



Guidance – Staff Working from Home

Introduction

For a variety of reasons, and with varying degrees of frequency, staff may undertake some of their duties from home. Whilst there is an expectation that normally staff will be in the workplace, it is accepted that there will be circumstances where working from home is mutually beneficial.

These guidelines have been developed to provide a clear approach to working from home where it forms an occasional (but not contractual) part of the individual's working pattern, and ensure fair treatment and consistency of approach. This guidance applies to staff working no more than one or two days each week from home and does not apply to permanent homeworkers or staff with a contractual element of homeworking.

Where homeworking is requested via a flexible working request, this should be dealt with via the Flexible Working Policy.

Definition

Working from home means performance of University work for agreed hours from the home of the member of staff. Working from home:

- should not create additional workload for other employees, or otherwise affect operational efficiency and effectiveness
- is not a contractual right, unless agreement is expressly agreed as contractual such as through a flexible working request
- will not alter an employee's terms and conditions of employment (other than as set out above)
- should not be combined with caring responsibilities.

Eligibility

Eligibility for informal homeworking will be based on the nature of the role and operational requirements. The following guidance on assessing a role for flexible working may be helpful in determining suitability <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=42679> Staff should be able to undertake their duties effectively from their home to be eligible for homeworking.

Some roles may not normally be suitable for homeworking. This includes:

- direct customer / service user face to face contact on a frequent basis (for example, reception staff)
- servicing and serving other University facilities or assets (for example, security or catering staff)

However, each role should be assessed on its own merits.

HR Partners can provide additional advice on determining the suitability of roles for homeworking.

Health and Safety Considerations

The Safety Services Department have produced guidance on homeworking that addresses health and safety and risk management. Please refer to this guidance for more information: <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=19794>

Arrangements for homeworking

- Good communication is an essential part of successful home working. Provision must be made to allow effective communication with work colleagues during the working day.
- Members of staff must be contactable throughout normal working hours by the manager and other University employees. The arrangements for contact should be agreed prior to working from home.

- Under no circumstances should the member of staff hold face to face work related meetings at their home. All such meetings should be carried out at the University campus or a similar professional setting.
- Where staff need to be contactable by phone, arrangements need to be made by the member of staff to facilitate this.
- No additional expenses will be paid to regular homeworkers, e.g. for utilities or broadband costs.
- Staff working regularly from home should retain flexibility to attend important meetings/events at the University on their homeworking day(s) with appropriate notice.
- Regular homeworkers should follow all University policies and procedures including those in relation to data protection and IT use.
- It is expected that formal homeworking arrangements are documented. A template letter is available for these purposes at Appendix1.

Requests for homeworking

Requests for formal / contractual homeworking (e.g. working from home one day each week or one day a fortnight) should be made through the University Flexible Working Policy. In accordance with this Policy, where it is unclear if a homeworking arrangement is suitable, a trial period may be agreed. Informal homeworking can be agreed between the member of staff and their manager.

Manager Responsibilities

Managers are responsible for considering requests for homeworking and responding accordingly. Managers should also monitor the success of homeworking arrangements and make staff aware of expected standards of behaviour and performance.

Employee Responsibilities

Employees who work from home for any period of time should always comply with the University's health and safety arrangements details of which can be found at <http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/healthandsafety/>.

They are also required to store University equipment safely and responsibly whilst it is in their home, and ensure that there is no unauthorised access to it, as well as following the same rules for storing and transmitting information as you would on campus. Data Protection policies must always be adhered to.

Employees should tell their mortgage provider, landlord or home insurer of their intention to work from home, even if are only doing so occasionally, to ensure that there is nothing preventing working at home, for example in the mortgage payment, lease or insurance.