

# NETTLEHAM PARISH COUNCIL HOMWORKING POLICY



## 1. Introduction

Nettleham Parish Council is committed to promoting flexible working to facilitate effective and efficient working. This policy outlines the circumstances under which the Council will allow employees to work from home. It also details the actions required to facilitate a home working arrangement.

## 2. Scope

This policy applies to all office-based employees of the Council.

## 3. What is Home Working

### 3.1. Definition

Home working is about using the employee's home as a base for work instead of the employee coming into a workplace.

### 3.2. Benefits of Home Working

There are many benefits to home working.

#### **For the Council these include:**

Better use of existing premises and resources.

Contributing towards the reduction of the Council's CO2 emissions by reducing unnecessary employee commuting.

The retention of valued and skilled employees for whom the ability to work at home is the preferred option.

Well-motivated staff who feel that they work for an organisation that is prepared to be flexible and which trusts them.

Potentially increased output and quality of work due to fewer distractions than working in an office environment.

Accommodation of the requirements of disabled employees or employees with temporary health conditions.

Promotion of a positive image as a good employer.

#### **For the employee these include:**

Increased discretion in the management of their work and personal time.

Increased motivation.

A saving of travel time and costs.

The ability to work without distraction.

Improvements in work-life balance issues.

### 3.4. Suitability of Home Working

#### 3.4.1. Posts

Generally speaking, any job that does not require time spent in one location or high visibility (e.g. to operate machinery or to deliver face to face customer care), may be adapted for homeworking.

Consideration should also be given to the impact on and inter-relationship with other jobs, access by the public, access to/by colleagues, access to required information, technology, costs, and savings etc.

#### 3.4.2. Employee Characteristics

Having established the suitability of the job for home working the suitability of the employee needs to be considered.

Home working does not suit everyone. Office dynamics and informal information flows may have a significant impact on the employee's performance. Some employees may develop better in a traditional office environment, and those without very much experience in their role are likely to need closer supervision which would not be possible if they were working from home.

Helpful personal qualities are likely to include:

Self-motivated.

Self-disciplined.

Enjoy the challenge of working on their own.

A flexible approach.

Able to organise working time effectively.

Able to work without direct supervision.

Confident to work away from the office environment.

Able to work on their own without day-to-day social interaction with colleagues.

Able to "switch off" from work and maintain a proper balance between working and non-working hours.

### 4.1. Assessing the Home Environment

An employee who works from home is afforded the same protection under health and safety legislation as an employee who is office based. It is therefore vital to ensure the home working environment is suitable before any home working agreement is reached.

The employee needs to take personal responsibility for the health and safety aspect of home working. An employee needs an environment at home which offers the

following:

Suitable "office" space, ideally a separate room but at least a dedicated space.

Freedom from interruptions and distractions.

Security and confidentiality.

Ability to meet Health and Safety requirements.

In addition to this employee need to be aware that the Council reserves the right to ask them to attend Council premises at short notice.

Employees must complete a Worker Self-Assessment Checklist (see Appendix 1) and submit this to their Line Manager.

## 5. Management of Home Working Agreements

### 5.1. Health and Safety

Home workers are afforded the same health and safety protection in law as office-based staff. As such all Council health and safety policies and procedures will apply to home workers. This includes the requirement for employees to report any work-related accidents and to undertake regular DSE assessments.

### 5.2. Data Security

Employees who work from home are required to comply with all IT security and confidentiality requirements of the Council.

The home worker will have a direct responsibility for all Council information material held at their home and must ensure that it is not accessible to non-authorised people

(e.g. other members of the household).

### 5.3. Working Hours

The hours worked will not exceed those in the contract of employment and in any case, those applied through the Working Time Directive.

### 5.4. Visits to the Home Worker

Due to the health and safety risks, the Council would not expect or advise employees to allow members of the public to visit them whilst working from home.

### 5.5. Contractual Terms

If the employee is an occasional home worker, there will be no requirement to issue a variation to the substantive contract of employment.

### 5.6. Review of a Home Working Agreement

Any home working arrangement should be reviewed periodically. This will allow both parties to assess whether the arrangement is still appropriate.

Appendix 1

### **Health and Safety Home Worker Self-Assessment Checklist**

Name

Job title

Department/Section

Address

#### ***Hazard Checks to be made Yes/ No/ Comment***

##### Fire

Is the work area tidy?

Are waste materials regularly disposed of?

Are exits routes clear?

Does the employee have an escape plan?

Know what to do in an emergency

Is a smoke alarm fitted? Alarm must be tested and maintained in accordance with manufacturer instructions.

##### Electrical Equipment

Any apparent damage? Cracked/loose casing on plug and computer equipment, missing screws etc.

Any evidence of overheating? Look for discolouration

Any obvious damage to leads or plugs?

Are all the cables secure in all plugs?

##### Slips, Trips and Falls

Floor covering sound and without defects?

All walkways clear of trip hazards e.g. trailing cables.

When seated at a desk can legs and upper body move together without twisting?

##### Working Environment

Is the temperature adequate?

Is the ventilation adequate?

Is there adequate lighting, including any necessary task lighting?

#### Manual Handling

Does the employee carry out any manual handling activities?

Attach risk assessment if answer is yes

#### Display Screen Equipment

Does the employee use DSE for more than 2 hours a day or more than 1 hour continuously?

Carry out DSE assessment on an annual basis if yes.

#### Accidents / First Aid

Is the employee familiar with the accident reporting procedure?

Provide employee with accident reporting form.

Does the employee have adequate first aid facilities whilst working at home?

Signatures:

Employee Date:

Manager Date:

Adopted: 19/05/2024

Review: annually

