Headspace, Moodfit. If you are finding everyday activities a struggle, contact your GP - many are now doing telephone or video consultations.

IF YOU ARE MISSING COLLEAGUES: Try to organise some regular 'get togethers' via conference call/apps. You may be 'seeing' each other during online work meetings but sometimes it's nice to have a chat over a cuppa, as you would during a coffee break in the office.



MAKE SURE YOU ARE GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP: You may be working different hours to fit in other commitments, but make sure you don't end up 'running on empty'. Set yourself boundaries and stick to them, e.g. no looking at emails between certain times of day/night, no working on weekends, etc., as applicable to your role.

MAKE SURE YOU HAVE SOME 'DOWN TIME': The lines between home and work are very blurred at the moment. Try to get outside for a period each day; the benefits of fresh air and being in nature are well documented in terms of mental health and wellbeing.

If you require further support, contact your manager and ask for a display screen equipment assessment (DSEA) which can be conducted remotely and support you with more specific advice.

www.ergonomics.org.uk