



## **Home Working Policy**

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## **Introduction**

Home working is a type of employment arrangement where staff members can do work at home instead of their workplace. It is an increasingly popular arrangement in the UK and realising the potential benefits from it, many employers operate it on various conditions.

There are two types of home working:

Contractual home workers are employees based at home on a regular basis either for all their working week or part of it. This may be suitable in the following circumstances:

- Where the function of the post requires little face to face contact with colleagues and/or clients
- To facilitate a more flexible work pattern, perhaps to accommodate other demands
- Where an individual plans his/her work arrangements to enable the achievement of defined outputs each week/month from home
- The job involves frequent/regular outside visits.

Occasional home workers spend the majority of their time at their workplace but now and then may work from home, normally to perform a specific non-routine task that requires a high level of concentration with minimum interruptions. It can also be used in specific circumstances where an employee cannot get to their workplace but could still do the work (for instance an injury or bad weather). The Ore Valley Group will set parameters for occasional home working and determine each request on its own merit. This type of arrangement does not require contractual change and it can be withdrawn at any time.

Occasional home working is a much more common arrangement with many employers recognising the flexibility and benefits it can bring to both the employer and the employee.

## **Policy Principles**

The Ore Valley Group Home Working Policy aims to:

- Benefit the business from creative solutions, ideas and projects by giving staff the opportunity to do these at home, without interruptions
- Not to compromise the usual level of service offered to our customers
- Set out the parameters to ensure the above conditions are met

## **Working from home**

- Is voluntary and is not intended to create a situation where staff feel obliged to work excessive hours
- Should not create additional workload for other employees, or otherwise affect operational efficiency and effectiveness
- Is not a contractual right through either express or implied terms
- Will not alter an employee's terms and conditions of employment
- Does not attract subsidy since the benefits are seen as being mutual
- Arrangements will be subject to review to ensure that they remain appropriate for all parties and may be modified through discussion

## **Policy Conditions**

### **Home Working Parameters**

For occasional home working a maximum of 8 days per year is set for each employee to work from home (pro rata for part-time staff).

Although a maximum number of days is prescribed this policy is not intended to create a right for any individual to work from home. There is also a limit of 1 day of working from home per month maximum.

Those limits are absolute and cannot be breached. This will take effect from 1st November 2019 and will be reviewed every October thereafter. The only situation where they could be waived is if bad weather or injury prevents the employee from being able to commute to/attend but the work could be done at home.

## **Line Manager's Approval**

Each request for home working must be individually discussed with the employee's line manager, who will assess each request against the rules set out by this policy. Business pressures will also be assessed when considering an employee's request.

## **Performance Management**

Working from home presents a particular challenge to normal management controls but the risk of potential abuse can still be managed. To ensure the Ore Valley Group gets value for money, home working will be managed by results (rather than managing time and the way the task is done). The manager will therefore agree with the employee the outcomes of work to be produced at home and expect those to be delivered. As long as it brings the desired benefits to the business, it would not matter how many hours or at what time of the day the work is done.

Breaches of the policy will lead to the home working arrangement being withdrawn from the employee and potential formal disciplinary action. A review of the policy may also be carried out.

## **Health & Safety**

The health and safety assessment will be carried out according to The Ore Valley Group health and safety checklist (Appendix 1), which covers VDU risks and general precautions for householder electrical safety. Domestic electrical supply configurations are out with the control of the employer and are the responsibility of the staff member as home-owner/tenant. Staff will be asked to perform their own assessment and results will then be validated by their line manager during a discussion. The employees will be expected to report any changes that may affect the arrangements in the future (in which case another assessment may be necessary).

### **Technical Support**

The Ore Valley Group IT infrastructure is capable of supporting this concept and gives employees remote access to calendars, mails and documents. Staff who request their manager's approval to work from home on a particular piece of work would be expected to have access to IT equipment and broadband already in place. The Ore Valley Group does not commit to provide the installation of equipment and/or software to allow people to work from home. The Ore Valley Group will be able to supply mobile devices to allow some employees to keep in touch when not in the office. This means that the Ore Valley Group will not pay for installation of telephones or the bills.

### **Use of OVHA devices**

It will be a requirement that staff have basic firewall and antivirus software installed on any equipment used at home in order to protect The Ore Valley Group office IT system from any harm. Where feasible, The Ore Valley Group could potentially make available suitable IT equipment to support this arrangement, such as access to a Chromebook. However, the employee would need to have internet access within the intended workspace to maximise the functionality of this resource.

### **Data Security**

Employees who work from home are required to comply with all IT security and confidentiality requirements of the Ore Valley Group. This includes acceptance and adherence to the Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy.

The home worker will have a direct responsibility for all Ore Valley Group 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).

### **Costs/Allowances**

No allowance for paper/ink/subsistence/internet service/wear and tear on equipment will be considered or paid. It is considered that the saving in time and money getting to/from work is a reasonable notional offset to any personal cost of working from home.

**Recording the days of working from home**

A record must be kept of all days worked from home and these authorised by the line manager

The Association will ensure that no individual is discriminated against on grounds of sex or marital status, on racial grounds, or on grounds of disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or other personal attributes, including beliefs, or opinions, such as religious or political beliefs.

**Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed by the Senior Corporate Support Officer.

The Ore Valley Group reserves the right to withdraw the home working arrangement for business reasons at any time, with immediate effect.

## **Appendix 1**

The Ore Valley Group health & safety checklist for employees working from home. This list is not exhaustive and should be used in conjunction with section 3.20 of the Health and Safety Manual.

### **Electrical Equipment**

The safety and maintenance of the domestic electrical supply/installation is the responsibility of the house-holder. The Ore Valley Group will only take maintenance responsibility for any equipment it directly supplies.

#### **Householder checklist:**

- Ensure electrical equipment is turned off when not in use and before performing any checks
- Check plugs are not damaged
- Check domestic electrical supply is suitable for the equipment in use
- Check plugs are properly wired and that the outer cable covering is gripped at the point it enters the plug or equipment.
- Check outer covers of equipment are sound and have no loose parts or missing screws
- Check all leads and cables routinely against damage to the outer covers
- Check for burn marks or other signs of overheating
- Repair any electrical equipment with potential to harm
- Check and secure all trailing wires – the best way is to use power outlets nearest to the equipment. Where this is not possible tuck trailing wires securely under desks etc and out of normal walkways
- Do not have young children unsupervised in any area where you are using electrical equipment
- Any equipment supplied by OV Group should either be new or have a valid PAT Test