

## Guidance - Homeworking

This document details guidance that applies to any instance of homeworking (Part A) and arrangements specifically applying when it is agreed that a member of staff will work from home for some or all of their working week (ie regular or permanent homeworking) (Part B). This should be read in conjunction with any homeworking agreement that is issued and agreed between a line manager and a member of staff.

### Part A – Guidance applying to all homeworking

Guidance applying to all staff working from home, during the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond is available [here](#).

In addition the following guidance is provided:

#### - Working Hours

Staff who work from home on a regular or permanent basis are expected to work the same pattern as their normal hours of work, had they been working on campus unless a change of work pattern has been agreed as part of the working from home request.

Staff should avoid working excessive hours as a consequence of working from home. Working patterns and levels of work both over time and during shorter periods should not be detrimental to health and wellbeing. We would encourage staff to take adequate rest breaks, as is applicable to individual working hours, a lunch break and regular short breaks from their workstation and staff should be mindful of the number of hours they are working.

Staff should ensure that they take adequate rest breaks and, as a minimum, in line with the Working Time Regulations 1998:

- a break of at least 20 minutes from working during a working day of more than six hours;
- ensure that they have a daily rest break of at least 11 continuous hours, i.e. the time period between stopping work one day and beginning work the next day must not be less than 11 hours; and
- have at least one complete day each week when no work is done.

If staff have concerns about their hours or arrangements, they should discuss these with their line manager.

#### - University policies and procedures

All staff, whether working from home or at their University premises base, are required to comply with University policies and procedures.

#### - Health and Safety

Staff working from home, even on an occasional basis, have the same duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act as all other members of staff and must take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of anyone else who might be affected, ensuring that they follow health and safety guidance. Staff should ensure, as is reasonably practicable, that they work in a safe manner and follow all health and safety instructions and guidance available [here](#) and the [Lone Working Policy](#)

## - **Workspace**

Staff should think about any potential hazards in the space where they will work and should complete a basic assessment of their workstation, to ensure they are working comfortably and appropriately. Please refer [here](#) for further information.

## - **Equipment and Facilities**

When working from home, it is important that staff know their responsibilities for handling University devices and data, including personal data. Staff are responsible for making themselves aware of these responsibilities and what actions they should take to ensure they are working safely and securely, as outlined in the [IT Security Toolkit guide](#).

The University's Remote Access services vary depending on whether staff are using a University managed device or a personal device. If staff have an agreement to work regularly or permanently from home then it will be a requirement that they use a University managed device. It may be possible to use a personal device for occasional homeworking, however there are additional security and data protection issues that must be considered in this case. Information is available in the [IT Toolkit Remote Access resource](#).

For Regular or Permanent Homeworking the University will provide equipment which the staff member reasonably requires to work from home and all such equipment will remain the University's property. A minimum specification of equipment for homeworking will be defined by IT and any further equipment needs will be discussed with the line manager.

It is the responsibility of the staff member to provide a phone line (if required) and suitable internet connection. Phone line and/or internet installation or rental costs will not be reimbursed by the University.

If a staff member requires equipment for health reasons this should be discussed with their line manager. The manager may refer the staff member to Occupational Health so that advice can be sought on potential adjustments or equipment which would be suitable. Any decision to purchase equipment must be agreed with the line manager.

If a staff member considers that they require additional equipment (but not for health reasons), they should discuss this with their line manager. In most instances any additional equipment which is required should be sourced from equipment already within the University or the line manager may discuss alternative ways of working without the equipment requested. The line manager may also seek guidance from Health and Safety to understand the options available and the potential cost and benefit of such equipment. Where a staff member has a reasonable requirement for equipment which cannot be sourced from the University, in exceptional circumstances the manager may agree that equipment can be purchased. This must be agreed in advance of any costs being incurred and must also be approved by the relevant Head of School/Section. Any purchases must both follow University approval processes and be sourced via the University.

In line with existing policies, where University equipment is provided the staff member must:

- use it only for the purposes for which it was provided;
- not allow family and friends to use the equipment;
- take reasonable care of it and use it only in accordance with any operating instructions and University policies and procedures; and
- return equipment if requested to do so by the University.

The University appreciates that the use of technology and IT equipment is crucial to working from home but that it can also develop faults, which may lead to delays in undertaking work. In the event of equipment failing or developing a fault, the staff member should inform their line manager and make all reasonable attempts to get the equipment fixed or replaced as quickly as possible via the IT Helpdesk. Please note that the responsibility for the broadband connection/provision lies with the staff member.

Should any University equipment be damaged, stolen or develop a fault, the staff member should inform their line manager so that appropriate repairs or replacements can be arranged. In the case of theft or damage, the staff member should also contact Finance so that they can consider whether they can make a claim under the University's insurance arrangements.

Where a staff member chooses to use any other personal equipment (for Occasional homeworking only), the University is not responsible for the provision, maintenance, replacement, or repair in the event of loss or damage, to any personal equipment used when working for the University.

Should the member of staff leave the employment of the University for any reason, it is their responsibility to arrange for the return of any equipment, furniture, materials and documents etc. that belong to the University by the end of their employment.

Staff are also responsible for ensuring they follow Display Screen Equipment (DSE) guidance.

#### - **Information Security and Data Protection**

Staff working from home are expected to provide a secure environment for equipment provided by the University, and to protect the physical and intellectual University property in their charge. Confidential documents should be stored securely and disposed of by secure methods. Portable computers and electronic information systems administered by the University may be used only by members of staff.

When working from home it is important that staff understand their responsibilities for handling University devices and data, including personal data. Please follow the guidance in the University's Data Protection Policy and the 'Working off campus: your responsibilities' document which is available on Staffnet or [here](#).

### **Part B – Arrangements applying to staff working from home on a regular or permanent basis**

The following apply when it is agreed that a member of staff will work from home on a regular or permanent basis.

#### - **Pay**

Staff who work from home will be paid as per their contract of employment.

#### - **Communication**

Staff working from home are expected to be available during agreed working hours to receive and respond to telephone calls and emails, and must keep their line manager informed of any absence from their normal workplace in accordance with normal procedures, or of any other factors affecting their work, e.g. illness, loss of internet service, etc.

- **Visits to the University's premises**

Staff who are working from home on a regular or permanent basis may be required, on request, to attend the workplace for purposes such as training, performance assessment, team briefings, and similar on days when they would normally work from home. Wherever possible, the dates and times of these events will be agreed in advance and with reasonable notice.

- **Visits to the staff member's home**

There may be a requirement for a member of staff from the University to visit staff at their home at mutually agreed times for health and safety purposes. In accordance with Health and Safety Executive requirements, if the University considers it necessary, it retains the right to check homeworking areas for health and safety purposes, having given reasonable notice of any visit/inspection. The need for such visits/inspections will depend on the circumstances including the nature of the work undertaken and any concerns about a staff member's health and safety.

It is a condition of any homeworking agreement that the member of staff agrees to accept visits from a member of staff of the University in their home for the purposes of ensuring health, safety, and security.

Staff have the right to refuse home visits but if this is repeatedly refused, this may impact on the future appropriateness for homeworking.

- **Working environment**

Staff working from home should ensure that they have an appropriate working environment, and separate space to allow them to work effectively with minimal distractions.

Staff should separate domestic and work activities as far as practicably possible.

In cases where staff are required to go to University premises there should be discussion between the staff member and line manager, providing as much notice as possible, to ensure staff are able to put in place suitable alternative care arrangements.

There may be occasions when circumstances beyond an individual's control mean that work cannot be carried out, for example, a power cut or a breakdown of equipment. They should, where possible, continue to work on something that does not require the use of IT in such instances. Staff members would be expected to work from University premises where the period of interruption is extended.

- **Insurance arrangements**

Staff are responsible for checking that all home and contents insurance policies provide adequate cover for the fact that they work from home. Any increase in home insurance policies specifically on account of the work for the University will be the responsibility of the staff member and will not be refunded by the University.

The University's Liability policies only provide cover where an incident is due to the University's negligence.

- **Mortgage or rental agreements**

Whilst in the majority of cases working from home has no effect, staff are responsible for checking applicable mortgage or rental agreements to ensure that they are permitted to work from home, and for obtaining any requisite permissions to work from home.

- **Costs and Expenses**

No contribution will be made by the University to costs and expenses occurred while working from home for example for heating, lighting, Council Tax, etc., however, tax relief may be available for staff on some expenses: <https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/working-at-home>.

- **Travelling Expenses**

Travelling expenses between home and the University will not be reimbursed for those working from home occasionally, regularly or permanently. Staff working permanently from home will have their home as their base and any travel expenses (except travel to the University) will be based upon this.

Travelling expenses to other locations will be reimbursed in accordance with the University Expenses Policy.

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