

Hull Teaching Primary Care Trust

HOME WORKING POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The PCT recognises that there may be circumstances when it would be more beneficial for the PCT or for staff to work from home, for example, to complete a special project or to free up desk space or as part of our approach to flexible working. The PCT's policy allows for home working, where appropriate, on a voluntary basis for staff, where there is a clear benefit and no detriment to the needs of the service.
- 1.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Policy for the Use of Information Technology Equipment Away From the Workplace.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy applies to all PCT employees irrespective of age, race, colour, religion, disability, nationality, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation or marital status, domestic circumstances, social and employment status, HIV status, gender reassignment, political affiliation or trade union membership. All employees will be treated in a fair and equitable manner and reasonable adjustments will be made where appropriate (e.g. interpreter or signing provision, access arrangements, induction loop, etc.).

3. GENERAL PROVISIONS

- 3.1 This policy is intended to provide a framework within which managers and staff are able to work from home. Many of the agreements will be reached between individual employees and managers however the implications for patient care and effective service delivery will always need to be considered when making decisions as will the impact on the rest of the team.
- 3.2 Whilst recognising the benefits of home working it should be realised that not all roles lend themselves to this option for example, working on a Help Desk, reception work, and support staff roles.
- 3.3 Employees must adhere to the Working Time Regulations and take appropriate breaks.

4. DEFINITION

- 4.1 Homeworking is a flexible working pattern in which a person's home is their occasional, regular or permanent place of work for all or some of their working week.

5. OCCASIONAL WORKING FROM HOME

5.1 Occasional homeworking may be appropriate for certain roles in one of the following circumstances:

- Staff who are not obliged to be present at their place of work full-time
- To allow staff the opportunity to work more effectively on a particular piece of work where concentration is important and to avoid the interruptions that are part of the office environment.
- To provide a solution to a temporary problem where staff may be unable to travel to the office.

5.2 There is no automatic right for any member of staff to work at home and homeworking will always be at the discretion of the Manager/Head of Service or Director.

5.3 Any employee who feels that they have not received equitable treatment or is not happy with any decisions or reasons given by their manager can seek advice and support the Human Resources Directorate and/or their Trade Union Representative and has the right of appeal through the PCT's Grievance Procedure.

6. REGULAR WORKING FROM HOME

6.1 In appropriate cases where there is a business reason for working regularly from home (e.g to maximise office space or to work on an intensive project or when on sabbatical leave), a case may be made to the Head of Service/Director to request home working. Conversely, members of staff may be approached by their Head of Service/Director and encouraged to work regularly from home, although it must be emphasised that any arrangement must be voluntary and no member of staff should feel pressured into working from home if they do not wish this.

7. WORKING AT HOME

7.1 In extremely exceptional circumstances, a member of staff may be contracted to work their full hours at home. If this arrangement becomes necessary then a more detailed risk assessment of the proposed work would need to be carried out in conjunction with the employee involved.

7.2 The apportionment of costs associated with this would also need to be considered.

8. HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 8.1 Under the Health and Safety at Work Act staff working at home are required to take reasonable care of their own health and safety, to comply with the PCT's Health and Safety policy, to co-operate with the PCT as necessary to comply with statutory obligations, and to complete a self-assessment health and safety checklist form which will include a VDU assessment.
- 8.2 It will also be necessary for managers and staff to be aware of the importance of reporting any accidents, incidents or near misses that occur in the home if they occur as part of the work routine and in the dedicated 'work area'.
- 8.3 Whilst the PCT does not have an obligation to maintain the home workplace in a safe condition, the Line Manager may wish to be reassured that the employee has made adequate provision by visiting the proposed site at a mutually convenient time, or requesting a Health and Safety representative to do so.

9. RESPONSIBILITIES

9.1 Employee

- 9.1.1 The employee working from home must ensure that colleagues are aware of this and that they are contactable at home.

9.2 Manager

- 9.2.1 The Line Manager must ensure that any problems identified from the self-assessment health and safety checklist form and VDU assessment will be followed up and any actions identified are dealt with appropriately.

10. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

10.1 Laptops

- 10.1.1 If a member of staff is using a PCT laptop for home working this must be set up by Hull IT engineers to allow synchronisation of user data with the network allowing copies of folders to be transferred to the laptop when disconnecting from the network and then update the server when reconnecting. Use of PCT laptops must be in line with the PCT's Computer Equipment Away From the Workplace Policy.

10.2 Home Equipment

10.2.1 In certain circumstances it may be possible to use an individual's home computer to connect to the network; this must be approved by the employee's line manager and the IM&T manager as this will incur a cost to the employee's department.

10.2.2 Forms in Appendix 1 must be completed by the user and authorised by IM&T manager.

10.2.3 It is the responsibility of the home worker to ensure their own PCs are kept up to date with software requirements. The PCT will not support or maintain employee's home equipment if using a CD, floppy disk or memory stick on a home PC these must be virus checked prior to use on the NHS equipment. Please refer to the policy for the Use of Information Technology Equipment away from the workplace.

10.2.4 For example in relation to employees based at home, it may be necessary for the PCT to provide a dedicated telephone line for the organisation's use.

11. CONFIDENTIALITY

11.1 Home workers must ensure the security and safekeeping of any confidential information they are required to work with in the home. The PCT will provide the appropriate equipment.

11.2 The PCT and the employee will agree on the method for safe disposal of any confidential waste produced by the employee in the home.

12. TERMINATION OF THE HOME WORKING ARRANGEMENT

12.1 The home-working arrangement can be terminated at any time, with reasonable notice. The line manager can request that the member of staff attends their normal place of work on any normal working day.

13. MISUSE OF THE POLICY

13.1 The PCT may instigate the disciplinary procedure if there is evidence to suggest that home working is being abused or the user has brought a virus into the network. Staff working from home should comply with the PCT Policy for the Use of Information Technology Equipment Away From the Workplace.

14. REVIEW

14.1 This Policy will be reviewed with the PCT's recognised Trade Union Partners within 2 years of the date of implementation.

Author: Home Working Group

Date: 11 January, 2007

Approved by:

Date:

Reviewed by:

Date:

APPENDIX ONE

This form will be used as a basis for collating information regarding home computers to ascertain if remote access will be granted. If you are unsure of any question please contact the IT Manager.

Do you use anti virus on your PC?	Yes	No	Don't Know		
Is your antivirus software up to date?	Yes	No	Don't Know		
If you have antivirus software which product do you use?	Symantec	McAfee	Don't know	Other (Please specify)	
Do you use a firewall product?	Yes	No	Don't know		
If you use a firewall product please specify	Symantec	Windows XP default	Zonealarm	Other (Please specify)	
Do you use Anti spyware software?	Yes	No	Don't know		
If you use anti spyware which product?	Symantec	Microsoft Anti spyware beta	Ad-ware	Spybot	Other (Please specify)
What operating software does the machine you intend to use, use?	XP	2000	98	Other (Please specify)	
Do you have broadband access at home?	Yes	No	Don't know		
If you have broadband who provides it	Kingston Comms (Karoo)	BT	Other (Please specify)		

Please tick correct answers above

Please note this form will be kept on file, if you change your computer please inform the IT Manager who will issue a new form to update records.

I confirm that the information stated above is correct

Name

Signature

Date

Date

Dear

Re – Remote access from home environment

The following principles should be adopted when electronically accessing sensitive data from home. Data should be securely accessed i.e. no one other than the authorised person should be able to see the screen or access the data in the absence of the authorised person. Access should be password protected and the password changed in line with IT protocols. All relevant material should be protected with up-to date anti –spam and anti-viral software. Any print offs should also of course be stored securely or shredded. The general clinical governance principles of data protection followed at the work place should be applied to the home environment when working there.

I'd therefore appreciate if you could sign acceptance below and return a copy of this letter for my file.

Yours sincerely,

IT Manager

I, Accept conditions as stated above.

Date:

AGREEMENT TO REGULAR OR PERMANENT HOMEWORKING FORM

This form should be completed by the line manager and a copy given to the employee and to Human Resource Services.

Name of staff member:

Job title

Department

Manager

Suitability for home working

Is the post suitable for home working?

Have you considered the suitability of the staff member's home for home-working?

Has this been discussed in full?

What are the reasons for the request?

Are there any implications for colleagues - particularly those managed by the post holder? (e.g. communications difficulties etc)

Is there a good business case to be made for working at home? Or is this a personal preference of the job holder?

Arrangements

What trial period has been agreed?

On what date will a review be held?

Days/ Hours at home:

Equipment

What equipment is to be provided by the PCT (if any)?

Health and Safety

Has a risk assessment been undertaken?

This is compulsory.

Insurance cover

Is the employee aware of their own obligations towards household insurance and mortgage provider/landlord? E.g. tenancy agreements/property deeds may include a clause restricting working from home

Security and Data Protection

Is the employee aware of their obligations under the Data Protection Act?

Have they made arrangements for the safe storage and protection of equipment, data and documents?

Name of line manager:

Name of employee.....

Signed.....

Date:.....

Signed.....

.Date:.....

For further assistance on any item, please contact the Health and Safety Advisor.