

# Homeworking

## 1. Introduction

This procedure provides information for employees whose office is based at home and for those who work from home on an occasional basis.

## 2. Categories of Homeworking

### 2.1 Formal Homeworking

Formal homeworking is when your contract states that you will work all or some of your hours from home and your home is recognised as a work location. Formal homeworking arrangements are permanent unless you have written confirmation that the arrangement is temporary and have been provided with a clear end date and/or review date.

Once a homeworking arrangement has been agreed and all necessary actions taken, your manager will submit an [Employee Change Notification Form](#) and a completed Homeworking Checklist to the [Employee Lifecycle Team](#) who will write to you to confirm this change. Where homeworking is agreed at the time of appointment, your manager will notify the resourcing team and the arrangement will be confirmed in your contract (subject to completion of the Homeworking Checklist). Where Homeworking Facilities Allowance is payable, this will also be confirmed in writing (see [Section 7](#)).

There are three types of formal homeworking arrangements:

#### 2.1.1 Business Requirement

There will be a business requirement for you to work from home if there is no suitable office location for your post or where you work all or some of your hours from home as a [reasonable adjustment](#). Homeworking is agreed either at the time of appointment or where a business requirement arises during the course of your employment.

#### 2.1.2 Business Efficiency

There will be a business efficiency for you to work from home if your job involves a high degree of travel between a number of locations and the business has decided that being based from home will save on travel time and/or costs to the FC. This form of homeworking is non-compulsory and is agreed either at the time of appointment, or when the business efficiency becomes apparent.

#### 2.1.3 Flexible Working Arrangement

You line manager may agreed to a flexible working arrangement which would allow you to work some or all of your hours from home. For information on making a flexible working request, please refer to [HR Policy and Procedure – Flexible Working](#).

## 2.2 Occasional Homeworking

Occasional homeworking is agreed and arranged in advance with your line manager on an ad hoc basis and may be suitable if you need to work free from distraction to complete a specific task. Occasionally homeworking does not affect your terms and conditions of employment. However, if a regular pattern of occasional homeworking occurs, for example working from home every Monday, you should discuss this with your manager and if necessary make a flexible working request. For information on making a flexible working request, please refer to [HR Policy and Procedure – Flexible Working](#).

## 3. Working from home

In order to work from home you must: have a suitable working environment (see [Section 4](#)); have an appropriate internet connection; be contactable by mobile or landline telephone; and provide assurance that documents and/or equipment can be used securely. In addition, a risk assessment must have been undertaken which confirms a safe working environment (see [Section 10.1](#))

### 3.1 Formal Homeworking Requirements

As formal homeworking involves working all or some of your hours from home, there are specific arrangements that must be in place. There must be confirmation that:

- Information Services can provide and install a suitable workstation and provide all necessary IT related equipment; and there are no restrictions on access to IT systems you will require to use from home (see [Section 6](#));
- you have advised your home insurer(s) of the proposed homeworking arrangement and have confirmation that adequate cover is in place (See [Section 11.3](#));
- you have advised any parties with an interest in your property, e.g. your mortgage provider or landlord, and have confirmation that there are no issues which will affect or prevent the homeworking arrangement (See [Section 12](#));
- you have contacted your Local Authority/Valuation Office regarding any liability for business rates of Council Tax (see [Section 13.1](#)); and

- you have contacted HMRC regarding liability for Capital Gains Tax (CGT) and are comfortable to progress with the homeworking arrangement based on their response; or that you acknowledge that any CGT liability arising from the arrangement is a personal one and the FC will not pay any compensation for this (see [Section 13.2](#)).

## 4. Working Environment

Homeworking requires adequate space and a suitable working environment. It is essential that all categories of homeworker have a dedicated workspace which is not accessed by other family members, tenants or guests during working hours.

Homeworking is incompatible with childcare/other caring responsibilities and must not be used in place of temporary or regular caring arrangements. You must arrange care for any dependants and ensure this remains in place throughout your working hours.

## 5. Equipment and Furniture

### 5.1 IT Equipment

If you have a formal homeworking arrangement you will usually be supplied with:

- Laptop or PC and Monitor (depending on which is most appropriate)
- Printer (optional dependent upon role requirements)

These items will be supplied and installed (if necessary) by Information Systems following a request from your cost centre manager.

If you occasionally work from home you will not be permanently supplied with equipment to work from home. Your manager will consider if suitable equipment is available when considering each ad hoc request.

### 5.2 Office Furniture

It is a requirement that appropriate furniture is in place prior to any formal homeworking arrangements being agreed. If there is a business requirement or business efficiency for you to work from home the FC will reimburse the cost of one desk, one chair, lockable storage for filing, a fire extinguisher and first aid kit as necessary.

Reimbursement is subject to these items being approved models which are purchased from approved suppliers. This information can be obtained from the colleague responsible for the purchase of office furniture for your unit. Reimbursement can only

be made for items which have been paid for in full, any items purchased on a hire purchase arrangement will not be reimbursed.

No reimbursement is made where the homeworking arrangement is the result of a flexible working request, or for occasional homeworking.

### 5.3 Care of Equipment and Furniture

All items provided will, remain the property of the FC, must be used solely by you and must be returned if the homeworking arrangement ends. You must therefore take reasonable care of any furniture and equipment supplied and any misuse, loss or damage may be treated as a disciplinary matter.

## 6. Telephones and Broadband

If there is a business requirement or business efficiency for you to work from home you may be provided with a mobile phone if your manager is satisfied that it is required for you to carry out your role. IS will provide any equipment required to enhance mobile phone coverage to your home.

If there is a business requirement or business efficiency for you to work from home and you do not have a broadband connection already installed in your home you must arrange to have this facility installed. The FC will reimburse the cost of broadband installation provided that your manager is satisfied that it is required for you to carry out your role and you confirm that there will be no personal use of the facility. Where a broadband facility is dependant upon a landline connection and no existing landline facility exists, landline installation can also be reimbursed on the same conditions. Please see [Section 7.1](#) for further information on claiming one-off costs.

Should you opt to be reimbursed for actual expenses rather than receiving the homeworking facilities allowance ([see Section 7.2](#)), the monthly costs of broadband and landline facilities will only be reimbursed where you provide confirmation that usage is for work purposes only.

Telephone or broadband facilities will not normally be reimbursed if you work from home as a result of a flexible working request or on an occasional ad hoc basis.

## 7. Homeworking Facilities Allowance

You are only eligible for a Homeworking Facilities Allowance (HFA) if there is a business requirement or business efficiency for you to work from home.

HFA is £18 per month (pro-rata against the % of FTE hours worked from home) and will not be subject to income tax and national insurance deductions.

This is the rate that HMRC currently allow employers to pay on a tax-exempt basis without you requiring to submit receipts. HMRC consider that this rate should cover monthly homeworking costs for a homeworker where these are predominantly related to the heating and lighting of one room.

## 7.1 One-off Costs

The monthly allowance is not expected to cover one-off costs, for example, broadband installation or an increase to your annual home insurance policy. If there is a business requirement or business efficiency for you to work from home, reimbursement of one-off costs should be requested by submitting an expenses claim in line with the [HR Procedure – Travel and Expenses](#).

## 7.2 Reimbursement of Actual Expenses

If there is a business requirement or business efficiency for you to work from home you can choose not to take the Homeworking Facilities Allowance and instead receive reimbursement for actual expenses.

You must provide receipted evidence that you have additional expenses because you are working from home. The reimbursement of expenses will not be subject to tax and national insurance but HMRC will audit receipts and you must therefore clearly demonstrate that the expense was necessary, additional and directly linked to the business requirement or business efficiency for you to work from home.

# 8. Travel Expenses

The [HR Procedure – Travel and Expenses](#) will continue to apply to all homeworkers, however when commuting between home and FC locations, there are some additional considerations which homeworkers must bear in mind.

## 8.1 Business Requirement

If there is a business requirement for you to work from home you will still claim for business travel expenses in line with the guidance set out in the [HR Procedure – Travel and Expenses](#).

If you regularly travel from home to a particular location, you may be viewed by HMRC as having more than one workplace and as such reimbursement for this journey would become taxable. You should regularly review your travelling arrangements with your

line manager and seek initial advice from the [Head of Finance](#) if you feel HMRC may consider you to have more than one workplace.

## 8.2 Business Efficiency

If there is a business efficiency for you to work from home you may be provided with an official FC vehicle. In such cases, MES will provide you with guidance for fuelling, vehicle care and record keeping etc.

If you do not have an official FC vehicle you will still claim for business travel expenses in line with the guidance set out in the [HR Procedure – Travel and Expenses](#).

If your home base is within the area you cover all of your work related journeys can be reimbursed. However, if your home base is outside the area you cover you can not be reimbursed for travelling from your home to your area and can only claim for expenses incurred once you have arrived at your first work location. For national roles (i.e. those who frequently travel to various sites across the country) and are therefore home-based, all work-related travel can be reimbursed regardless of the start point.

## 8.3 Flexible Working Arrangement

If you have a flexible working arrangement you will still claim for business travel expenses in line with the guidance set out in [HR Procedure – Travel and Expenses](#).

You cannot claim for journeys from your home to the FC location which was (or would have been) your base, had your flexible working request not been accepted.

## 8.4 Occasional

It is not expected that occasional homeworkers will normally incur any travel costs. If you are required to travel from your home to your normal place of work on a day where you had expected to work from home, you will not be reimbursed for this journey.

If you are required to make a work related journey to a different FC location on a day when you expected to work from home, expenses for that journey will be claimed in line with the guidance set out in [HR Procedure – Travel and Expenses](#).

# 9. Security

You are required to follow FC guidelines to ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken to protect FC equipment and official information relating to employment that is stored in your home.

All papers in your possession should be locked away when not in use and you should not allow these to be seen by any persons not authorised to do so. Particular care should be taken where documents carry an official-sensitive marking.

Please refer to the [Information Assurance](#) pages of the intranet and the [HR Policy and Procedure – Email, Intranet and Social Media](#) for further information.

## 10. Meetings

You are required to be flexible in your approach and must attend meetings in FC Offices as necessary. When attending meetings you must inform your line manager of your travel plans and confirm your safe return.

You must not use your own home for meetings with business visitors or colleagues unless this is for the purposes of delivering/collecting documents, installing, fixing or removing IS equipment, or to undertake a risk assessment of your home office area.

## 10. Health and Safety

The FC has the same duty of care towards homeworkers as those who work from FC locations and the FC [Health and Safety Policy](#) will still apply.

In order to work from home your manager will need to be satisfied that you have a safe working environment. Whilst working from home you should be aware of your own responsibility by working in a safe and sensible manner and maintaining a safe working environment for yourself and others coming into your home workplace in connection with business.

### 10.1 Homeworking Risk Assessments

#### 10.1.1 Formal homeworking

Prior to any formal homeworking arrangement being agreed a risk assessment will be carried out in your home by your line manager.

This will include a workstation assessment, checking data security arrangements, the effect of the homeworking arrangement on other members of the household and a visual inspection of FC electrical equipment, first aid kit and fire safety appliances. The risk assessment will also determine how often any electrical appliances should be PAT tested.

Risk assessments will be carried out by your line manager on an annual basis and the ongoing homeworking arrangements are subject to annual confirmation that your home continues to be a safe and suitable working environment.

### 10.1.2 Occasional homeworking

If you occasionally work from home you are required to carry out a self-assessment workstation assessment of your homeworking environment. This should be discussed and agreed with your line manager before any work is carried out at home.

If you occasionally work from home and have an underlying medical condition or you are occasionally working from home as a reasonable adjustment, your line manager may carry out a risk assessment with you at your home before agreeing you can work from home.

## 10.2 Accidents

You must report any work related accident, injury or near miss in the FC's Accident and Incident Reporting System (AIRS).

# 11. Insurance

## 11.1 Employers Liability

If you have an agreed homeworking arrangement, you will be covered by the Crown in relation to employer's liability and personal accident in the same way as those employees based in FC premises. However the FC will not be liable for any loss, injury or damage which is not directly connected with FC furniture or equipment installed for work purposes. It will neither be liable for any accidents or damages caused due to negligent or reckless use of furniture or equipment whilst in your possession.

## 11.2 Equipment

Any Equipment supplied to you, whether provided directly, or purchased by you and reimbursed by the FC, does not require to be insured under your Contents Policy as this remains the property of the FC.

## 11.3 Buildings and Contents Cover

Before any home working arrangement can be agreed you must contact your own Insurance Company to ensure that your Buildings and Contents Cover remains valid. You must ensure that your home insurance provides adequate cover in the unlikely event that equipment or furniture used by you for work, which has not been supplied by the FC, causes damage to your own property.

The FC will only be liable for any increase in your own insurance premiums in relation to homeworking arrangements if your manager has confirmed that there is a business requirement or business efficiency for you to work from home.

## 12. Mortgages and Tenancy Agreements

If you have a formal home working arrangement you must advise anyone with an interest in your property, for example a mortgage lender or landlord, of your home working arrangement, to ensure that you are not subject to agreed terms and conditions or covenants which prevent you from working from home.

You should also check your title deeds to ensure that they do not prohibit home working. It is your responsibility to advise **all necessary parties** and ensure you are not breaching any regulations by working from home.

The FC will not normally be liable any charges or fees arising out of a breach of, or requirement to remove or adapt, these restrictions.

## 13. Council and Capital Gains Tax

### 13.1 Council Tax

If you work from home, the part of the property used for work could become liable for business rates (also known as non-domestic rates) whilst the remainder of the property will continue to be liable to council tax.

[Local authorities \(LA\)](#) in Scotland and [Local Valuation Offices \(VO\)](#) in England and Wales are responsible for determining whether any business rates are payable. To decide this, there are a number of things which they take into consideration, including the extent and frequency of the business use of the room (or rooms) and any modifications made to the property to accommodate that use.

Each case is considered on its own merits, and the LA or VO may visit your property before making their assessment regarding business rates. However, as a general rule, it is not expected that business rates will apply provided that:

- there are no modifications to the room used for working from home;
- no visitors attend the home for business purposes;
- and the room is used for other purposes in non-working hours.

It is your responsibility to contact your local authority or valuation office before a home working arrangement is agreed to find out if business rates of Council Tax will apply.

The FC will not be liable for any increase in Council Tax due to business rates for Flexible Working arrangements however such costs may be reimbursed if there is business requirement or business efficiency for you to work from home and this is unavoidable.

## 13.2 Capital Gains Tax

Capital Gains Tax (CGT) arises on the sale of your property if part of your home has been used exclusively for business purposes.

Each case is looked at on its own merits but as a general rule there would only be a CGT liability if you had dedicated a room for business purposes and this was not accessible by you or other family members for other reasons.

The FC will not compensate you for any CGT incurred as a result of your homeworking arrangement. It is your responsibility to contact HMRC prior to commencing your homeworking arrangement to confirm whether the arrangement will result in a CGT liability.

# 14. Moving Home / Job Changes

## 14.1 Moving Home

If you have a formal homeworking arrangement you must discuss any potential house moves with your manager as they will need to decide if your home working arrangement can continue. Any new home needs to be suitable for homeworking (see [Section 3.1](#)) and if your homeworking is no longer possible, or if your new location has any impact on your business requirement of business efficiency status, your manager will discuss any alternative options with you and will arrange for you to be notified in writing of any subsequent change (See [Section 15](#)).

Your manager must also be satisfied that following your proposed house move there will not be a disproportionate increase in the burden of costs and that there will be no detrimental impact on:

- the ability to meet customer demand;
- the quality of work/service and/or performance standards;
- organisational requirements;

If you choose to move home it will be your responsibility to meet the cost of moving any equipment or furniture. This will not be the case if your move is a permanent transfer on public interest terms and your new manager has agreed that you will continue to work from home.

## 14.2 Job Changes

If you successfully apply for a new job your homeworking arrangement does not automatically transfer with you. If your new manager agrees that you can continue to work from home but your new role does not have a business requirement or business efficiency for you to be based from home, you will no longer be eligible for HFA (or reimbursement of actual expenses) and will be considered to have a flexible working arrangement.

# 15. Changing the Homeworking Arrangement

If you no longer want to work from home you need to submit a flexible working request asking for a change to your work location. For information on making a flexible working request, please refer to [HR Policy and Procedure – Flexible Working](#).

If your changing business requirements mean that your manager considers your homeworking arrangement is no longer suitable, they will discuss this with you. This will be managed as a contractual change and you will be provided with adequate notice accordingly.