



CODE OF PRACTICE

ON

HOMeworkING

June 2002

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DRAFT CODE OF PRACTICE ON HOMeworkING

1. INTRODUCTION

Homeworking is one of a range of flexible working arrangements that employees can apply for, subject to their work being suitable for such arrangements. The Worklife Balance Policy outlines other such flexible working arrangements. Homeworking may also be deemed desirable or necessary to the efficient working of the council and as such should also be seen in the context of the Managing Change Policy and Procedure.

Homeworking has a number of benefits for the employee and employer. The employee gains greater flexibility of working times, time and cost savings on commuting and can have a quieter work environment in which to undertake their work. Homeworking supports the Council's environmental objectives by reducing unnecessary car travel, freeing up office accommodation and helps in attracting and retaining staff by providing alternative methods of working. Homeworking must not be seen as an alternative to making usual childcare arrangements.

This Code of Practice is intended to provide a measure of consistency in the introduction of homeworking across the council. This document provides **guidance** for employees and managers, where the use of homeworking is being considered, and **protection** of employees and managers, where homeworking is to be introduced.

The Health and Safety aspects of homeworking are described in section 4 of this policy and must be implemented for any employee who will be working from home and/or hotdesking.

2. DEFINITIONS OF HOMEWORKING / HOTDESKING

2.1 Occasional homeworking

Employees occasionally work at home, typically on an ad hoc basis to do a particular piece of work or due to family circumstances. This includes any homeworking arrangement of up to one month in duration.

The employee would normally retain a dedicated and exclusive office workstation at their normal place of work or other desk sharing arrangement dependant on team arrangements.

2.2 Partial homeworking

A regular agreed arrangement for homeworking has been made between an employee and management. This could include any of the following arrangements:-

- Working a % of the employee's working week at home on a permanent or temporary basis for a period greater than 1 month. This may include working mornings or afternoons or working 1, 2 or 3 days at home each week.

- Working a % of the employee's working week from home or mobile on a permanent or temporary basis of more than 1 month. This may include either working just mornings or afternoons from home or working 1,2 or 3 days from home each week. This would include employees who have to do site visits as a major part of their job (social workers, building inspectors as well as other work groups) and who may make site appointments from home and then possibly return home at the end of the visits to write up reports.

Where the frequency of home or mobile working is significant, an employee will not be provided with a dedicated and exclusive workstation. This will be substituted by a flexible "office facility" (hotdesk) in a location which will be available for use for the remainder of their working week when they are not working from/at home. In this situation employees will be provided with a lockable facility to store personal effects.

The general rule will be that if a particular arrangement makes it appropriate for employees to be provided with a PC for their home, then they would not normally be allocated a dedicated and exclusive workstation in a council office. This does not mean that if an employee is not provided with a home PC, that s/he will automatically retain a dedicated and exclusive workstation. It will be for the manager to determine the best use of council resources, having consulted with the employee concerned.

This "office facility" could be provided at more than one location, depending on the nature of the employee's duties, the need to work with other team members and the extent of flexible working taking place at different council buildings.

2.3 Full homeworking

A regular agreed arrangement for homeworking has been made between an employee and management. This could involve any of the following arrangements:-

- Working for most of the working week **at** home on a permanent or temporary basis of more than 1 month's duration.
- Working most of the working week **from** home on a permanent or temporary basis of more than 1 month's duration.

Employees will not be provided with a dedicated and exclusive workstation. This will be substituted by a hotdesk arrangement for the occasions when they are not working from/at home. Employees will be provided with a lockable facility to store personal effects.

The hotdesk arrangement could be provided at more than one location, depending on the nature of the employees' duties, the need to work with other team members and the extent of flexible working taking place at different council buildings.

Appropriate office equipment will be provided for homeworking.

2.4 Hotdesking

Where an employee operates on a mobile basis, where it is not necessary or appropriate for them to have a dedicated and exclusive workstation in council accommodation, and where shared desks/accommodation would be appropriate.

In these circumstances, the manager must consider the following issues:

- # creation of hotdesking area, with standardised PC and fully adaptable desktop if appropriate
- # security and location of working files and papers
- # telephone arrangements
- # a range of seating provisions with footrests etc.
- # office equipment provision
- # team 'break-out' areas
- # 'quiet' hot desk areas
- # provision of lockable storage
- # booking arrangements

3. ASSESSMENT FOR SUITABILITY

3.1 Assessment

The Worklife Balance Policy sets out a range of flexible working arrangements that might be considered. However, not all these arrangements will suit every type of job or every individual. This is certainly the case with homeworking.

In order for homeworking to be adopted an assessment needs to be carried out, to consider:-

- suitability of the job to the proposed arrangements
- cost effectiveness of homeworking
- suitability of the working environment
- specific needs of individual employee

3.2 Suitability of the job

The first stage of the assessment needs to relate to the duties undertaken and should be conducted by the manager in consultation with the individual employee or group of employees concerned and trade union(s). The manager must ensure that other team members have been consulted before any agreement to homeworking has been made. It must be demonstrated that the move to homeworking will not be detrimental to the speed or quality of services provided to the public and internal customers or detrimental to the efficient working of the team.

Appendix A sets out points to consider when determining whether a job is suitable for homeworking

3.3 Cost effectiveness of homeworking

Managers will need to consider whether it is financially viable for an employee to take up homeworking. The cost effectiveness of this would depend upon a number of factors.

- Will there be a significant impact on freeing up office space? This may in turn depend upon the number of employees seeking to undertake homeworking.
- What level of technical support does the employee need to be able to work effectively at home? Full technical support represents a significant cost factor.

Managers need to consider the potential costs involved and to submit a proposal to the Head of Service for authorisation. Appendix E contains a cost/benefit analysis proforma.

3.4 Suitability of the working environment

The next step is to undertake an assessment of the working environment under the proposed arrangements. This must be undertaken before homeworking begins. Depending upon the nature of the proposed arrangements, this can involve a Health & Safety and insurance assessment of the employee's proposed home office. In addition the employee has the right to invite a trade union accredited safety representative to carry out a health and safety inspection of their home.

The employee's home must have suitable work space and have space for storage and security/confidentiality of papers, equipment etc.

If the homeworker moves home, it will be necessary for the manager and employee to determine whether the homeworking arrangement can continue from the new location.

3.5 Specific needs of individual employee

Employees may also have various needs that will need to be considered. These will include practical matters such as layout of workstation, for example correct seating and access needs, as well as issues such as tackling isolation and ensuring work does not disrupt home life outside of work hours. Appendix B contains an employee self assessment sheet which highlights possible issues that should be noted before homeworking is undertaken. Section 11 refers to the appeals process.

4. HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS OF HOMEWORKING

4.1 Hazards of homeworking

Types of harm which could result from home office type activities, in the absence of adequate controls.

The main hazards are:-

- harm to health from poor workstation layout, working position or conditions
- injury resulting from tripping over cables or other obstructions on the floor
- injury from using damaged or unsuitable equipment
- injury to the employee or others arising from the presence or actions of others (including children).

Work other than of an office-type would bring other potential hazards.

4.2 Responsibilities of Heads of Service

Heads of Service will ensure that;

- this Code of Practice is circulated and brought to the attention of employees and implemented wherever homeworking is considered
- all activities are covered by suitable and sufficient risk assessments carried out by people competent to do so
- employees are not allowed to work at home in circumstances which present an unacceptable risk to their safety or well-being
- employees receive adequate training for the duties which they undertake
- managers and employees adhere to the Health and Safety arrangements described in this document.

4.3 Responsibilities of managers

In considering each proposal of homeworking, and before the work is permitted to start, managers will:-

- make all necessary enquiries in consultation with the employee and, if necessary, with Occupational Health Service to ensure that there are no health issues which could result in risk to the employee's well-being from working alone
- attend the designated training session before allowing employee to commence homeworking
- if there is any doubt about the safety of the home office advice should be sought from a safety advisor
- ensure that employees attend the designated training before completion of risk assessment checklist. Refer to Appendix D
- ensure that the employee has returned the completed and signed risk assessment checklist
- risk assess the homeworking conditions prior to allowing employees to start homeworking. This will be a two part process:
 1. The employee will need to complete the risk assessment checklist.
 2. The manager will then discuss this with the employee and complete the management section of the form.

The manager will need to decide whether the conditions are acceptable in the light of this information. If they are in doubt it may be necessary for the manager to arrange a visit to the

home to ensure that safe conditions are maintained, in which case reasonable notice will be given. If there are others in the home who may be affected by the work, they should be told about the significant findings of the risk assessment.

Manager's must also set up safe systems of work and ensure that:-

- an adequate written description of the work activity is provided to the employee.
- employees do not undertake duties for which they have not been trained.
- employees are provided with adequate information, instruction and training on Health and Safety issues relating to the type of work being carried out eg. display screen equipment, fire safety, lone working.
- all necessary management actions arising from the risk assessments are completed.
- there are suitable measures to monitor the well-being of homeworkers working alone away from home eg. regular phone contact, e-mail.

Once homeworking has been approved, managers will:-

- ensure that a suitable workstation is set up with appropriate equipment and furniture giving special attention to ergonomic issues
- establish procedures to be followed in case of emergency
- ensure that adequate general inspections of the workplace and equipment are carried out and that the appropriate maintenance regime is agreed and established
- respond as appropriate to issues raised by employees and trade union safety representatives
- monitor the work of equipment maintenance contractors or service providers in regard to the safety of employees and others
- take all reasonable steps to ensure that adequate rest and meal breaks are taken, and work does not extend beyond the agreed hours
- ensure that a review of the risk assessment is made whenever there is a significant change in homeworking employees' circumstances. For example; a review will be needed in the case of a female employee who is expecting a child
- ensure that there is adequate provision for First-aid taking into account the risks from the tasks undertaken
- establish specific procedures for adequate office / supervisor contact by telephone, electronic mail or visit, to include monitoring of the well-being of the employee and reporting of injuries and incidents
- managers setting up home workstations should ensure arrangements are made for the safe delivery and installation of PCs and associated equipment.

4.4 Responsibilities of Employees

Homeworking employees must:-

- attend the designated training
- accurately complete and return the risk assessment checklist form to the manager and provide any other necessary information
- whilst there is an onus on the employee to provide accurate information, the responsibility still lies with management to ensure that the workplace is safe
- report to manager any problems or potential problems, with regards to the safety of work

- equipment, the place of work, or the system of work
- follow advice from the line manager regarding any work which is to be done other than at the home or at the office, and co-operate with any measures which are introduced to establish a safe system of work
- work within the parameters of the working time directive i.e. take breaks away from the workstation
- carry out a visual check of both the equipment and the place of work every three months or as often as the work area is altered or re-setup and report faults or dangerous conditions to line management without delay
- take all reasonable steps to prevent unauthorised access to the work or work equipment
- advise the manager if work time is likely to significantly extend beyond the agreed period
- report any accidents which occur during their agreed working hours
- report any health problems, or illnesses which may be attributable to, or aggravated by, their working conditions.

Homeworkers, like all employees, must take care of their own safety and that of anyone who may be affected by their working at home. Additionally, homeworkers are responsible for the safety of the premises used for homeworking.

5. REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES, PROVISION OF EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

5.1 Financial considerations

Appropriate equipment will be provided by the Council for homeworking. The level of provision will vary according to each job and how much of it is performed at home. Appendix C sets out what costs, charges and provision should be borne by the council depending upon the particular homeworking arrangement entered into.

Whether an employee is a full or partial homeworker, managers will need to consider the financial aspects of the required changes to the home office and the provision of equipment and support. The employee's hours will need to be considered when assessing the cost effectiveness of them working from home if full technical support is to be provided. The manager will need to ensure that appropriate budgetary provisions have been made for any additional costs which will arise through the adoption of such arrangements.

A cost/benefit analysis will need to be completed for any investment in homeworking provision. This should be submitted to the Head of the relevant service for authorisation. See proforma in Appendix E.

Expenses for part-time, reduced hours and job-share workers are available on a pro rata basis.

5.2 Telephone provision

Homeworkers will normally be responsible for providing and having access to a telephone at home. There may be circumstances, including that of the employee not having access to

a regular phone, where employees can receive reimbursement of any installation costs when agreed by the manager. This may include reimbursement of mobile phone purchase costs only where no telephone is provided, or required, at their home location.

Where it is considered appropriate for the employee to have a business line the IT helpline must be contacted before a home business phone is installed. They will be able to advise on the most appropriate package which will allow the use of Centrex telephone services at BCC sites which has the advantage of providing extension to extension free dialling with the rest of the BCC telephone network, advantageous external call costs and, in many circumstances, access to data connections.

Employees are entitled to a refund of business calls on receipt of an expenses claim form. Business lines must not be used for personal use as they would then become a taxable benefit.

5.3 Supply of equipment

Where employees are provided with equipment and supplies they are responsible for the ordering and collection of such supplies from the office where it is reasonable and with due regard to manual handling issues.

5.4 Faults

Where electrical equipment develops a fault the employee must notify their managers as soon as reasonably practicable. Where the fault relates to a piece of portable mobile equipment (e.g. laptop computer) and it cannot be rectified over the telephone, the council is responsible for making arrangements with the employee for transporting such equipment to the council's office for diagnosis and/or repair.

Faults to larger pieces of equipment (e.g. PC) will be diagnosed and/or repaired via a visit from an I.T. specialist from the council. Employees will be required, upon reasonable notice, to allow the council access to their premises to repair equipment or rectify faults.

6. PROVISION, ACCESS AND SUPPORT

The frequency of homeworking, and the nature of the duties undertaken, will normally dictate the level of IT provisions, access and support required by an employee. When determining what provisions an employee requires, managers should look at what is reasonable given the nature of the job.

6.1 Occasional homeworking

Employees who require use of a computer when doing homeworking on an occasional or ad hoc basis will use their own equipment or, if available, a laptop borrowed from their office. There is no access to BCC systems with this arrangement and information is transferred via floppy disk, or by e-mail (internet). Employees must consider the security issues of sending sensitive information via the internet. Sending only what you would be prepared to send on

the back of a postcard is a useful test.

6.2 Partial and full homeworking

Employees who require use of a computer and access to BCC systems in order to perform the duties of their job will (depending on the circumstances of each case) be provided with one or more of the following:-

- BCC computer - standard or laptop - preloaded with all necessary software and network connections
- IT telephone support will be available for BCC computers
- printer
- other IT provisions which are required to perform the job (eg fax, modem, broadband connection)
- a dedicated business telephone line and/or a mobile telephone.

6.3 Other considerations

Employees must use a BCC computer - not their own pc - if they need BCC network access and IT support.

Employees must not load any software onto the BCC computer, without the specific approval of IT support and shall not use the BCC computer for private purposes.

If the homeworker moves home the transfer of city council IT equipment should be completed by or be under the supervision of BCC IT professionals.

Connections provided to and from the BCC IT network **must** be provided via the CSS, ICT Division facility. This is to prevent security breaches and ensure access to the Authority's network facilities is protected. Specific facilities in this regard have already been put in place and **any** unauthorised connection could seriously compromise the security of the **whole** network and the services provided on it.

Employees should note that due to their configurations, laptop computers are not suitable for everyday use.

7. INSURANCE

The Council will provide insurance cover for employees and for the equipment it has supplied to an employee for homeworking. The employee must make all reasonable efforts to ensure the Council's equipment is secure and safe. The risk assessment check list in Appendix D includes aspects of home security.

It is the responsibility of the employee to notify their own insurance company (or their landlord's insurance company) of their plans to work at /from home to avoid invalidating the

household insurance policy. Occasional, ad hoc days of working at home will not usually increase the cost of a household insurance policy. In cases where employees find that they are liable to an increase in their insurance premium they will be recompensed on the production of evidence of the increase.

Employees will need to provide confirmation that they have notified and obtained permission from their landlord or mortgage company to make use of their residence for homeworking.

8. SECURITY OF EQUIPMENT AND INFORMATION

8.1 Security

An assessment is required to consider security measures for the purposes of the protection of computer and other equipment, electronic data and manual data held and used in the home office. This will occur as part of the initial Health and Safety self assessment and will continue to take place regularly.

The employee must take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of council equipment as they would their own property. The employee is responsible for bringing to the council's attention any material changes to security measures at their home to enable a further inspection to occur.

Council equipment that is put in an employee's home will be detailed on a department inventory and will be tagged appropriately. A copy of this inventory will be signed by both the manager and employee.

An employee who removes tagging devices will face disciplinary action. If an employee fails to inform the Council of material changes to the security of their home they may face disciplinary action.

8.2 Data protection

Only council owned computers can be connected to a council network.

The council is responsible for ensuring that all data connections into the council's mainframe computer, local area networks or wide area networks are secure from hacking and from virus attack.

All computer equipment will be checked for virus contamination prior to installation into the home office and will be preloaded with virus checking software. The PC or laptop will be set up to operate standard virus checking routines both on receipt of incoming e-mails and also on a programmed frequency (eg. weekly).

The employee is responsible for ensuring that virus checking routines set up at the time of installation are not removed or amended in any way - without prior authorisation from the appropriate manager. In the event of a virus infection occurring in a situation where such routines have been removed or amended by an employee, disciplinary action may result.

Employees working at home must comply with the Data Protection Act and be compliant with BCC data protection policy and procedures as they would if they were working in a council office. In order to ensure that the council's confidential data is secure and safe while at

home employees must ensure that:-

- all confidential electronic data is protected by a password
- all confidential paper data is secured in a locked cabinet or case, when not in use
- confidential waste is disposed of in the usual way i.e. using a shredder

8.3 Maintenance

The council is responsible for maintaining any equipment supplied to a homeworker and will need to be given access to domestic premises to check that electronic and other equipment is safe and functioning properly. Reasonable notice must be given.

9. MANAGEMENT ISSUES

9.1 Management monitoring procedures

i) Setting targets

- Manager and employee need to set mutually agreed targets so the employee has a clear idea as to what is expected of him/her when working at home.
- The manager can also use such targets to monitor how the employee is progressing in regard to quality and quantity of work and if they need any assistance, training and/or support.

ii) Sickness

- If an employee is ill on a day that s/he should be working at home, s/he must inform his/her line manager by telephone. If the employee has access to Groupwise they should put a note on it to this effect.

iii) Hours worked

- The times to be worked by the employee while at home must be agreed in advance if they are not in accordance with the employees' contractual hours or (agreed) flexible working hours. Colleagues, clients and the manager need to know when they are contactable.
- The hours worked should fall within the Council's contractual hours unless otherwise agreed with manager in line with the Worklife Balance policy.
- Homeworkers must complete time-sheets/flexi sheets in the same way as the rest of the team.
- Homeworkers must notify their team by telephone or e-mail if they are away from their home office for any reason.
- Any extra hours worked at home other than those falling within usual flexitime arrangements should be agreed in advance.

iv) Training and development

- “Commencing Homeworking” training will be provided for all employees taking up partial or full homeworking arrangements and their managers. This training must be undertaken before the employee starts homeworking. This will include health and safety issues, personal security, looking at the implications of working at home and how best to manage these.
- Employees working at home must have equal access to training and development as their team members. This will be in line with their regular Employee Development Review sessions and departmental IIP requirements.

v) Trial period/regular reviews

- All employees and posts new to homeworking are subject to a minimum 12 week trial period (apart from exceptional circumstances) in order to ensure that the homeworking arrangements operate satisfactorily for both management and home workers.
- New staff to the council who are appointed on a homeworking basis should have a period of time based in the office before homeworking commences. This will allow them to familiarise themselves with their work and colleagues, and to fully complete their induction.
- The homeworking arrangements must be reviewed regularly (every 3 months). This must include health and safety considerations. Problems may result in the homeworking arrangement being withdrawn temporarily or permanently.

9. 2 Communication procedures

i) Regular contact

- The manager must define how often homeworkers must attend and contact the office via phone or e-mail.
- It is important to distinguish between employees’ home phone number and their business number. Occasional homeworkers are unlikely to have a business number. The employee’s home phone number may not be divulged without their express permission. All external calls should be dealt with via the main office.
- Employees’ home addresses must not be given out.
- The homeworker should use the GroupWise calendar system where available so that the manager and colleagues have access to their diary at all times. They must also use a message taking facility if they are out of the home office.
- Managers must contact homeworkers at least once a week to monitor and provide feedback on work undertaken.
- There must be arranged time when the team manager can be consulted by the employee.

- Managers may want to set up a 'buddy' relationship for the homeworker whereby team members keep one another informed of day to day happenings. This also helps to reduce the level of isolation and unreleased stress which some homeworkers may otherwise experience.
- Managers may also consider working together in establishing a 'support network' for homeworkers, where they can discuss and share issues pertinent to the changed working arrangements.
- Homeworkers must be kept up to date with City Council developments.

ii) Team meetings

- It is important that employees who work at home attend team meetings as normal. The team should try to organise meetings when everyone would be working in the office. There should also be informal meetings with the team and other opportunities to maintain regular contact through telephone and e-mail.
- Managers should ensure that homeworking arrangements do not adversely affect other team members who continue with traditional working arrangements.

iii) One to ones

- Managers must ensure that homeworkers have one to ones at least as often as the other team members. The manager and employee may find it useful to pre-book specific times in advance and the meetings should be held at the office or other council accommodation.
- Regular supervision should take place at least every month.

iv) Post - in/out

- The homeworker must make arrangements with management to collect and send work related post.
- The internal council mail collection system will not apply to homeworkers.
- Receipts are required for any stamps used and money will be redeemed in line with usual petty cash arrangements.

9.3 Breach of provisions

Where employees are subsequently found to be in breach of the provisions contained within the Code of Practice (eg. unauthorised use of council computers at home by a third party) the Code of Conduct for Employees will be used.

10. CONTRACTUAL VARIATIONS

It is essential that homeworkers' terms and conditions of employment equate with those of workplace based employees. However, homeworkers may be subject to variations in conditions which will either form part of their contract of employment if homeworking is a permanent arrangement or be an addendum to the contract in the form of a letter if

homeworking is on an temporary or trial basis. It is not likely to be necessary to issue any contractual variations to occasional homeworkers. All variations in working arrangements should be recorded in line with the council's Flexitime Agreement.

The degree of homeworking and the arrangements made for equipment will usually dictate what terms need to be included. Variations of terms and conditions that may apply are as follows:-

- Workbase

It must be clearly stated where the employee will be based. This is important for travel claims.

- Hours/times of work

These will be as set out in the employees' contract of employment, unless other arrangements are mutually agreed. Flexi-time would apply to home workers and, like office-based employees, managers must agree in advance that it is appropriate for flexi-time to be taken. Employees and managers are reminded of the provisions of the Working Time Directive. Furthermore overtime will not be paid unless agreed in advance by the manager concerned.

- Return of council's property

The Council's property must be returned when the employee's homeworking arrangement or employment terminates. Management will arrange for any equipment to be collected at a mutually agreed time. This will take place either before the termination of contract or within a week of this date.

- Moving home expenses

Employees will normally be responsible for any costs incurred when moving home in regard to the movement of BCC equipment. However where these costs are significant, itemised costings should be submitted to the employing manager who may allow all or a contribution to the costs depending on circumstances.

- Homeworking Code of Practice

Home workers must be fully aware of the contents of the Code of Practice on Homeworking and agree to comply with the requirements of it, for example, those on Health and Safety, security of information and equipment, and communication with the workplace.

- Termination of homeworking agreement

The period of notice required to terminate the homeworking agreement is one month on either side. Home based working arrangements can be ended by either party and alternative working arrangements agreed. There must be valid reasons, by employee or manager, as to why the arrangement needs to be terminated.

In operational emergencies eg. lack of cover to meet service requirements, or in the case of poor performance, the arrangement may be suspended or terminated with immediate effect.

- Consent to enter employees' premises

The employee must give the Council the right to access their domestic premises, with reasonable notice, to check that electronic and other equipment is safe and functioning properly, to undertake periodic health & safety inspections, to repair equipment or rectify faults or to retrieve Council property and records if it needs to be replaced or returned to the Council.

- Meeting clients

Homeworkers must not use their own home for meetings with clients or colleagues. Meetings should be held in city council accommodation unless meeting with a client at their place of work.

11. APPEALS

As with all flexible working practices, homeworking is subject to the appeals process as stipulated in the Worklife Balance Policy and Procedure.

12. ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

Relevant legislation and other documentation

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
 Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 as amended (1999)
 The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
 Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992
 Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992
 Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1999
 Electricity at Work Regulations 1989
 Data Protection Act 1998
 Employment Relations Act 1996

Bristol City Council Policies

Homeworkers, as with employees based at any site, are in the employ of Bristol City Council and, as such, are expected to work within the parameters of **all** city council policies. Policies of particular relevance include:

Worklife Balance Policy and Procedure
 Corporate Health and Safety Policy, Change of Accommodation, Display Screen Equipment, Safe Use of Electricity at Work, etc.
 Managing Change Policy and Procedure
 Code of Conduct for Employees
 Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure
 Stress Policy

HSE guidance

Essentials of Health and Safety at Work.
 Homeworking - Guidance for employers and employees on health and safety. INDG226

Department Safety Advisers can be contacted for further advice.

Appendices

- A - Suitability of the job for homeworking
- B - Employee self assessment for homeworking
- C - Costs of homeworking
- D - Risk assessment checklist
- E - Cost/benefit analysis proforma

**Suitability of the job
for homeworking**

Not all jobs are suitable for homeworking. When assessing a proposal for homeworking the following points must be considered.

- What proportion of the employee's work which is done alone or as part of a team?
- Are there alternative methods of doing their tasks that might facilitate homeworking?
- What proportion of the employees work could be done at home?
- Are current work practices and processes appropriate for homework - if not, can they be changed with team agreement?
- Will the employee require access to specific equipment, tools, materials, or documents in order to work and are there practical and costs problems with this requirement?
- Can this equipment be provided?
- Does the employee manage any other team members and if so how will this occur if the employee works at home?
- How much technical or other support is provided by the employee to other staff members?
- Can the work be carried out without direct contact with service users?
- Can the IT requirements be supplied?
- How will office cover be maintained?
- How can confidentiality of information be maintained?
- Will service delivery be impaired during normal working hours?

Employee self assessment for homeworking

Not everyone will find that homeworking suits their particular needs. Employees need to consider the following points when considering homeworking.

- Am I able to work on my own with only phone contact to fall back on?
- Will I miss the support of working within a team?
- Am I able to be self-motivated enough?
- Will I be able to organise my work within my hours and not allow work to disrupt my home life outside working hours?
- Am I planning to move home in the immediate future? *If so I may incur the extra expense of moving council equipment.**
- Am I prepared to make the same sort of childcare arrangements as I would if I were going **out** to work?
- Am I prepared to check my working environment to ensure it complies with health and safety requirements?
- Have I planned to undertake regular checks to ensure it continues to be a safe working environment?
- What arrangements will I need to make for regular contact with my manager?

Pros of homeworking

No more commuting, saving time and money

More flexibility of work hours

Cons of homeworking

You could experience isolation

You may find it hard to escape work

*Refer to page 17 for further detail.

Useful websites for further information

www.homeworking.com/library/famil.htm

www.unison.org.uk/polres/wlb/telework.htm

Appendix C

Costs of Homeworking

Reimbursement of Expenses

Description	Basis for Claim	Eligibility	Evidence Required	Method of Payment	Tax Liability
Travel Expenses	Mileage will be reimbursed for all business travel from the employees' homes provided they live within the geographical work area. Employees living outside the city council boundary will be reimbursed for business travel <u>inside</u> the work area only ie. journeys from home to the boundary of the work area will not be reimbursed.	Full or partial homeworkers who do not have a dedicated employer provided workspace	As per car user status	Reimbursement upon receipt of claim	Not as long as the Inland Revenue accepts the employees' home is their workbase
	Mileage will be reimbursed under the "lesser of" rule for all business travel in accordance with BCC car allowance policy with the employees' team base as their designated workbase.	All other home workers			No
Telephone and internet access	Business calls made from home phone	All types	Phone bill highlighting business calls	Reimbursement upon receipt of claim	No
	Dedicated telephone line for computer/business use only - due to volume of usage by homeworker	Full	Telephone line in Council's name. Bills to be checked by manager.	Paid directly by the Council	No - if business use only
	Connection fees charged by an Internet Service Provider	None			No
	Connection through secure link to BCC network	Full or partial based on business case	Ordered through ICT	No charge	

Description	Basis for Claim	Eligibility	Evidence Required	Method of Payment	Tax Liability
Voicemail/pager	Will be provided where message taking facilities are required.	Partial or full	Management decision	Provided directly by the Council	No - if business use only
Rent or Mortgage payments	Increase in rent or mortgage payments due to homeworking	None			
Insurance	Increase in insurance premium due to homeworking	Partial or full	Written evidence from insurance company	Reimbursement on receipt of claim	No
Heating/lighting/power and other household expenses	Increase in costs of utilities (gas, electricity, oil etc) as a result of homeworking	Full or partial homeworkers who do not have a dedicated employer provided workspace	None required	A flat rate of £150 a year to be paid on a monthly basis. Part time workers paid the allowance pro rata. Amount to be reviewed each year.	Yes
Office Supplies (Stapler, hole punch, staple remover, stationery etc.)	Required to perform the duties of the job	All types	Management decision	Order through departmental stationery ordering system	No

Description	Basis for Claim	Eligibility	Evidence Required	Method of Payment	Tax Liability
Computer Printer	Required to perform duties of job. (The type of computer, access and support provided will depend on the job and amount of homeworking being done - see IT Access and Support section of this document)	Partial and full	Management decision depending on the job and amount of homeworking	Purchased/provided by the Council directly	Not if value of computer and associated equipment is less than £2,500.00
Fax	Required to perform duties of job	Partial and full	Management decision depending on the job and the amount of homeworking	Purchased/provided by the Council directly	No
Desk/Chair	Required to perform duties of job and for health and safety reasons.	Partial or full	Management Decision	Purchased/provided by the Council directly.	No
Lockable Cabinet	Employee will be handling a substantial amount of confidential paper information. (Consider whether information could be held electronically where security measures may already be in place)	Partial or full	Management decision	Purchased/provided by the Council directly	No
Shredder	Employee will be handling a substantial amount of confidential paper information and it is not feasible for homeworker to transport confidential information to a council office or have an appropriate colleague collect the information for shedding at an office.	Full	Management decision	Provided by the Council directly	No

Homeworking Risk Assessment Checklist.

Name Department.

Home Address Telephone Number

The completion of this checklist will enable you to carry out a self assessment of the safety of your work area if intending to work at home. Having completed this you will need to discuss the findings with your line manager.

1. Have you attended the “Commencing Homeworking “ training?	Yes	No
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(If you have answered No to the above question, you should not proceed with this questionnaire but report back to your manager for arrangements to be made to attend the training).

	employee answers	managers comments
2. Which room in the house do you intend to use as your workbase? Eg spare bedroom, box room, dining room.		
3. How many electrical sockets are available in this room for work equipment?		
4. Do you believe your electrical wiring is in a safe condition?	Yes No	
5. Are you satisfied that you can provide sufficient heating, lighting and ventilation for your own comfort and well being?	Yes No	
6. What means of communication have you got in an emergency?		
7. Will there normally be someone else in the house, during the working day who can summon assistance if necessary?	Yes No	
8. Is the home used as a place of work by anyone else?	Yes No	
9. Will children have access to the work area?	Yes No	
10. It will be your responsibility to ensure as far as practicable that any equipment that is supplied to you is stored securely within your home? Do you feel that your home is sufficiently secure?	Yes No	

	employee answers	managers comments
11. Will you be able to position a computer in such a way that you can eliminate glare and reflections from your screen?	Yes No	
12. Do you anticipate that there will be noise and distractions when you are working?	Yes No	
13. Is, or will, the computer be positioned in such a way that there will be sufficient leg room under the desk or work surface?	Yes No	
14. Is the desk /work surface large enough to allow you to place all your equipment where you want it?	Yes No	
15. Is the height of the desk /work surface suitable eg you will not have to stoop or sit in an awkward position?	Yes No	
16. Do you feel you need a foot rest?	Yes No	
16a. <i>If yes to previous question</i> , have you been provided with a foot rest?	Yes No	
17. Have you been provided with, or do you already have, a suitable chair, eg adjustable height and backrest, with 5 castors, and in a good state of repair ?	Yes No	
18. Do you feel you need a document holder?	Yes No	
18a. <i>If yes to previous question</i> Have you been provided with a document holder?	Yes No	
19. The Display Screen should be; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adjustable for brightness and contrast • able to tilt and swivel easily • should be stable and free from flicker (screen image) • at a height that is comfortable for you. <i>If any of these are not present please explain briefly in the column.</i>		
20. The keyboard should ;- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be separate from the screen. • be able to be raised and lowered. • have clear symbols <i>If any of these are not present please explain briefly in the column.</i>		
21. Have you been given sufficient information and instruction so that you know how to use the software?	Yes No	
22. If you were having a problem related to your display screen work, would you know the correct procedure to follow?	Yes No	

	employee answers	managers comments
23. If the use of a computer is a major part of your work have you been offered an eye test?	Yes No	
24. Do you experience any back, neck , arm, elbow, wrist, hand or finger pains?*	Yes No	

Please note that when you sign this you are confirming that you are aware that clients, pupils, service users etc must not be invited into your home for work purposes and that meetings must be held at alternative venues to your home.

I declare that the answers to the above questions are correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature

Date

*A display screen incorrectly positioned and used, can aggravate a pre-existing medical condition. It is therefore important that your manager is made aware of any musculoskeletal conditions which could affect your ability to use display screen equipment safely, so that they can seek medical advice and, if needed, provide you with equipment which may alleviate any problems.

For completion by Manager.	
a. Does the type of work undertaken by the employee mean that there is a need for extra security measures?	Yes No
b. How many electrical items are to be issued to this employee?	
c. Have all of those been PAT tested?	Yes No
d. <i>refer to question 3 above.</i> Are there sufficient sockets for the above items?	Yes No
e. Are you satisfied that the employee will be working in a safe environment?	Yes No

If you have answered No to the last question you will need to visit the home to determine whether anything can be done to improve safety or to determine whether homeworking is not possible for this employee.

Manager's Name Signature

Date

C:\My Documents\Personal\Intranet\homework70100amend.wpd

HOMEWORKING - COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS PRO-FORMA

Department:
Employee Name:

Division:
Current workplace:

Item	Illustrative Cost		Enter cost for this employee (1)	
	One-off (£)	Annual (£)	One-off (£)	Annual (£)
Costs (to City Council)				
PC Hardware & Support (2)				
PC	920	120		
Printer	150	30		
Communication				
Modem/Centrex dial-up line OR	n/a	320	n/a	
Broadband always-on service	n/a	720	n/a	
Software				
Virus Protection		15		
GroupWise (if not already)	60			
ABNET (stand-alone)	80			
Internet		55		
MS Office Standard (3)	295	30		
Bespoke IT Systems				
Miscellaneous				
Training	95			
Contribution to overheads (per FTE)		150		
H&S & Insurance assessments				
Electrical safety testing		10		
Additional Travel expenses				
Are any of the following required?				
Telephone / Mobile Phone		25/100		
Voicemail (incl. suitable handset)	125	20		
Pager				
Desk / Chair	370			
Lockable Cabinet	100			
Shredder	40			
Electrical/rewiring works etc.	150			
Telephone usage		50		
Postage/Copying etc.				
Other (enter as appropriate):				
TOTAL ADDITIONAL COSTS				

- (1) Use illustrative cost only where no more precise figures available
 (2) Based upon Pentium 3 purchases; consider recycled Pentium 1/2 from ICT
 (3) No annual charge until year 3

Item	Illustrative Cost		Enter cost for this employee (1)	
	One-off (£)	Annual (£)	One-off (£)	Annual (£)
Benefits (to City Council)				
Accommodation (4)		1,400		
Reduction in Travel expenses				
Reduced staff turnover (5)		800		
Other (enter as appropriate):				
TOTAL SAVINGS				

Net Surplus/Deficit	n/a	n/a		
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- (1) Use illustrative cost only where no more precise figures available
- (4) Based upon 6 square metres per person minimum H & S guidelines and central accommodation charge of £226 per square metre
- (5) Benefits will include reduced recruitment costs, lower turnover, reduced need for agency/cover staff, lower advertising costs, attracting better employees etc.

Manager's Name:

Signature:

Date:

Head of Service

Date:

Have you notified your departmental personnel team?