

Home Working Policy – adopted October 2023

1. Introduction

Holton le Clay 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.

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.

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.

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 employees need to be aware that the Council reserves the

right to ask them to attend Council premises at short notice.

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.

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.