

Home Working Policy

W2

Additionally refer to:

Flexible Working Policy
Disciplinary Policy
Grievance Policy
Employee Performance Management Policy
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
Health & Safety Policy

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1. Policy on a Page

- 1.1 This policy describes the Trust's approach to Home Working.
- 1.2 The aim of the policy is to support managers and employees with the arrangements of home working to ensure working obligations are met.
- 1.3 Home working is when an employee conducts their duties from home, away from the Trust's premises. It can be either a long-term or short-term arrangement and could apply to all, or only part, of an employees working hours.
- 1.4 There are a number of different arrangements that relate to Home Working, the main three are defined as:

Permanent home working

Where a member of staff has their home designated as their permanent, contractual work base. Such staff will still need to attend Trust premises whenever necessary for their role.

Part-time home working

Where a member of staff has written agreement from their manager to regularly work from home for set parts of the working day/week but still has a base on Trust premises

Temporary home working

Where a member of staff works from home from time to time for a particular reason (E.g.to work on specific projects / due to childcare issues / as part of a graduated return) but is normally based on the Trust's premises.

- 1.5 Line managers and employees both have a number of responsibilities in relation to home working and these are outlined in section 4.
- 1.6 The request for home working can come from the employer or employee but the Trust will never insist that an employee must work from home unless there are exceptional circumstances and it is necessary to protect health and safety.
- 1.7 The process for agreeing home working is outlined in section 7 and a form in Appendix B acts as a record of home working agreements. It also contains a reminder checklist for managers and employees that should be completed before home working starts.
- 1.8 A risk assessment (Appendix A) must be completed before any home working starts.

2. Document Statement

- 2.1 The Trust is committed to providing a safe and appropriate working environment to enable staff to undertake their role effectively. In order to support the increasingly diverse needs of the Trust and its workforce this policy provides comprehensive guidance to all staff and their line managers for the application and process of home working.
- 2.2 There are a number of benefits for employees to work from home (greater flexibility in working hours, less interruptions, reduced travel costs). There are also benefits to the Trust including increased productivity, better staff engagement and retention, reduced travel and therefore reduced carbon footprint.
- 2.3 The Trust recognise that home working will cover many different circumstances and this policy will not cover all eventualities. It provides an outline of things to consider and some guidance on how home working should be carried out.
- 2.4 Home working may be suitable for a wide variety of job roles but there will be some roles where home working is not suitable. Managers should also consider how new staff are properly inducted and how the learning requirements for the role are to be conducted.
- 2.5 This policy applies to all employees of the Trust, including those employed via the Temporary Staffing Department.

3. Definitions

3.1 Home working

Time spent working away from Trust premises working at home. It can be either a long-term or short-term arrangement and could apply to all, or only part, of an employees working hours.

3.2 Permanent home working

Where a member of staff has their home designated as their permanent, contractual work base. Such staff will still need to attend Trust premises whenever necessary for their role.

3.3 Part-time home working

Where a member of staff has written agreement from their manager to regularly work from home for set parts of the working day/week but still has a base on Trust premises

Example - an employee who has a work base at Princess Royal Hospital, but has agreed with their manager that they will work from home every Wednesday.

3.4 Temporary home working

Where a member of staff works from home from time to time for a particular reason (E.g.to work on specific projects / due to childcare issues / as part of a graduated return) but is normally based on the Trust's premises.

Example - an employee who has a work base at Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, but has agreed with their manager that due to travel problems they will work from home for the next few days.

3.5 Trial Period

An agreed period of time where the manager and the employee trial home working to see if it suitable for the employee and the role.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Line Manager Responsibilities

- 4.1.1 Ensure any employee working from home has completed the risk assessment in Appendix A and ensure any actions identified in the risk assessment are completed within a reasonable time frame.
- 4.1.2 Ensure staff working from home have the correct equipment.
- 4.1.3 Continue to review the arrangements on a regular basis, at least annually.
- 4.1.4 Maintain regular contact with the employee and make sure staff do not feel isolated.
- 4.1.5 Make reasonable adjustments for any health conditions or disabilities.

4.2 Employee Responsibilities

- 4.2.1 Complete the risk assessment in Appendix A prior to any home working.
- 4.2.2 Ensure that they work the hours that have been agreed with the Trust and they must be contactable during their working hours. To be paid for hours not worked could be considered as fraud and action will be taken in accordance with the Trust's Disciplinary Policy.
- 4.2.3 Take reasonable care of their own health and safety, including taking their normal unpaid breaks.
- 4.2.4 Comply with the insurance, security, data protection and all other requirements outlined in this policy and raise concerns with their line manager where necessary.
- 4.2.5 Maintain regular contact with their manager through a mutually agreed arrangement.
- 4.2.6 Notify their manager if any of their circumstances change (including changes to health and safety risks, working arrangements, moving house or ill health).
- 4.2.7 Immediately notify their manager if any issues arise which prevent them from efficiently carrying out their duties (e.g. IT problem, power cut). This may mean the employee must return to the workplace.
- 4.2.8 Ensure they are appropriately dressed if appearing in video meetings.

5. General Principles

- 5.1 During working time the focus of employee's attention should be on working matters and they should be available to attend a SaTH place whenever necessary.
- 5.2 Staff should not normally have the role of principal carer while working from home however in certain circumstances it may be appropriate provided this does not present any risk to the person being cared for and the line manager has approved it.
- 5.3 No face to face work meetings should take place within an employee's home.
- 5.4 Employees may utilize the process in the Trust's Grievance Policy if they are unhappy with a manager's decision in any aspect of this process.

- 5.5 Managers and employees are encouraged to seek advice and support from their Trade Union/Professional Organisation (TUPO) representative and/or the Trust's HR Team throughout this process.
- 5.6 Employees remain responsible for car parking payments when attending Trust sites. Information on car parking schemes can be found on the Intranet: http://intranet.sath.nhs.uk/Facilities_Department/carparking.asp

6. Wellbeing and Sickness Absence

- 6.1 Although there are benefits to home working, the Trust recognizes that long term home working can cause employees to feel disconnected from the workplace. Depending on their personal circumstances they may also feel isolated and lonely. Managers and staff are encouraged to review and adjust arrangements as necessary and take steps to ensure employees remain engaged with the workplace and their colleagues.
- 6.2 It is important that employees take their allocated unpaid breaks as normal and do not work excessive hours over and above those required by their contract.
- 6.3 Normal rules governing management and reporting of sickness absence will apply for any home working arrangement. It is particularly important that staff who become ill during a period of home working should notify their line manager as soon as possible.

7. Process of Agreeing Home Working

- 7.1 Before any decisions are made for home working, the following criteria must be considered:
- The likely cost/benefit of any proposed arrangement
 - The quantity of work that can be realistically achieved and how this will be measured
 - If a safe and productive environment is achievable in the staff members home
 - Any adverse effects on the employee or other team members
 - Any risks to confidentiality and data protection.
 - Whether flexible working arrangements are being requested as part of home working and whether these can be accepted
- 7.2 All home working arrangements should be confirmed in writing using the form in Appendix B.
- 7.3 Managers and employees may wish to agree a trial period to determine if home working will be suitable for both sides.

Where the request is from an employee

- 7.4 Employees who wish to work from home must make a formal request using the Trust's Flexible Working Policy.
- 7.5 The decision on whether or not to allow the member of staff to participate in home working will rest with the relevant line manager. The manager must be satisfied with the arrangements agreed with the employee. Such arrangements must be robust, allow for 'measurable targets' to be set and regular feedback on performance achieved.
- 7.6 It must be stressed that the needs of the organisation and the service it provides must be the 'primary' determining factor in any agreement for home working. Such arrangements will be regularly reviewed by the line manager. At any time, the agreement for home working may be terminated (see section 8).

Where the request is from the Trust

- 7.7 There will be some employees who, for various reasons, cannot work from home. The Trust will never insist that an employee works from home against their wishes, unless there are exceptional circumstances and it is necessary to protect health and safety. Employees with any concerns about a request to work from home should discuss this with their manager and may seek advice from their TUPO or the HR Team if needed.
- 7.8 Where a manager needs to request that an employee works from home, they should discuss this with the employee and both consider the factors in 7.1 to assess whether home working would be possible. If the employee is in agreement, they should together make the necessary arrangements and agree the date the arrangement will become effective.

8. Reviewing, Changing or Ending Home working

- 8.1 It is good practice for home working arrangements to be reviewed on a regular basis. The frequency of these reviews should be agreed between the manager and the employee but should be done at least annually. This may result in the arrangements being changed or ended and the process for doing this will depend on the type of arrangement, as explained below. Employees who are dissatisfied with any management decision may utilize the Trust's Grievance Policy.

For part-time or temporary home working

- 8.2 Arrangements can be changed or ended following discussion between the employee and their manager. They should consider the circumstances which have caused the arrangements to no longer be suitable and agree a timetable for the change to working arrangements (normally no less than 4 weeks to allow both sides to make any necessary arrangements).

For permanent home working

- 8.3 An end to permanent home working represents a change to an employee's contractual base and will require a more formal approach with a formal meeting and contractual notice being issued.
- 8.4 Where it is the employee requesting to end the arrangement they should notify their manager as soon as possible. This may not always be possible if the Trust cannot provide a suitable workplace for the employee. The employee and the manager are encouraged to engage in constructive discussion on working arrangements and reach an agreement which is suitable for both parties.

9. Health & Safety

- 9.1 The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 places a legal duty on the Trust to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare of its employees. This duty is also extended to staff working from other premises including their home.
- 9.2 All staff have a statutory responsibility to take 'reasonable care' of their own health and safety and to 'others' who may be affected by their acts or omissions. Employees are also required to co-operate with the Trust as necessary, to comply with statutory obligations, and abide by all Trust policies. This duty includes those working from home.
- 9.3 The Trust is required under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 to undertake a risk assessment of the home workers activities and working environment. This should be undertaken via a self-assessment form completed by the home worker (Appendix A). It remains the manager's responsibility to ensure this self-assessment form has been completed **before** any home working takes place.

- 9.4 If the self-assessment form identifies other hazards then the Manager may need to seek further advice from the Health & Safety team, HR or Occupational Health. If any significant risks are identified then this is likely to result in the decision that home working is not a suitable option.
- 9.5 It will be the responsibility of the potential home worker to complete the home working risk assessment check list in Appendix A, and to share the completed risk assessment with their line manager.
- 9.6 If the employee is to use DSE (Display Screen Equipment) the requirements of the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 are fulfilled by completion of Appendix A.
- 9.7 Employees working at home must inform their manager in the event of accidents, incidents or dangerous occurrences. Initial reports should be by telephone, followed by reporting via the Trust's DATIX system. If the employee cannot do this from home, they must report the incident to their manager who will complete the DATIX on their behalf.
- 9.8 Advice and guidance relating to physical and mental health for home workers can be found in section 16 of this policy. Managers and employees may also seek advice and support from Occupational Health or the Trust's Employee Assistance Programme.

10. Security and confidentiality

- 10.1 Employees must maintain the same standards of information governance that would apply as if they were at work on Trust premises. Employees should be aware of their responsibilities under the Data Protection Act (2018), the General Data Protection Regulation (2016), the Caldicott principles and the Code of Conduct for Employees in Respect of Confidentiality and the Freedom of Information Act.
- 10.2 Employees must consider confidentiality requirements when choosing an appropriate place to work, considering what can be overheard by others or seen on their screen.
- 10.3 Ideally person identifiable, confidential or sensitive information and material, including patient records, should not be kept at home. Where it has to be, it must be kept secure at all times and employee should discuss with their manager if they require any equipment/furniture (e.g. a lockable cabinet) to enable this.
- 10.4 Employees must be familiar with, and adhere to, the relevant Trust's Information Governance policies in respect of information and data which can be found on the intranet via https://intranet.sath.nhs.uk/information_governance/ig_policies.asp. Specific guidance on data protection, GDPR, secure data handling, records management and retention and information and information system security can found on this intranet page.
- 10.5 Home workers who transport equipment (e.g. laptops) and/or person identifiable, confidential and sensitive information should not have these items on display and must not leave them in an unattended vehicle at any time.

11. Implications on Tax, Insurance, Expenses

- 11.1 It is the responsibility of the employee to consult their insurance company, mortgage holders, landlords, tax office etc where appropriate to ensure that they meet any contractual requirements. The Trust accepts no liability for any problems caused by employees failing to notify any relevant organizations that they are working from home.

- 11.2 Employees who **choose** to work from home are not normally entitled to tax relief on additional outgoings. However, if there is a requirement from the Trust for an employee to work from home, there may be tax relief on a proportion of the costs for heating and lighting. It is the responsibility of the home worker to clarify their position with the Inland Revenue. More information can be found from the government website: <https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/working-at-home>.
- 11.3 It is recognized that home workers may incur additional household expenses whilst working from home. However, for most staff these will be offset by reduced travel costs, reduced parking payments and/or tax relief. The Trust will not provide any additional money to staff working from home and those who are financially impacted should discuss this with their manager and may choose not to work from home or if they're already working from home they may choose to return to the workplace (see section 8)..

12. Equipment

- 12.1 The Trust will maintain its own equipment (including portable appliance testing (PAT testing)), but will not be responsible for maintaining a home worker's own computers and equipment e.g. electrical sockets and other parts of the home worker's domestic electrical system, which are their own responsibility.
- 12.2 Once home working has been agreed it will be the responsibility of the home worker to maintain the workstation and surroundings in a safe condition and notify their line manager when appliances require PAT testing.
- 12.3 Appropriate equipment is one of the key control measures in order to facilitate home working with minimal risk to employees. It will be the responsibility of the potential home worker to ensure that they have a suitable desk and chair for display screen use prior to working from home and should discuss any requirements with their manager. Managers and employees should discuss and agree appropriate arrangements for this equipment to be transported safely.
- 12.4 Home workers may be loaned such equipment as is necessary for their role (e.g. desk, keyboard, office chair, mobile phone) and should discuss any requirements with their line manager. The employee must take reasonable care of the equipment and may be liable for any costs if the equipment is damaged or stolen if reasonable care has not been taken or if the equipment has been used for anything unrelated to the Trust's work. The equipment remains the property of the Trust and must be returned on request, when the home working arrangement ends or when their employment with the Trust ends.
- 12.5 Employees should report any technical problems to their manager and the Trust's IT Department.
- 12.6 The Trust remains responsible for providing any necessary stationary and consumables as would normally be provided at the workplace and employees should discuss any requirements with their manager.

13. Review Process

- 13.1 This policy will be reviewed if there are legislative changes, within 5 years or where other significant reasons arise.
- 13.2 In order that this document remains current, any of the appendices to the policy can be amended and approved during the lifetime of the document without the policy having to return to the ratifying committee.

14. Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

- 14.1 This policy applies to all employees equally and does not discriminate positively or negatively between the protective characteristics.

15. Process for Monitoring Compliance

- 15.1 The monitoring of this policy includes an annual audit of the points set out in the table below. Where non-compliance is identified, an action plan will be drawn up and monitored at the Workforce Committee. Where remedial action can be taken immediately, the action must be recorded appropriately.

Aspect of compliance or effectiveness being monitored	Monitoring method	Responsibility for monitoring (job title)	Frequency of monitoring	Group or Committee that will review the findings and monitor completion of any resulting action plan
Home working risk assessment completed for all staff working from home	Spot check of personal files	HR Team	Yearly	JNCC

16. References

Legislation relevant to home working includes:

- Health and Safety at Work etc Act (HSWA) 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (MHSW) 1999
- The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations (DSE) 1992
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998.

Government website for tax relief:

<https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/working-at-home>

Physiotherapy Guidance for Home Working:

http://intranet/Library_Intranet/documents/Coronavirus/briefings/Fast%20Track%20Physio%20WFH.pdf

Occupational Health Toolkit for Home Working:

http://intranet.sath.nhs.uk/Library_Intranet/documents/HR/H&W/2019_updatedpages/200320_HW%20Toolkit%20Working%20from%20Home_v1.pdf

Mental Health when working from home;

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/7-simple-tips-to-tackle-working-from-home/>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/coronavirus-and-work/tips-for-supporting-yourself-and-your-team/>

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak-while-working>

Car Parking Information on Trust Intranet:

http://intranet.sath.nhs.uk/Facilities_Department/carparking.asp

17. Associated Documents

Flexible Working Policy

Disciplinary Policy http://intranet.sath.nhs.uk/hr/HR_Policies.asp

IG Policies and Guidance

https://intranet.sath.nhs.uk/information_governance/ig_policies.asp

ACAS Home Working Guidance:

<https://archive.acas.org.uk/media/3905/Homeworking---a-guide-for-employers-and-employees/pdf/Homeworking-a-guide-for-employers-and-employees.pdf>

HOME WORKING RISK ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

This risk assessment tool is designed to be completed by an administrative/ managerial staff member working from their own home or other domestic premises, using Trust-owned IT equipment and accessories.

Your name	
Your post (or current work activity, where different)	
Your Care Group and department	
Your line manager	
Your address	
Your contact telephone number	
Date of assessment	

Please work through the checklists below, in relation to your remote working location. If the answer to any question is "no", remedial action may be required. It may be helpful to send a photo of the equipment/ environment to your manager to support those discussions.

This risk assessment should be completed at least annually.

Item	Yes/ No/ NA	Management action required	Date complete
General working environment - environment			
Do you have good enough lighting, either general room lighting or local task lighting?			
If windows cause glare, can you close curtains/ blinds?			
Is heating and ventilation adequate?			
General working environment - electrical			

Is the fixed electrical system in good condition (e.g. no damaged sockets or wires)?			
Are there enough sockets for your work activities?			
Does all Trust-owned electrical equipment bear a portable appliance testing (PAT) sticker, and is it "in date"?			
Is existing portable electrical equipment free of faults/ obvious defects?			
General working environment - fire			
Are flammable materials (e.g. paper) and ignition sources (e.g. cigarettes) kept to a minimum?			
Do you have an (informal) escape plan in case of fire?			
Is there a smoke detector or fire alarm that is regularly checked?			
General working environment - workspace and storage			
Is there enough space to work comfortably?			
Do you have enough privacy and freedom from disturbances to work?			
Do you have enough storage space for work equipment/ documents?			
Do you have adequate segregation from non-workers (e.g. children, pets)?			
Is the work area free of any significant slip or trip hazards?			
General working environment - miscellaneous			
If you have any concerns about managing working hours, workload, isolation or work-life balance, have you			

discussed these with your manager?			
Are you aware of arrangements for lone working, including communication with and reporting to the Trust base?			
Are you aware of how to access IT support*/ other equipment support if necessary?			
Are you able to avoid significant manual handling tasks? (If not, speak to your manager for advice on minimising risk.)			
If you have any security concerns, have you discussed them with your manager?			
If you have any other concerns, have you discussed them with your manager? (Please say what.)			
Computer work - workstation and computer use			
Do you know how to set up the workstation and chair for safe use?*			
Is the screen clear, readable and flicker-free?			
Do you know how to adjust the screen brightness/ colour (if required)?			
Are your eyes level with the top of the screen?			
Is the keyboard tiltable and is there space in front of it to rest your hands when not typing?			
Are the screen, computer and keyboard kept clean?			

Is the chair adjustable, and can you adjust it to suit your needs? (If your chair is fixed height, can you sit comfortably at your table/ desk?)			
Are your feet flat on the floor when the chair is set to the right height for typing, or when seated on a fixed-height chair? (If not, you may need a footrest.)			
Is there enough legroom for free movement?			
Are equipment and papers within easy reach?			
Is there enough space on the desk for work?			
Is the mouse/ trackball/ other input device suitable?			
If you need a document holder (e.g. when copy-typing, working between document and screen) do you have one?			
Are you able to spend 10 minutes in the hour doing something other than computer work?			
When using the computer are you free from aches, pains, tingling or pins and needles in the hands, arms, shoulders, neck or back? (NB: if you do experience these symptoms, tell your manager if these persist after you have stopped working on the computer.)			
Are you free from blurred/ poor vision, red/ sore/ dry eyes or headaches when using the computer? (If not, ensure you are taking enough breaks from the screen, and note that you may benefit from a sight test.)			
Computer work - laptops only			
Do you have a separate keyboard, mouse and laptop rest/ docking station?			

(NB: these are required if using a laptop for long periods.)			
If you need a rucksack or trolley bag, do you have one? (Typically required if you are transporting your laptop between multiple work locations.)			
Can you avoid working on hand-held devices (e.g. smartphones, iPads) for long periods of time? (NB: if “no”, then a full-size laptop or desk PC is required.)			
Have you discussed any other concerns with your manager, and have these been addressed?			

***Resources**

https://www.ergonomics.co.uk/Animated_Posture_Guidance.html

https://www.ergonomics.co.uk/res/Posture_Guidance.pdf

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg36.htm>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=5&v=Af7q5j14muc&feature=emb_logo

H&S Team telephone contact details: PRH 4487/ 4969/ 4950 or RSH 3802/ 3336/ 2474

IT Helpdesk: PRH or RSH 2522

PRH Switchboard: 01952 641222

RSH Switchboard: 01743 261000

When complete, please email this form back to:

- *Your own line manager, for local action and record-keeping on personal file*
- sath.covidsecureriskassessment@nhs.net *for monitoring purposes*

Home Working Agreement

This form acts as a prompt and record for managers and employees when considering home working. It should be completed together then signed by both parties and a copy placed on the employee's personal file. In emergency circumstances it may not be possible to complete prior to starting home working, but should be completed as soon as possible.

Question	Notes
What type of home working is being agreed?	<p><i>Permanent home working / part time home working / temporary home working</i></p> <p><i>Note: if permanent home working, this signed form represents written confirmation that the employee's contractual base has changed to their home address.</i></p>
Are the post and the post holder suitable for home working?	
Are there any implications for colleagues (e.g. direct reports) and how will these be managed?	
What are the arrangements for keeping in touch and monitoring progress/performance?	
What trial period (if any) will be applied?	
When will the next review of home working arrangements take place?	
What equipment is being taken home?	<i>(e.g. laptop, docking station, etc)</i>
What are the agreed working hours?	<i>(e.g. Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).</i>

Line Manager Checklist – Before home working starts

Action	Tick when complete
Work with employee to complete risk assessment and actions arising from it have been completed	
Provide appropriate equipment for employee to work from home (ensure electronics have been PAT tested)	
Agree with employee how work progress will be monitored	
Provide the employee with a signed copy of this agreement	

Employee Checklist – Before home working starts

Action	Tick when complete
Work with line manager to complete risk assessment and actions arising from it have been completed	
Check with insurers, mortgage provider, landlord etc (see section 11 of the policy)	
Make necessary arrangements for safe storage of Trust equipment and confidential material	
Read and understand on-going responsibilities as listed within this policy	
Prepare an appropriate, safe working environment at home	

Line Manager

I confirm I have completed, and will continue to complete, the actions required of line managers outlined in section 4.1 of the Trust’s Home Working Policy. I have considered the matters above, a risk assessment has been completed and I agree to the employee working from home.

Signed (Line Manager)..... Date

Name (capital letters)

Employee

I confirm I have completed, and will continue to complete, the actions required of employees outlined in section 4.2 of the Trust’s Home Working Policy. I have considered the matters above and agree to work from home. I confirm receipt of the equipment listed above and agree to return this on demand.

Signed (Employee)..... Date

Name (capital letters)

Copy to: *Employee
Personal File*