



HOME WORKING POLICY

Re-adopted 13th May 2024 – Minute No. 0201/24

1. Introduction

Parish Council employees have the option to work at the Parish Office or can choose to work from home. This policy sets out the procedures the Council use to manage and prevent unacceptable risks arising through the use of unapproved or unsafe home working facilities.

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HSWA) places duties on employers, self-employed people and employees. Under HSWA, employers have a duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of their employees, including home-workers.

Most of the Regulations made under the HSWA apply to home-workers as well as to employees working at an employer's workplace. These include, for example, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR), the Display Screen Equipment Regulations 1992, the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992, the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER) and the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended) (COSHH).

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, employers are required to do a risk assessment of the work activities carried out by home-workers. Completing a risk assessment involves identifying the hazards relating to the home-workers' work activities and deciding whether enough steps have been taken to prevent harm to them or to anyone else who may be affected by their work. A risk is the chance, great or small, that someone will be harmed by a hazard. A hazard is anything that may cause harm.

2. HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

The employees' proposed working environment should be considered and where necessary surveyed, and any perceived risks assessed. The findings of this consideration or survey process and any associated risks will be documented, so that appropriate control measures may be reviewed.

The working environment for new employees will be inspected before employment commences. New employees will be made aware of this requirement during the recruitment process.

It is the responsibility of the employee to maintain their home working environment. The Council reserves the right to inspect the working environment after serving appropriate notice to the employee.

3. Responsibilities of employees

Home-working employees must:

- Attend appropriate training and meetings at the Council's request;
- Co-operate with the risk assessment process, report any problems, carry out regular checks of equipment and the workplace and report faults to the Chair without delay;
- Take all reasonable steps to prevent unauthorised access to the work or work equipment;
- Report any accidents which occur during the agreed working hours;
- Report any health problems which may be attributed to, or aggravated by, their working arrangements;
- Adhere to risk assessments.

4. Parish Council responsibilities

It is the Parish Council's responsibility that suitable risk assessments are carried out, that employees are prevented from working in circumstances which present an unacceptable risk, that suitable training is provided for the work to be undertaken and employees adhere to health and safety arrangements. The Parish Council will:

- Make all necessary enquiries to ensure that there are no health issues which could result in risk to the employee in working alone;
- Where a safety concern arises seek appropriate advice;
- Ensure that employees attend any necessary training courses e.g. health and safety;
- Complete the necessary risk assessments and ensure that they are reviewed when circumstances change;
- Establish safe systems of work;
- Ensure employees are clear as to their duties and have received the appropriate training;
- Ensure there are suitable measures to monitor the well-being of employees, e.g. regular contact.
- Ensure that a suitable workstation is set up with appropriate equipment, including telephony, and furniture;
- Establish procedures to be followed in an emergency;
- Ensure that adequate general inspections of the workplace and equipment are carried out and that an appropriate maintenance regime is agreed and established;
- Monitor the work of maintenance and service contractors;
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure that adequate rest and meal breaks are taken and that work does not extend beyond the agreed hours;
- Establish specific procedures for adequate contact by telephone, electronic mail or visit, to include monitoring of the well-being of the employee and reporting of injuries and incidents; and
- Establish a formal lone working procedure for those working away from their home for part of the day.

5. EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

The Parish Council will consider which equipment is required for the employee to carry out their duties, and will be responsible for servicing and maintaining this equipment. This equipment should be used solely for business purposes.

The Parish Council will ensure that appropriate insurance policies are in place.

The Parish Council reserves the right to enter the employee's home for the purposes of maintaining and servicing equipment.

The employee shall comply with the Parish Council policies on Data Protection and Information Security.

6. HOURS OF WORK

The hours of work are specified in the Contract of Employment together with the expected pattern of working hours.

7. ANNUAL LEAVE/SICK LEAVE

The Council will maintain an adequate system of record keeping for reporting sickness absence to ensure that employees take their full statutory entitlement to statutory leave.

The Council will ensure that an adequate system for reporting sickness is in place to deter abuse of the system, and to enable the Council to monitor the home-worker's well-being.

8. INSURANCE

The Council will ensure that all equipment supplied to a home-worker is covered by the employer's insurance policy, or ensure that adequate steps are taken to ensure that the employer's equipment is covered by a valid insurance policy.

9. EXPENSES

The Contract of Employment specifies which expenses the employee may claim, such as travel expenses, use of home as office and costs of business calls made using private telephones etc.

The Parish Council will undertake an annual review of risks and hazards associated with the workplace as part of the annual risk assessment policy of the Council.