

Guidance for managers and employees – Working from home

Contents

Introduction.	2
Main principles of the working from home policy	2
Eligibility	2
Application process	2
Timeframes	2
Response to requests	2
Working from home flexible working requests–management considerations and responsibilities	3
Is the job suitable for working from home?	3
Can home working meet the needs of your service?	3
Can you provide the equipment necessary to facilitate home working?	3
Is the post holder suited to homeworking?	3
How would you sustain team-working and communication?	3
Consider how you could manage remotely?	4
Managing Health and Safety	4
Well -being	4
Working from home Flexible working Requests – Employee considerations and responsibilities	4
Are you and your post suitable to working from home?	4
Is your home suitable for home working?	5
Working from home legal considerations	5
Costs	5
Taxation	5
Health and safety	5
Information governance and data protection	6
Reviews of Flexible working agreements	6
Ending a flexible working agreement	6
Further support and guidance on working from home can be found...	6

Introduction

This guidance is designed to help support colleagues who have been recruited into a post that requires Working from Home or those thinking of requesting regular working from home, and to support line managers with a framework to successfully implement home working within their teams.

You should read our [Working from Home policy](#) and [Flexible Working policy](#) alongside this guidance.

All of the Trust's policies and procedures, in addition to the Trust's values and behaviours must be adhered to while the employee is working, whether at home or on the service site.

Main principles of the working from home policy

Homeworking is a type of flexible working based on an agreement between employer and employee; it can be used in conjunction with other arrangements such as flexible hours, working part-time, term-time working or the department's core hours. Requests for regular home working are managed through the Trusts Flexible Working Policy.

Eligibility

The Trust will consider employee requests for regular homeworking from employees with less than the normal flexible working Policy requirements of 26 week continuous service for application from homeworking only.

Application process

It is the line manager's responsibility to consider all requests and further guidance and support can be found in the [Flexible Working Policy](#) and [Flow chart](#).

It is advisable to meet with the employee to fully understand their request; the [Working from Home checklist](#) can also support this conversation as it details the Manager and Employee requirements. E.g. Access to a secure internet and broadband connection, as well as a suitable home working location.

Timeframes

Applications for Working from Home should be considered and responded to within 28 days of receipt.

Response to requests

Managers must provide a written response and template letters are available in the [Flexible Working Tool Kit](#). In the event that a request is declined the staff member should be informed of the reasons for this and informed of their right to appeal the decision. Section 7.5 of the [Flexible Working Policy](#) details the appeals process and timeframes.

Working from home flexible working requests – management considerations and responsibilities.

Is the job suitable for working from home?

The first step is assessing if the post or key elements of the post are suitable for homeworking. Some roles might be, but not all are. Managers need to ensure the suitability of a post is considered fairly and consistently.

Can home working meet the needs of your service?

Remember that homeworking is about service needs too, so it is vital to make sure homeworking benefits the service. Managers should consider if the role can be performed to the same standard at home as it can be at the service base.

Can you provide the equipment necessary to facilitate home working?

Is additional equipment required and can it be obtained easily and/or cost-effectively. Equipment may include a Trust encrypted laptop and Trust Mobile phone for example.

Other costs such as additional broadband, energy costs will be met by the employee.

Is the post holder suited to homeworking?

Staff working from home need behavioural attributes to confidently working on their own and with less supervision. Homeworkers ideally need to be:

- happy to spend long periods on their own
- self-disciplined, self-motivated showing resilience with setbacks
- able to separate work and home life
- competent and consistently deliver on performance targets and objectives
- consistently demonstrate that they comply with Trust policy and process

If the employee or manager is not confident that homeworking is suitable, it may be better to keep the employee working at their current location or consider arranging training and development in the interim. **Alternatively, a temporary agreement to trial some homeworking could be implemented.**

How would you sustain team-working and communication?

Teams do need to liaise and co-operate through a combination of phone, email contact, [video conferencing](#) and face-to-face meetings. Include within any agreement, the frequency and attendance to face to face team meetings and when they would be available to colleagues and how they can be contacted. A guide to activate work voice messaging and forwarding of work call to a mobile is available within the further guidance section.

Consider how you could manage remotely?

Employees who work from home must be managed consistently with those who do not homework, they should be given the same opportunities for training, development and promotion. Calendar management, telephone, email and video conferencing make it possible to manage many employees remotely. It is advisable to agree the scope of work to be undertaken, setting SMART performance objectives, outlining clearly your expectations of the employee and agreeing periods at which to review progress. Reviews could take place over video conferencing or a frequency for attending face to face review meetings on Trust premises could be agreed. Poor performance would be managed through the [Trust's Managing Performance policy](#)

Managing Health and Safety

The Trust and its employees are subject to the provisions of the Health & Safety at Work Act (1974) regardless of where work is carried out. Management must as far as is reasonably practical, ensure the health, safety and welfare of our employees at work through a review of the [Lone Working policy](#) and completion of a [Home Working Risk assessment](#) and [DSE Assessment](#) before homeworking can be approved. For employees with specific and/or differing needs this may require Occupational Health input or support from an ergonomic assessor. A Manager or ergonomic assessor may attend the employee's home by prior appointment to review the work base. A further home visit or photographs can provide reassurance that any actions have taken place. If concerns are raised that cannot be or are not addressed then management can reserve the right to refuse a homeworking flexible request. The cost of office equipment and furniture required as a result of a risk assessment would come from the line manager's local budget.

Managers must consider providing reasonable adjustments to employees who fall under the remit of the Equality Act 2010. Support can be found in the [Guidance for Reasonable Adjustments](#). Equipment to facilitate requests for working from home for employees who fall under the Equality Act may be available through the [Access to Work](#) scheme as well as financial support – further guidance should be sought from our Trust Occupational Health provider via a Management referral.

Well-being

Employees should not to work excessive hours, should take regular breaks and eat well. Managers have a duty of care to the home worker, so it's important to watch out for signs they may be tired, de-motivated or feeling isolated. Try to role model good self-care to your colleagues. The Staff Health and Wellbeing 2020 hub is available to offer support to all Trust staff.

Working from home Flexible working Requests – Employee considerations and responsibilities

Are you and your post suitable to working from home?

Review your job description and within your flexible working application, describe how you can fulfil your role responsibilities whilst working from home. Include the tasks you could complete and how you would manage your time, maintain team work and communicate with colleagues and service users.

Homeworking is not a substitute for suitable care arrangements and dependents need to be looked after by someone other than the employee when they are working, necessary care arrangements should be in place to cover the time when the employee is working. Employees should be contactable during their agreed working hours.

Is your home suitable for home working?

Ensure you have an appropriate work space and environment at home, with access to a secure Broadband internet connection. Your space should be private to ensure you are able to manage confidential information and discuss confidential matters over the telephone or via video conferencing. Should you wish to set up a home office, make adaptations to your home/property, obtain building or planning permission in order to facilitate home working the Trust will not be liable for any costs. Any requests made in this respect should not adversely affect the reputation of the Trust. Equipment supplied by GHNHSFT must be secured and used for work related purposes in accordance with our existing policies. The Trust reserves the right for line managers to visit employees who work from home by prior arrangement with the employee.

Working from home legal considerations

1. Employees must inform their local council to review any implications to council tax.
2. Employees must check any mortgage, lease agreements or covenants and inform their mortgage provider and/ or landlord of any working from home.
3. Must inform their home insurers of the nature and extent of the use of their home for work purposes. There is not usually an additional charge.

Items of equipment belonging to Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust are covered by our insurance whilst they are in the employee's home and when in transit.

Costs

The Trust will not contribute towards any costs associated with working from home for example power, heating, lighting, broadband charges, phone.

Taxation

Further guidance on Taxation for home working can be found on the [.gov website](#). It is unlikely that you will be able to claim tax relief if you have requested to work from home.

Health and Safety

An Employee must participate and comply with any control measures identified within any Trust Risk Assessment process and review of Personal Safety. The Employee will be responsible for ensuring a current PAT test certificate and making their equipment available for testing on a Trust site. If a work related accident occurs whilst a colleague is working remotely or from home, this must be reported in accordance with the usual procedures. The Trust reserves the right to visit an employee's home for the purposes of conducting a risk assessment or accident investigation. Employees must adhere to the Trusts [Sickness Absence policy and Absence Reporting procedures](#) and report non-attendance at work in the usual way.

Information governance and data protection

Employees must familiarise themselves with the Trust's [Data Protection](#) and [Information governance](#) policies and comply with these whilst working from home. Security of data must be considered before using any Wi-Fi networks or hot spots. Most home Wi-Fi networks enable you to secure your home connection by a password.

Reviews of Flexible working agreements

The manager and employee must review and agree working from home arrangements on at least an annual basis.

Ending a flexible working agreement

To employees, homeworking can seem like an attractive option when trying to balance work and home, but both employees and managers should be fully aware it does not suit everyone. Should an employee wish end a flexible working agreement earlier, they should write to their manager detailing the reasons for wishing to end the agreement.

Management may need time to make suitable arrangements to facilitate an employee return to site to work.

As detailed in the policy an agreement may come to an end if the right to work from home has been abused, or the Trust's requirements have not been adhered to or where working from home no longer provides the most effective and efficient way for meeting service needs. Guidance and support on how a manager can end a Home working flexible agreement can be obtained through the HR Advisory centre.

Further support and guidance on working from home can be found...

Working from home Power point support guide

Working from Home
Guidance V2.a.pptx

Phone user guide

Mitel Phone User
Guide.pdf

- **Policies and procedures for home working:**
 - [Working from home procedure](#)
 - [Working from home employee responsibilities](#)
 - [Flexible working guideline](#)
 - [Flexible working toolkit](#)
 - [Lone working policy](#)
 - [Sickness and absence reporting procedure](#)

- [Business travel policy](#)
- **Ensuring safe and effective flexible and home working:**
 - Risk assessments:
 - [Home working risk assessment](#)
 - [Display Screen Equipment \(DSE\) risk assessment](#)
 - [Guidance for Reasonable Adjustments](#)
 - [Managing performance policy](#)
 - [Flexible working manager's toolkit](#)
 - [Workplace wellbeing policy](#)
 - [E-Learning](#)
- **IG, IT and Digital:**
 - [IG policy](#) and [IG Intranet](#)
 - [Data protection Policy](#)
 - [Storing and sharing of electronic and paper records](#)
 - [IT Security Policy](#)
 - [Portable equipment and removable media protocol](#)
 - [Checking home broadband speed](#)
 - Digital solutions for working from home, following agreement with line manager:
 - [VDI for PC](#)
 - [VDI for Mac](#)
 - [MS Teams Setup](#)
 - [Attend Anywhere](#)
- **External guidance and documentation:**
 - Taxation - <https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/working-at-home>
 - Access to work scheme - <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>