



## 8.7 Home Working

This chapter is for employees who are permitted to work from home.

### **Permanent Home Working**

There are a small number of posts where the needs of the organisation require an employee to be permanently based at home. This will be the case particularly when the post is a regional or national one involving a substantial amount of travel to other locations. The contractual employment base will be the employee's home address.

Where such a post is a national one the employee may be contracted to work at the administrative centre on one or two days per week. S/he will still be regarded as based permanently at home.

### **Occasional Home Working**

With management agreement an employee may work from home for a short, defined period, either to enable her/him to work undisturbed on a specific project, or for domestic or medical reasons.

### **Communication, Supervision and Support**

- Also see Staff Supervision Procedures and Appraisals Procedure
- Where an employee works permanently or regularly from home s/he will be jointly responsible with Childhood First for:
- Ensuring appropriate working hours, reporting, supervision and communication arrangements. Home workers will not normally be contacted outside their normal working hours except in exceptional circumstances.
- Ensuring regular communication to discuss work in progress and for support and training. This will be in addition to planned supervision and annual appraisals, where any issues arising from the home working arrangement will be discussed.
- Reviewing the home working arrangements on an ongoing basis and proposing any changes as necessary to ensure their continued effectiveness
- Ensuring electronic equipment and IT support is readily available and equipment is repaired and replaced in a timely manner as necessary. See IT Policy.

Childhood First will arrange for the employee to be included on all appropriate internal mailing lists e.g. staff briefings, and will ensure that s/he is properly briefed on issues affecting her/his work e.g. organisational developments, training opportunities and vacancies.

### **Responsibilities of Permanent Home Workers**

Employees who work permanently from home are responsible for ensuring that they:

Comply with all Childhood First employment policies.

- Report all sickness absence and holidays. See Absence/Sickness Procedure
- Maintain communications with colleagues and provide regular information on their whereabouts and how they can be contacted.
- Take proper care of any equipment provided by Childhood First, taking all reasonable steps to protect it from loss or damage.
- Report any loss or damage of equipment promptly to the line manager. Employees will not be liable for the cost of loss or damage of Childhood First equipment unless there is evidence of deliberate misuse or neglect.
- Work in a way which does not jeopardise the health and safety of themselves and others.
- Take adequate rest breaks as required by the Working Time Regulations 1998. They must:
  - Take a break of at least 20 minutes in a working day if the total working period will exceed 6 hours
  - Ensure that there is at least 11 hours between stopping work on one day and starting on the next
  - Have at least one complete day each week when they do not work

Also see Working Time Procedure - To Follow

### **Health and Safety**

The employer has an obligation to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of all employees. In order to meet this obligation in respect of home workers Childhood First will:

- Provide information and training on the safe use of equipment, including display screen equipment.
- Arrange for an analysis of the employee's work station and a risk assessment of the work place to be conducted. This may be by completion of an assessment questionnaire by the employee.
- With the employee, agree any changes identified as the result of the risk assessment, providing equipment and/or advice as necessary.
- Arrange for regular testing of electrical equipment e.g. laptop computers, and for its maintenance and repair. The employee may be required to take the equipment to Childhood First premises to facilitate this.

Home workers have a responsibility for their own health and safety and for the health and safety of others, whether they be family members or visitors, who may be affected by the way they work. They therefore have a duty to work in a safe manner and to follow any health and safety instructions issued by Childhood First.

Employees who work from home are not required to maintain a smoke-free environment, unless a part of their home is visited by other people in connection with the work carried out there. In the latter case the area concerned is required to be smoke-free and signs must be displayed see Smoking and Alcohol Procedures.

### **Insurance**

Childhood First will extend its employer and public liability insurance to cover home workers' work spaces and will provide insurance cover for any loss or damage of equipment which it provides.

It is the responsibility of home workers to advise their own insurers and mortgage lender or landlord that they work at home.

## **Equipment**

Where it is agreed that an employee will work from home permanently, Childhood First will provide a computer (usually a laptop), which will remain the property of the employer. This computer must be used for work purposes only.

Where additional equipment is necessary, when an employee commences permanent home working, Childhood First will meet the cost of this. Any equipment purchased will remain the property of Childhood First.

Childhood First will also pay for the connection of any telephone and/or internet service required to enable the employee to work at home.

The cost of business calls and any additional communication charges incurred as a result of permanent home working will be reimbursed on receipt of monthly receipted expense claims accompanied by itemised bills.

Where it is agreed that an employee will work occasionally from home, the employee will be expected to provide any equipment needed. If necessary a laptop computer may be made available. The cost of business calls will be reimbursed on receipt of receipted expense claims accompanied by itemised bills.

## **Stationary and Postage**

Stationery and consumables for business use should, wherever possible, be obtained from a Childhood First office. Where this is not practical, for example because items are heavy or bulky, stationery and other items may be purchased locally and costs reclaimed on receipted expense claims.

Costs of postage, including stamps and parcel post, will be reimbursed on receipt of receipted expense claims.

## **Security**

The home work space should have adequate security in terms of window and door locks.

Sensible precautions should be taken to safeguard confidential information. All Childhood First documentation should be locked away and filing cabinets and drawers locked when they are not being used.

Childhood First property should not be left in vehicles overnight. Where this is unavoidable it must be securely locked in the boot away from public view.

It is strongly recommended that home workers do not arrange to meet a visitor who is not known to them in their home. Arrangements should be made to meet at a Childhood First centre or office or in a neutral meeting place.

## **Travel Expenses**

Employees whose contractual work place is their home may claim travelling expenses, in line with Mileage and Travel Allowance, for travel to Childhood First centres and offices and other locations for business purposes.

An exception to this applies in the case of home workers who are contracted to work at another specified location on one or two days each week. Travelling expenses cannot be

claimed on those occasions but may be claimed for travel to other locations and if additional visits to the specified location are required for business purposes.

### **Key Legislation**

- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
- National Minimum Wage Act 1998
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (SI 1999/3242)
- Working Time Regulations 1998 (SI 1998/1833)
- Flexible Working Regulations 2014 (SI 2014/1398)
- National Minimum Wage Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/621)

*Reviewed April 2020*