


 UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
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1.1	The Company recognises that its employees are its most important asset and is committed to improve the working conditions of all employees.
1.2	As far as possible, the Company provides flexible working arrangements. The Company offers flexible working options which can be requested by employees and adjusted with the aim of providing a better work life balance.
1.3	The Company realises that there are situations where conflict between work and home life creates a need for temporary or permanent changes to working arrangements. The Company offers options available in the policy to employees to re-establish a balance. The Company encourages employees to accommodate the needs of both their home and work life.
1.4	This policy does not replace the employment contract and the Company may update it at any time.
1.5	The policy fits with the Company's commitment to providing the highest standards of service and achieving a better working environment.

- 2.1 This Home Working Policy will:
 - 2.1.1 increase the opportunities for flexible working arrangements;
 - 2.1.2 reduce costs;
 - 2.1.3 increase efficiency;
 - 2.1.4 improve recruitment;
 - 2.1.5 improve employee retention.
- 2.2 The benefits of the policy for the company and its employees include:
 - 2.2.1 Retention of staff who might otherwise have to leave for domestic reasons, thus saving on the recruitment and training of new staff;
 - 2.2.2 Reduction in employee absence;
 - 2.2.3 Greater job satisfaction and responsibility;
 - 2.2.4 Enhanced quality of work life;
 - 2.2.5 Greater flexibility to deal with work and domestic commitments; and
 - 2.2.6 Furtherance of the Government's Equal Opportunities Policy, for example for people with disabilities.

3. Home Working Definition

- 3.1 Home working is when an employee carries out some or all of their duties at home.
- 3.2 When home working is agreed, employees will have the same obligations, including core working hours, continuing to be available for work, and to follow the Company's policies and procedures.
- 3.3 Home working can be agreed in two ways:
- 3.3.1 **Regular home working** is when an employee is formally agreed to work from home on a regular basis for the majority of their working week (e.g. 20% or more) of their working week.
- 3.3.2 **Occasional home working** is when an employee is agreed to work from home on an ad hoc basis to carry out a specific task. In this case, the employee will remain the Company's primary place of work.

4. General Principles

- 4.1 This policy applies to all employees of the Company. All employees can request formal home working, however the Company will determine which positions are suitable for home working.
- 4.2 The Company encourages home working where it meets business needs. The line manager will consider the appropriateness of home working and implement it where there are demonstrable benefits for the business and its employees.
- 4.3 The line manager will regularly monitor and review home working arrangements to ensure continued effectiveness. To this end, regular contact will be maintained between the home working employee and the line manager.
- 4.4 The Company will treat all employees equally, whether they are home or office based.
- 4.5 Employees who work from home must ensure that they have a suitable working environment in which they can work free from disruption. Adequate care arrangements in place for dependants who live with the employee during working hours.
- 4.6 It is the responsibility of the line manager to inform their direct line manager if their home working arrangements change.
- 4.7 Employees are entitled to request flexible working options.
- 4.8 All employees, whether working from their office base, are required to comply with the policies and procedures of the Company.
- 4.9 Occasional/ad hoc home working can be arranged at short notice. For formalised, regular home working, see section 5 below. Reasons for requesting home working include illness of a child or adverse weather conditions. In these situations, the employee should contact their line manager (e.g. the line manager) and the line manager will need to work from home. The line manager will decide whether or not to approve the request.

5. Applying for Formalised Home Working

- 5.1 In line with the flexibility provided by the Employment Act 2002, employees can request changes to terms and conditions of employment in respect of home working. However, employees do not have an automatic right to request home working.
- 5.2 To work effectively, home working must primarily meet the business needs of the Company. Whilst requests for home working will be considered on an individual basis, any request for home working must be approved by the Company.
- 5.3 Employees who wish to request home working must do so in writing to << e.g. line manager >> and should set out:
 - 5.3.1 the nature of the request and the reason for it;
 - 5.3.2 the proposed home working arrangement;
 - 5.3.3 an explanation of how the request will affect the Company and its business;
 - 5.3.4 how such effects will be managed.
- 5.4 Where a request is not approved, it is not under an employee's statutory right to request flexible working. However, the requirements of the Company's Flexible Working Policy must be fulfilled.
- 5.5 The Company will consider requests for home working and will hold a meeting with the employee to discuss the request. The Company will respond to the request within 14 days of the meeting.
- 5.6 Applications for home working must be submitted at the << e.g. line manager's >> discretion. The Company will consider the individual's circumstances and the needs of the Company. If home working has been refused the Company will provide a written explanation for the refusal in writing.
- 5.7 If employees feel that a request for home working has been unreasonably refused, they may appeal the decision in line with the Appeals Procedure contained in the Company's Working Policy.
- 5.8 Employees working from home must sign a Home Working Agreement before being approved for home working.
- 5.9 Approved home working arrangements are subject to a trial evaluation period before being confirmed.
- 5.10 The Company reserves the right to vary existing home working arrangements.
- 5.11 If the employee moves to a new location, the home working arrangement will be reassessed.
- 5.12 The Company reserves the right to terminate existing home working arrangements if it is no longer in the Company's best interests.
- 5.13 Home working may be terminated for employees who abuse the system. Such employees may be subject to disciplinary action under the Company's disciplinary policy.

6. Selection Criteria

- 6.1 In determining whether an employee is suitable for home working the following

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criteria will be taken into account:

- 6.1.1 The suitability of the work environment for the work is capable of being undertaken at home;
- 6.1.2 The impact of the work on the employee's efficiency and effectiveness;
- 6.1.3 Whether cost-effective arrangements can be made;
- 6.1.4 The needs of the employee for flexible working arrangements;
- 6.1.5 The suitability of the work for the employee's home environment;
- 6.1.6 The suitability of the work for the employee's family;
- 6.1.7 The ability of the employee to work with reduced social contact; and
- 6.1.8 Whether arrangements can be made to ensure a place for effective communication between the employee and the Company.

7. Equipment and Connectivity

- 7.1 The Company will provide the equipment to enable employees to work effectively from home. This includes:
 - 7.1.1 The supply of a broadband line, for the exclusive use of the employee;
 - 7.1.2 Relevant IT equipment including laptops, printer, fax;
 - 7.1.3 Furniture including desks, chairs, and drawers etc;
 - 7.1.4 Mobile phone;
 - 7.1.5 Consumables including paper, toner, and ink, and stationary.
- 7.2 The Company will be responsible for maintaining, repairing or replacing the equipment.
- 7.3 The Company reserves the right to use the employee's home for the purposes of maintaining the equipment.
- 7.4 Equipment supplied by the Company is for personal use. The equipment should be used exclusively for business and it must not be used by anyone other than the employee.
- 7.5 The equipment provided by the Company is the property of the Company. Employees are required to return the equipment to the Company should the employee no longer require it.
- 7.6 Use of personal equipment for work is permissible provided that it satisfies the necessary business and technical requirements.
- 7.7 The Company will not provide computers and equipment for maintaining employees' own business.

8. Health and Safety

- 8.1 The Health and Safety Act 1974 applies to home working employees as well as office based employees. Under the Act, the Company is responsible for the health, safety and welfare of its employees, wherever they work. At the same time employees have a duty to ensure that they take reasonable care not to expose themselves or others to risks to health and safety.

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8.2 Prior to any employee starting work, the Company will undertake a risk assessment at the place of work in order to ensure that it is suitable for the work to be carried out. This may be carried out by the employee themselves. Should any remedial work or measures be required, these must be completed prior to the employee starting to work from the place of work.

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8.3 The risk assessment must be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it remains appropriate.

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8.4 Home working employees must be provided with day-to-day health and safety issues and for reporting any issues to the manager. Employees must take reasonable care to ensure a safe working environment.

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8.5 Failure to comply with the provisions may result in the withdrawal of the home working arrangement and disciplinary action.

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9. Insurance and Other Financial Matters

9.1 [Equipment supplied by the Company's insurance policy providing and maintaining equipment supplied to employees must be taken with reasonable care to ensure it is secure.] Employees must take reasonable care to ensure that any equipment owned by the Company is kept secure.

Equipment supplied by the Company is covered by the Company's insurance policy. Employees will be responsible for maintaining equipment supplied to them. Employees must take reasonable care to ensure that any equipment owned by the Company is kept secure.

9.2 Employees will be held responsible for loss or damage to any supplied equipment when caused by negligence or failure to take adequate precautions to ensure its safety.

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9.3 Employees working from home are covered by the Company's Employer's Liability policy in respect of any injury or illness sustained while employed at home or in the course of their duties.

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9.4 It is the responsibility of the employee to provide adequate insurance for home buildings and contents for damage caused to the home or contents while working from home.

It is the responsibility of the employee to provide adequate insurance for home buildings and contents for damage caused to the home or contents while working from home. The Company will not accept liability for damage to the home or contents.

9.5 Home working arrangements must be covered by the home and contents insurance policies of the household. Employees working from home are required to contact the insurance company to advise that they will be working at home on a regular basis.

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9.6 Some mortgage and rent payments may be used for work purposes. Employees must obtain permission from their landlord or mortgage lender to allow for the home premises to be used for business purposes.

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9.7 Employees should check with their insurance company as to whether business rates are payable in respect of the home used for business purposes.

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9.8 The Company will not accept liability for an employee who suffers any detriment, loss or damage as a result of not obtaining the necessary permissions from the insurance company, landlord etc.

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10. Confidentiality, Security and Data Protection

10.1 All employees, whether working from their office base, are required to

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comply with the Company's policy.

10.2 Employees are responsible for the security of the Company property and all Company information etc. within their possession.

10.3 It is the responsibility of home working employees to ensure the security and confidentiality of information within the Company. Managers >> must be satisfied that all reasonable precautions are taken to maintain confidentiality of material in the Company.

10.4 Data security is a paramount concern for the Company. The Company may want to conduct a risk assessment before deciding whether to approve a home working request. Employees must ensure that all stored and accessed, including written information and data, is secure and cannot be accessed by other personnel. Employees must not take no action which might prejudice the security of the Company.

10.5 Employees must report any suspected breach of security, confidentiality or data protection immediately to their line manager to title e.g. the line manager>>

10.6 Failure to keep information secure under the Company's policy is a disciplinary matter and will be dealt with accordingly.

11. Hours of work

11.1 Employees working from home are required to agree an appropriate working arrangement with their line manager. Home working employees must take appropriate breaks.

11.2 Requests from home working employees to change their hours of work will be treated in the same way as requests from office based employees and must be agreed by their line manager.

12. Annual and Sick leave

12.1 Requests for annual leave must be agreed by the << line manager >> following the normal procedures.

12.2 Employees working from home are subject to the normal sickness absence procedures.

13. Expenses

13.1 Expenses paid for by the Company are agreed at the outset of the Home Working Agreement.

13.2 Further reasonable expenses may be reimbursed at the Company's discretion on a case-by-case basis.

This policy has been approved & signed by:

NAME:

NAME>>

POSITION:

DATE:

SIGNATURE:

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HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER>>

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