

## How to assess a role for homeworking

From time to time, staff may make a request to work from home, either on an occasional or more regular basis (e.g. a set number of days per week). Homeworking may also amount to a reasonable adjustment for staff with a disability, especially where that disability can pose difficulties with travel.

It is the role of the manager to assess whether a role is suitable for homeworking, in accordance with advice from HR or, in the case of reasonable adjustments, DASS.

The manager should consider:

- Whether the role can be performed effectively from home without significant impact on productivity, service or colleagues.
- Whether work can be organised in a way that allows homeworking or not. For example, is it feasible for the member of staff to undertake face to face aspects of their role on office based days and undertake other work on their homeworking days.
- Whether the homeworker can be effectively supported, developed and managed during periods of homeworking.
- Whether any specialist equipment / technology will be required to enable the homeworking, and if so, the cost implications of this. Note – where homeworking is a reasonable adjustment relating to a disability, support may be available from DASS.
- How the homeworker can communicate with colleagues effectively during periods of homeworking.
- Previous experience of homeworking for the individual or the role in question; has the role previously been successfully completed from home or does the member of staff have a history of successful homeworking / self-managed work.
- The overall performance of the member of staff. For example, if an individual has a history of poor performance or requires significant support / training, homeworking may not be suitable.

Where it not clear if homeworking will be suitable for the role, or whether there will be any detriment to the University, the manager may consider undertaking a trial of homeworking to determine effectiveness for both parties. A trial period would normally last for one-three months in order for a full assessment to be undertaken.

# How to guide

For homeworking to be successful, the individual needs to be confident to work without immediate management support, have effective communication skills and be self-motivated.

Where homeworking is agreed, it should be formally documented so that both the member of staff and their manager have clarity. An agreement can be informal, but should include the expected number of days / patterns for homeworking (eg set days, maximum number of days per week) and how those days should be agreed (eg will they be fixed or will they change according to business need and if so, how will this be managed). It is also a good idea to let colleagues know where appropriate.

From time to time an applicant for a role will also ask for an element of homeworking during the recruitment process. Hiring managers should consider a request during recruitment as set out above; in these circumstances a trial period is recommended.