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# HOME & HYBRID WORKING POLICY

Policy Owner – HR

## Document History

Issue	Date	Amendment Comment
Issue 1	24/1/2022	General Issue

## Document Authorisation

Description	Name	Sign	Date
Prepared By:	Mrs A Millis		21/1/22
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## **Guidance aims and objectives**

The aim of this policy is to set out how employees can make a request for home or hybrid working arrangements, and the conditions that will apply to such arrangements if a request is granted.

As a company, we are supportive of such arrangements where these are appropriate and compatible with business needs. Some employees may be recruited on home or hybrid working arrangements. Otherwise, employees may apply for such arrangements on an occasional basis where necessary to respond to specific circumstances, or on a longer-term basis.

When we refer to 'home working' in this policy, we mean arrangements under which your home would be your main place of work throughout your working week.

When we refer to 'hybrid working,' we mean arrangements which could involve you working from home for part of your working hours, for at least some of the week/month. This is an informal arrangement, without the need for a flexible working application or a contractual change.

References to 'workplace' in this policy means our premises.

## **Requesting hybrid working arrangements**

We recognise that there are various circumstances in which you may benefit from hybrid working on an occasional basis. These may include when:

- a quiet, uninterrupted work environment will, for example, assist in dealing with a backlog of administrative tasks or in producing specific work to a deadline.
- a child, elderly relative or other dependant becomes unwell or arrangements for their care break down at short notice.
- public transport is disrupted (e.g., by adverse weather or by industrial action that affects your ability to travel to the workplace); or
- you have a medical appointment during the working day, and it would be more efficient for you travel there from home than from the workplace.

To request hybrid working, you should speak to your line manager. Your line manager may authorise an occasional period of hybrid working, provided that, in their opinion:

- you have work that can be undertaken at home; and
- working at home is compatible with business needs; and
- any increase in work that may be passed to your colleagues as a result is kept to a minimum.

Your line manager will, where necessary, consult with the Business Unit Director to confirm arrangements.

If your line manager concludes that it is necessary to refuse a request for occasional home or hybrid working and you are unable to attend the workplace as normal, your line manager will advise you whether your circumstances are covered by any other company policies (such as our Emergency Time Off for Dependants Policy).

If you are mixing between home and office working for part of the week/month, depending upon circumstances you are considered a hybrid worker and your original contractual base remains. It would be expected that there is a schedule agreed with your line manager of when you are at which location so that you can easily be contacted and supported.

### **Enforced home or hybrid working arrangements**

There may be times when the business temporarily asks you to work from home. This may be for national health & safety reasons such as a pandemic or national disaster, or simpler reasons such as office refurbishments or power failures. This may also be working from home for a period if you are isolating but well enough to work. It may also include enforced working from home for an undefined period based on business decisions which will be aligned to government advice.

In such unprecedented times, informal conversations may need to take place between the employee and their line manager to determine the best way to undertake duties. This is particularly needed if for example, there are caring challenges due to school closures or the closure of day centre/residential settings. Such a conversation could include flexibility on working pattern and how certain tasks may be performed when away from the place of work.

It is expected that after the temporary need to work from home ends that you would return to your normal place of work and undertake your duties as normal. Temporary enforced working variations do not constitute a contractual change or custom and practice. Successful temporary working arrangements do not guarantee that a flexible working request is accepted.

### **Requesting permanent home or hybrid working arrangements**

After successful completion of your probationary period, or where home/hybrid working is a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010, you can make an application for permanent home or hybrid working arrangements. Any request to work from home or on a hybrid basis must meet the needs of our business as well as your needs and not all roles or jobs are suitable for home or hybrid working.

If you wish to apply for permanent home or hybrid working arrangements, you will need to be able to demonstrate that you can:

- work independently, motivate yourself and use your own initiative, adapting to new working practices, as necessary.
- manage your workload effectively and meet any applicable deadlines.
- make appropriate childcare/dependent care arrangements to enable you to focus on your work during your working hours.
- identify and resolve any new pressures created by working at home.
- keep in regular contact with your line manager and colleagues.
- access materials you will need and speak with people you will need to speak with; and
- be able to separate work life and home life, both mentally and physically.

We must also be satisfied that your home environment is suitable for homeworking. This includes having a suitable working area, and a strong internet connection.

Please be aware that a request is unlikely to be approved if:

- you need to be present in the workplace to perform your duties (for example, to use equipment that is only available in the workplace, or where your job requires personal interaction with colleagues or third parties that would not be as effective if conducted remotely).
- any aspect of your performance and/or current standard of work has been identified by your line manager as unsatisfactory, either formally or informally.
- you have an unexpired warning in respect of your conduct or performance; or

- you need regular supervision or support to deliver an acceptable quality and/or quantity of work.

To be considered for permanent home or hybrid working, you will need to make a flexible working request in accordance with our Flexible Working Policy. Follow the flexible working request guidelines within the employee handbook (this is a formal process set out in employment law), which includes the option for a trial period.

It may assist your application for home or hybrid working if you first discuss your proposal with your line manager informally. This may identify potential problems with your application, such as a need to be in the workplace on occasions you had not considered, which your application can then address.

It is important that we have enough time to consider your request properly, so please send any request to us plenty of time in advance of when you would like the alternative working arrangements to begin.

If your flexible working request is agreed, we will issue you with a new contract of employment reflecting this change. If you are based predominantly at home but visiting client sites and attending the office for important work events, then you will be classified a home worker.

These options do not entitle you to choose when and how you work. It simply means you do your job from an alternative location. Your contractual obligations, including your core working hours, continue to apply. Any changes would need to be agreed between us.

Note that any agreement for home or hybrid working is related to the specific role that you hold at the time of the application. If you subsequently take on another role, it is not guaranteed that the working arrangements will be continued as the existing agreement may not be suitable in the new role.

### **Setting up the home / hybrid working**

Other than your company laptop, monitor, keyboard, mouse, and mobile phone, you are required to ensure you have sufficient and appropriate equipment for working from home.

Any personal equipment you use when working from home is your responsibility and we will not be responsible for providing, maintaining, repairing, or replacing any equipment in the event of loss or damage to any personal equipment you may use when working for us.

Please inform us if you have a disability that means you need any special equipment to work from home safely and comfortably. In such cases, we will discuss with you what equipment or adjustments to your home workspace you may reasonably need.

We are not responsible for associated costs of you working from home including the costs of heating, lighting, or electricity, internet access, or telephone calls.

If you need to purchase any stationery or send any documents or other materials by post or courier in the course of your duties, you should obtain appropriate receipts and reclaim such costs in accordance with our Expenses Policy.

There may be tax implications to homeworking. You should get specific advice on this.

You may be eligible for tax relief if you work from home. Further details can be found on [Claim tax relief for your job expenses: Working from home - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/claim-tax-relief-for-your-job-expenses-working-from-home) . Any such claim would be a personal claim direct to HMRC and remains your responsibility.

### **Managing hybrid/ homeworking**

Employees who work remotely (irrespective of the duration of the arrangement) are subject to the same rules, procedures and expected standard of conduct and performance as all other employees. Contractual obligations, duties and responsibilities remain in place, as do our workplace policies.

We want you to remain as involved as possible in our business and our activities while you are working remotely. This includes having access to company news, events, and benefits, as well as opportunities for professional development, training, and promotion.

Your line manager will keep you up to date with communications and information relevant to your work. You must ensure that you maintain regular communication with your line manager and colleagues as needed for the performance of your work.

It is recommended that you block out a regular time with your line manager each week. This is a great way to keep connected wherever you are and ensures that both you and your manager are kept up to date with your current needs and areas of support that you might want. Such a block keeps feedback continuous, open, and honest with your manager every week. It is a good idea to talk with your manager about your communication style and how you feel best supported so you can both work to find your best working style together.

Should a period arise where all possible staff are home working, communication styles may need to change to adapt to the scenario, however the principles of regular and open communication as stated above remain.

You will be expected on request to attend the workplace or other reasonable location - on days or at times when you would normally be working from your home address - for purposes such as meetings, training courses or other events, as necessary.

You understand that when you do attend the workplace, you may have to hot desk or share a desk with someone else.

It is also expected that you are flexible to additional hours and being on call (as applicable), cover of colleagues and attending training, as if you were office based.

If you, at any point, feel isolated, left out, or lacking guidance or support you should discuss this with your manager at the earliest opportunity.

Where an IT or other problem prevents you from working effectively from home, you should contact your manager straightaway. We may need you to work at an office until the issue has been resolved.

If you cannot work on a remote working day because of illness or injury, you must follow the procedure set out in our Absence Management Policy. It is common for home workers to continue working through illness (presenteeism), but research shows that they are less productive, have poor output and take longer to recover, therefore please make your decisions as if you were due to attend an office. Switch off your work devices and recuperate.

If you are a home worker, you will be linked to the base location of your line manager and you will, therefore, receive information about that site with regards to staff changes, social events, and development opportunities.

Your access to training and development opportunities will, wherever possible, be the same as for staff who are based in the workplace. In relation to applications for internal vacancies and promotions, we will discuss with you if your home or hybrid working arrangement will impact on your ability to do certain roles.

If at any time you wish to work from a location other than your UK home address, either on a temporary or permanent basis, you will need to seek written agreement from your line manager in advance. If the request includes a non-UK residence, different legislative and compliance requirements mean that working abroad may be subject to different arrangements from those set out in this guidance.

If we agree to you working from a location other than your home address on a temporary basis, we reserve the right to require you to return to working from your home address upon reasonable notice.

### **New starters**

Under normal conditions, whatever the contractual base of work, corporate inductions must take place in the office and managers should ensure that they are visible, present and in the office to support the effective and engaging onboarding of all new employees.

### **Health and Safety**

Home and hybrid workers remain subject to the Company health and safety policy and have the same responsibilities for health and safety as other employees. You have a duty of care for your own health and safety and that of anyone who might be affected by your actions or omissions. You must attend our health and safety training courses, read the Health & Safety at Work Policy, and undertake to use equipment safely.

If you have any health and safety concerns, or if an accident or incident takes place, you must immediately report this to your manager and a member of the HSQE team in line with our Health and Safety Policy.

We have the right to conduct periodic health and safety risk assessments of your homeworking, as well as maintenance checks and electrical testing.

It will not usually be appropriate to hold work-related meetings in your home, and you must not give out personal details like your address or home phone number.

Whilst it is good practice to have a first aid kit or firefighting equipment in the home, you are not required to do anything more than would be expected in a domestic setting.

Health and safety also include your mental health and well-being. When working away from an office environment you should ensure that you take regular breaks from your screen during the working day, particularly as the natural interruptions in a workplace are not present. You are encouraged to take time away from work each day whether this be going for a walk or just taking some time to relax. If you have any concerns about your working patterns or levels of work, talk to your line manager to ensure that these do not negatively impact upon you.

### **Travel expenses and home /hybrid working**

If your contractual location is your home, then any business-related travel, including attending an office site, can be claimed through expenses, if agreed in advance with your line manager.

If you are hybrid working your base location remains the same and therefore a visit to your base location would be considered a commute and no travel expenses can be claimed.

Travel to alternative sites, whether home or office based are subject to the travel expenses policy.

### **Dress code when working from home**

If you are having a conversation with a client or colleague using video conferencing, you are expected to be attired professionally as if you were in the office or meeting face to face. It is encouraged that you wear smart casual clothing at home, as if you were in the office and in accordance with the J&E Hall dress code, to assist your mindset that you are at work, changing into clothing of your choice outside of working hours. This can also assist in separating your workday and personal life.

### **Security, confidentiality, and data protection**

Our high standards must be always adhered to. You should familiarise yourself with our Data Protection Policy in particular. This includes, but is not exhaustive to, positioning of your screen when others are at your home, tidying up and locking away confidential documents at the end of the day or the safe disposal of confidential waste. You must always use a secure Wi-Fi connection when working or connecting to our network

Please be mindful of using approved videoconferencing platforms such as teams, not use a speaker phone for work related discussions, and turning off smart speakers or home surveillance devices near your working area. There is further guidance in the IT remote working user guide.

Data protection risk assessments will be conducted periodically.

Only equipment that we have authorised may be used for homeworking.

Whenever you are prompted to install a legitimate update to your computer or other equipment, you must do so straightaway.

You must report any actual or potential breach of security, confidentiality, or data protection to the data protection officer immediately.

If you are in unsure about any aspect of security, confidentiality, or data protection, you must speak with your manager and a member of the IT team.

### **Accessing your home**

We may need to access your home to set up the homeworking and to conduct risk assessments, checks, and repairs to our equipment.

We may also need access to retrieve our property, whether during the homeworking, at the end of the homeworking arrangement, or when your employment ends.

We will give you as much notice as possible that we need to enter your home and you must cooperate with our reasonable requests. All due care and attention will be taken when visiting your property.

## **Insurance**

Working at home may affect your home and contents insurance policy, mortgage, lease, or rental agreement. You must make any necessary arrangements with your insurers, bank, mortgage provider or property owner before commencing home or hybrid working.

Our employer's liability insurance policy covers you when you are working at home. You must report any accidents to the Health and Safety Officer immediately in accordance with our Health and Safety Policy.

## **What if you move house?**

You must inform us, and we will reassess the working arrangement.

If we consider that the house move would make, or has made, homeworking unsuitable, we will discuss this with you and we may decide to bring the homeworking to an end. If that happens you will usually be able to return to your previous contractual place of work, although that cannot be guaranteed.

## **Termination of home or hybrid working arrangements**

If you want to bring your home working arrangement to an end, you should speak with your manager, providing at least one month's notice. We will only be able to accommodate your request if there is sufficient office space and a suitable desk for you.

We reserve the right to terminate your home or hybrid working arrangements, for example if your role changes such that home or hybrid working is no longer suitable, subject to one month's notice.

If you receive an unsatisfactory grade in an appraisal or are subject to a formal performance or conduct caution or warning for any reason, we reserve the right to terminate your home or hybrid working arrangements immediately and require you to work at the workplace.

On termination of your home or hybrid working arrangement, you will be required to return certain equipment provided by us. If termination of your home or hybrid working arrangement also involves termination of your employment, you will be required to return all equipment provided by us. If we need to collect equipment from your home, we will contact you to make the appropriate arrangements.

## **Status of this guidance**

This policy applies to employees only.

This guidance does not give contractual rights to individual employees. The company reserves the right to alter any of its terms at any time although we will notify you of any changes.