



MABLETHORPE & SUTTON TOWN COUNCIL

Working from Home Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Home working on an ad-hoc basis is a recognised flexible working practice which, in appropriate circumstances, can help staff balance their work and personal lives, achieve business objectives and have a positive impact on the environment.
- 1.2 Occasional Home working involves using the employee's home as a base for work, on an occasional basis, instead of the employee coming into a recognised workplace.

2. Purpose of this policy

- 2.1 To provide a clear and manageable procedure for occasional home working.
- 2.2 To provide the basis for a clear understanding of the occasional home working scheme for the benefit of the Town Council and staff member.
- 2.3 To make clear the responsibilities of the Town Clerk (or line manager) and occasional home worker.
- 2.4 To ensure occasional home workers work safely and securely with preventative measures for hazards or risks.

3. Scope

- 3.1 Whilst this policy applies to all staff regardless of length of service, it is recognised that some roles will be more suitable to occasional home working than others.
- 3.2 To work effectively home working has to primarily meet the business needs of the service as well as the individual.
- 3.3 There is no automatic right to work at home and such working is voluntary and by agreement with the Town Clerk. Each individual request for occasional home working will be considered on its merits.
- 3.4 Factors to consider as part of the approval process include:
 - the objectives of the home working;
 - the suitability of the job for occasional home working;
 - the performance level of the individual member of staff, including the confidence in them to work remotely and without regular supervision.
Employees who are subject to formal or informal conduct or capability proceedings will not normally be eligible to home working arrangements. However, it is recognised that there may be occasions where home working can help individuals improve their performance;
 - the suitability of the worker's home for home working e.g.:
agreed method of communication, access to colleagues, information, and technology;
 - the outcome of a risk assessment;
 - the impact on and interrelationship with other members of staff / elected Members.

- 3.5 Taking work home occasionally, on an ad hoc basis, to concentrate on a particular project or task may be suitable in the following circumstances:
- No original documentation documentation, ledger, historic records, burial books will be removed from the office by any member of staff.
 - where a specific task needs dedicated and focused input and/or could be dealt with more efficiently at home, e.g. saved travelling time and lack of interruptions;
 - where it is difficult for staff to get in to work, e.g. Adverse weather, a short but unavoidable commitment at home, or work is being undertaken out of the office near to home.
 - All work undertaken in respect of updating paperwork will be carried out via a secure remote access network.

4. Definitions

Occasional Home Working is where the employee spends the majority of their time in the workplace but from time to time agrees with the Town Clerk (or line manager) to work from home.

5. Ownership and Responsibilities

5.1 The Town Council is expected to:

- consider how occasional home working can benefit the Council, the individual and environment and be flexible in their approach to home working requests and opportunities;
- ensure that the work output of staff designated as occasional home workers is managed;
- ensure that staff applying to work at home have completed a risk and DSE assessment to ensure all work will be undertaken safely and securely.

5.2 Occasional Home workers are expected to:

- comply with all Town Council policies and procedures whilst working, whether this be in their home or on the Town Council premises;
- take reasonable care of any Town Council supplied equipment for home working;
- report any broken or defective Town Council provided IT equipment to the Town Council via their Line Manager;
- keep secure and locked any documents or data that belongs to the Town Council in accordance with Town Council Governance rules and policies;
- report any damaged, lost or stolen equipment, including Town Council documentation or data belonging to the Town Council via their Line Manager;
- report any accident or incident to the Town Council via their Line Manager that such an incident has been reported.

6. Standards and Practices

6.1 Conditions for Occasional Home Working

- **Hours** - all occasional home-workers' usual hours of work will apply. Staff working from home are still subject to the terms of the Working Time Regulations and should be reminded of this so that they do not routinely work in excess of normal office hours.
- **Contact** - all occasional workers will be expected to be available by telephone during normal working hours. The right of an employee not to disclose his / her address and telephone number, except to immediate colleagues, should be respected. However, an agreed method of contact with their manager and colleagues, both internal and external, must be maintained when working from home.

- **Compliance with Policies and Procedures** - all occasional home workers must comply with all Town Council policies and procedures whether working from home or at the Town Council.
- **Equipment** - the Town Council does not undertake to supply any equipment as a result of an agreement for occasional home working. However, it may at its discretion supply equipment such as a portable laptop and peripherals or solutions to work securely from an individual's own PC. Any equipment provided will remain the property of the Town Council which must be returned when it is no longer required for work purposes and / or when the employee leaves the Town Council.
- **Team Working** - the occasional home worker will ensure their absence from the workplace will not create additional workload for other employees or otherwise affect operational efficiency or effectiveness.
- **Caring Responsibilities** – occasional home working is not a substitute for childcare or care of other dependents. Occasional Home Workers with any dependents must ensure that they are able to fulfil the requirements of their post whilst working from home by making adequate provision for the care of their dependents during working hours.
- **Absence** - the usual provisions relating to reporting sickness absence and other reasons for not being able to report to work will apply.
- **Environment** - an occasional home worker needs a home working environment which offers:
 - suitable "office" space,
 - adequate equipment including computer, broadband connection, telephone line etc.
 - freedom from interruptions and distractions;
 - security and confidentiality;
 - ability to meet Health and Safety requirements.

6.2 Process

- 6.2.1 Members of staff who wish to work from home occasionally must contact / inform their line manager, who will give consideration for such request.
- 6.2.2 Where approved, a simple risk assessment must be undertaken by the staff member. A self-assessment checklist should be completed and the contents discussed and approved by the line manager prior to the commencement of occasional home working. A copy of the assessment should be kept on the employee's personnel file.
- 6.2.3 Each occasion of home working must be agreed by the Line Manager. A request should be made with adequate notice so cover can be arranged for the employee's absence if necessary.
- 6.2.4 The arrangement to occasionally work from home will be reviewed regularly at agreed intervals and may be terminated at any time by either the employee, line manager or the Town Council.

6.3 Health and Safety

- 6.3.1 The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requires all employers to ensure as far as is 'reasonably practicable', the health, safety and welfare at work of employees. This duty is extended to employees working at home.

- 6.3.2 Prior to the commencement of occasional home working a Display Screen Equipment (DSE) risk assessment of the proposed area and equipment (to include furniture and electrical equipment, telephones etc.) must be carried out. This should be recorded on the risk assessment form and discussed with and approved by the Town Clerk / line manager.
- 6.3.3 The equipment used by home workers (whether owned by the Town Council or provided by the home worker) must be safe to use, fit for purpose and not give rise to any health and safety risks. The equipment should be maintained in efficient working order and in good repair.
- 6.3.4 The Town Council will be responsible for maintaining Town Council equipment. Any concerns regarding Town Council equipment must be immediately raised with the Town Clerk / line manager.
- 6.3.5 Occasional home workers must ensure that all equipment owned by the Town Council is kept securely, including whilst in transit.
- 6.3.6 If an incident occurs whilst working from home, the member of staff must report the incident to the Town Clerk / line manager.

6.4 Insurance

- 6.4.1 Occasional home workers working under this policy with the knowledge and consent of their manager are covered by the Town Council's insurance arrangements.
- 6.4.2 The Town Council will be responsible for any necessary insurance of equipment supplied by them and employee liability insurance.
- 6.4.3 It is the responsibility of the occasional home worker to provide adequate home buildings and contents insurance. The Town Council will not accept liability for damage caused to the home or its contents.

6.5 Information Management, Equipment and Support

- 6.5.1 The Line Manager and employee must liaise with SCIS to provide appropriate access to IT facilities for working from home. SCIS will determine the most appropriate method of providing secure access depending on the requirements and circumstances of the individual.
- 6.5.2 Support of non-Town Council provided equipment is strictly limited to guidance only and action is taken at the risk of the individual. SCIS cannot be responsible for issues arising from the use of an individual's home equipment to access Town Council systems.
- 6.5.3 Home broadband connections are the responsibility of the home user. SCIS will not contact broadband suppliers to investigate this type of problem.

6.6 Security and access to others

- 6.6.1 Occasional home working staff will be responsible for taking adequate steps to ensure the security of Town Council equipment in their home. Home working staff are responsible for ensuring that no other person can access Town Council information and services (including internet access).
- 6.6.2 Reasonable private use of Town Council property loaned to support home working is acceptable (in line with the Town Council's ICT Policy). However other members of the employee's family are not permitted to use it.

6.7 IT Security

- 6.7.1 All home workers are expected to follow all of the Town Council ICT policy and

procedures to protect the Town Council and customer confidential information. If the materials or information the home worker will be working on are person identifiable, it is essential that proper controls are implemented in order to protect information. All of the same controls applied at the office will apply at home (e.g. password protection, hardware and software security standards, etc.).

6.7.2 The following requirements must be adhered to:

- The use of a home PC, personal lap top or other device is not permitted for any work that contains Parishioner / Councilor or staff identifiers or is of a confidential or sensitive nature unless it is via the Town Council approved remote access to secure servers.
- The use of personal devices to access applications where all information remains on secure Town Council systems such as e-mail is acceptable.
- The use of personal devices is permitted for work of low risk documents, e.g. job descriptions, provided that the final version is held as part of the corporate records structure.
- Any work taken home must be transported securely; using either a Town Council supplied laptop or encrypted memory stick.

6.8 Confidentiality and Security of Data

6.8.1 Employees are expected to keep any work data used at home confidential and secure. All work data remains the property of the Town Council and may be required at any time. All data will be managed in line with the Policy.

6.8.2 Employees are not permitted to keep Town Council data, either electronic or paper files, at home on a permanent basis. The Town Council has statutory obligations to fulfil requests for information under acts of parliament (e.g. Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts) and it has to be able to gain access to that information at short notice.

6.9 Concerns

Any concerns in relation to how this procedure has been applied to you should, in the first instance, be discussed with your line manager. However, should this not resolve the issue then you have the right to pursue your concern in accordance with the Town Council Grievance Policy and Procedures.

6.10 Failure to comply with policy

A failure to comply with this policy will be investigated and may result in disciplinary action being taken which could potentially lead to dismissal. A lack of compliance could also be considered fraudulent in which case the matter may be referred to Lincolnshire Police.