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## **HOME WORKING POLICY AND GUIDELINES**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust recognises that home working can bring advantages both to the employee and to Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust. These may include flexibility around issues such as dependent care or disability issues, better use of time, reduced costs, freedom from transport problems, ease pressure on accommodation and car parking and ecological benefits.
- 1.2 Home working may be considered either as a long-term arrangement or to cover a short-term difficulty. It may also be considered if someone is unable to get to work - e.g. because of accident or injury - or as part of a 'return to work' policy. It should not be used where medical opinion is that the person is unfit for work.
- 1.3 Home working may not be appropriate or suit everyone. For example, the type of job the member of staff does may not be appropriate or possible to do outside of the office. The employee must be self motivated and disciplined to enable them to deal with home distractions that may interrupt the home working ability.
- 1.4 Staff considered for home working will normally have satisfactory attendance records (in considering the PCT's Absence Management Policy expectation) and punctuality pattern, either with us or evidenced from a previous employer if new in post.
- 1.5 A formal review should take place at least every 6 months to ensure that home working is still the best way of working for the employee. A review of performance must be made against agreed targets. If the job has changed since it was originally approved for home working it may no longer be suitable for home working and should therefore revert back to being office based. In these cases a minimum of one months notice will be given.
- 1.6 The home worker would be responsible for ensuring that they fulfil the confidentiality clause within their contract of employment whilst working at home. In relation to data security, the home worker would be provided with an encrypted data stick.
- 1.7 Home working for the purpose of this policy refers to time spent working at home rather than Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust premises or other work premises e.g peripatetic staff.

## 2. SCOPE

Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust will ensure that the application of any part of this policy does not have the effect of discriminating, directly or indirectly, against staff on grounds of race, colour, age, nationality, ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, religious belief or disability. The application of this policy will apply equally to full and part-time staff.

A member of staff may request assistance with this policy if they have special needs. If the member of staff has language difficulties because English is not their first language the use of an interpreter will be considered.

### 3. DEFINITIONS OF HOME WORKING

The definitions for occasional home working are set out below.

- 3.1 A flexible worker with occasional home working would mean that you have an office space at a PCT property and would use your home as a base on an ad-hoc basis.
- 3.2 This working arrangement may happen on a regular basis but would only be for a minor part of the employee's time and for a full time employee would amount to no more than 2 days per week on average. If you exceed this amount, you would need to consult with your line manager who would need to seek advice from Human Resources.
- 3.3 An application form to apply for this type of home working is attached as Appendix 1.

### 4. FLEXIBLE WORKER WITH OCCASIONAL HOME WORKING

- 4.1 **Authorisation:** The employee must gain approval from their line manager to commence flexible home working after completion of the application form (Appendix 1). Approval for home working is at management's discretion and must meet the needs of the business. The line manager should ensure that the employee's absence from the office does not cause problems for other staff.
- 4.2 **Equipment:** Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust would not provide equipment for the flexible home worker, however it may be possible on an ad hoc basis to supply a lap top to enable home working. If you use your own computer whilst working at home, you are responsible for the insurance and maintenance of the equipment and software used (virus checking for example).
- 4.3 **Contact:** The employee must inform appropriate colleagues of when they are working at home and include any periods of home working in all diaries. The employee must also provide details of how they may be contacted during this time.
- 4.4 **Health and Safety:** Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust has a statutory duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 which states that an employer shall ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees. This places obligations on home workers themselves to do their work in such a way as to ensure that they and any other person, including members of the household, or the public, will not be exposed to risks to their health and safety.

For casual/ ad-hoc work, the employee will be required to certify that the working environment will be safe and adequate for the purpose and that s/he will take all steps necessary for safe working and a safe environment for all occupiers of the employee's home. Equipment used by the home worker (whether owned by Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust or provided by the home worker) must be safe to use and not give rise to risks to health and safety.

- 4.5 **Security and Confidentiality:** Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust would need to ensure Data Protection Regulations are met, whether an employee has use of their own computer or a PCT computer, agreeing a code of conduct and carrying out a risk assessment of their workstation at home. Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust's security and confidentiality rules

would apply to all home workers and breaches would be dealt with under the PCT's disciplinary policy and any other relevant policies.

Home workers must ensure that all equipment owned by Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust, including correspondence files, are kept secure, including all NHS property in transit. Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust will require the employee to certify that s/he is able to maintain security and confidentiality of documents within the home and comply with IT security and data protection requirements. Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust reserves the right to take all reasonable steps necessary to verify this. A condition for home working is that Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust will have right of access to the premises for this purpose although this will be done sensitively and with appropriate notice.

- 4.6 **Accidents, Incidents and Dangerous Occurrences:** Employees working at home must inform their manager in the event of accidents, incidents or dangerous occurrences. Initial reports should be by telephone, followed by appropriate action. The home worker should also complete a PCT incident form.
- 4.7 **Sickness Absence:** Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust's policy on sickness absence would apply to all home workers. It is particularly important that any periods of sickness absence whilst working at home are reported to the relevant line manager as soon as possible.
- 4.8 **Hours of Work:** The hours and working pattern should be agreed with the line manager prior to commencement of home working ensuring that the employee does not work in excess of their normal working hours during home working and are in line with Working Time Regulations 1998.
- 4.9 **Base:** The employee's base will remain as the appropriate Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust Office where s/he workstation will be maintained.
- 4.10 **Termination:** This arrangement will be reviewed between 3 and 6 months at agreed intervals and may be terminated at any time by either the employee or Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust. HR will try to monitor the reasons for termination.

## 5. COSTS

- 5.1 The PCT will meet the costs of necessary postage and legitimate phone calls (on production of an itemised bill. However, the employee is expected to minimise these, where possible, by (e.g.) collecting paper, consumables etc from the office and delivering mail to the office for dispatch.
- 5.2 Normally, no other costs arising from home working will be reimbursed. However, in exceptional circumstances the Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust may contribute to other costs if agreed at a Senior Management meeting.

## 6. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

- 6.1 **Flexible Working with Occasional Home Working:** To apply for this type of home working, the employee would need to discuss the request with their line manager and complete the application form found in Appendix 1. The employee should ensure that adequate notice is given to the line manager prior to the commencement of the period

of home working. All reasonable requests to work at home will be considered favourably and would be considered in line with the service needs.

Work carried out at home would not normally be considered as overtime.

Employees at Senior Manager level or above may request a 'blanket' permission to work at home when they consider it necessary for a particular task. This may be subject to an agreed limit of a number of occasions per week.

If the request is accepted, the line manager or Director should consult with the Human Resources Department. This will ensure that the manager is made aware of their responsibilities in terms of communication, training and relevant procedures for home working. They would then need to meet with the employee to ensure that they are made aware of the implications and their responsibilities whilst home working e.g Health & Safety issues, insurance, confidentiality and communication. A manager's checklist is attached as Appendix 4. A member of the Human Resources team can also attend to give advice if necessary. A letter will then be sent to the employee confirming the details of the meeting.

## **7. AGREEMENT**

Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust, Trade Union representatives and Professional Bodies have agreed this policy and procedure.

**Date for Review: July 2012**

**Application for Flexible Worker with Occasional Home Working:  
(home working on regular basis but less than two days per week on average)**

**Please note: it is not necessary to complete an application form for one-off/ad hoc home working**

Before a formal application is made, the employee must have discussed the situation in detail with her/his line manager.

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Job title:</b>	
<b>Directorate:</b>	
<b>Line manager:</b>	
<b>I would like to apply for home working on the following basis:</b>	
<b>I wish to work at home on an ongoing basis on the following days:</b>	
Every Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday/Friday ( <i>delete as appropriate</i> )	
(Part-time staff) I normally work: Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday/Friday	
Arrangements for dealing with phone calls:	
Arrangements for dealing with E-mails:	
Arrangements for dealing with letters and other correspondence:	
Arrangements for managing staff in your team:	
Arrangements for contact with your line manager:	
I believe there will be no detriment to the service for the following reason(s):	
<b>I understand that Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust will not pay any costs of working from home other than those hitherto agreed and itemised overleaf.</b>	
<b>I have read, understood and agree to the Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust policy and guidelines on home working.</b>	

<b>Signed:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Agreed by (line manager):</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Agreed by (Director):</b>	<b>Date:</b>

**Health and Safety Guidance Notes**

1. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HASAW Act) requires all employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health safety and welfare at work of all employees. This duty is extended to employees working at home.
2. The HASAW Act also places a duty on employees to carry out the work in such a way as to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, that persons not in their employment are not exposed to risks to their health and safety. These include other members of the household and members of the public.
3. **To ensure that these duties are exercised, Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust will carry out a risk assessment of the proposed area of work and equipment, in the employee's home to ensure the safety of the employee, her/his family and members of the public. The home worker will undertake a self assessment/risk assessment prior to the agreement being finalised which will be completed by the manager with the guidance of the PCT Health and Safety advisors. Thereafter it is essential that the risk assessments are managed as if the employee were based in PCT premises.**
4. When employees work from home, close supervision will not be possible. There is therefore a greater responsibility upon home workers to ensure that work is carried out without risk to themselves or others.
5. Any action taken by the PCT to implement the HASAW Act (and subsequent legislation) will equally apply to employees working at home.

**HOMEWORKING – SELF ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST**

Thank you for completing this form. It will be used to assist your Manager and the Health and Safety team in ensuring that your working conditions at home comply with current best practice.

Name:	Date of completion:
Address:	Job Title: Department:

<b>Fire</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Is the work area tidy?			
Are waste materials regularly disposed of?			
Are exit routes clear?			
Do you have an escape plan?			Know exactly what to do in an emergency
Is a smoke alarm fitted?			Alarms should be tested weekly & batteries as required or at least annually
Do you have a suitable fire extinguisher readily at hand?			
Have you been trained how to use it safely?			

<b>Electrical Equipment [either PCTs or your own but used for PCT work).</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Any apparent damage?			Cracked casing, missing screws, etc.,
Any evidence of overheating?			Look for discolouration
Any obvious damage to leads or plugs?			
Are the cables secure in all plugs?			

<b>Slips Trips &amp; Falls [Work areas]</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Floor coverings sound, and without Defects?			
Are walkways clear of tripping			

hazards, e.g. trailing cables?			
When seated at your desk can you move your legs & upper body together without twisting?			

<b>Working Environment</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Is the temperature comfortable?			
Is the ventilation comfortable?			No drafts.
Do you have adequate lighting, including any necessary task lighting?			

<b>Manual Handling</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Do you carry out any abnormal Manual Handling activities?			
Have you attended the Trust's manual handling training?			

<b>Display Screen Equipment</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Do you use DSE for more than an hour a day on a regular basis?			
Are you aware of the Trusts policy on eye tests			

<b>Driving</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Do you drive on business?			
Is your vehicle insured for "business use"?			Check documentation
If required, has your vehicle a valid MOT?			
Do you hold a current driving licence?			

<b>Working Alone</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Have you discussed the need for a call in procedure with your manager?			
Do you carry a mobile phone or phone card?			
Do you require a personal attack alarm?			

<b>Hazardous Substances / Processes</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Comments</b>

Will you be expected to carry out any work with hazardous substances?			Other than normal domestic products or low risk commercial items [tipp-ex etc]
If yes, has a COSHH assessment been completed & passed to you for action?			
If yes, have you agreed with your manager on the provision of any personal protective equipment you may need?			

<b>Accidents / first Aid</b>	Yes	No	Comments
Do you know the procedure for reporting any accidents or work related illness?			All work related accidents [including those that take place in your home whilst working] must be reported
Do you have a first aid kit available when working at home?			

<b>Well-being</b>	Yes	No	Comments
Do you suffer any discomfort or ill health that you believe has resulted from your work?			If yes, report to your line manager

<b>Security</b>	Yes	No	Comments
Is final exit door secured by mortice deadlock?			
All other external doors similarly secured by morticed security bolts?			
Do key operated window locks secure all accessible windows? Laptop and confidential files locked away when not in use?			

<b>PCT Supplied Equipment (Please list below)</b>	<b>Serial No.</b>

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**Any other comments you have regarding your working environment, please list here: -**

**Signature:** .....

**Date:**.....

**Health and Safety  
Managers Checklist for Home working**

This checklist is intended for employees who will be working from home for at least 40% of their time. However, much of the list applies to anyone who does some work from home. Further advice can be obtained from the Health & Safety Manager.


***Pre Home working Agreement***

<b>No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Detail</b>
1.	Assess suitability of individual for Home working	Is the individual self-motivated, able to work in isolation from the team? Will working alone affect their wellbeing e.g. support mechanisms, reduced social contact? Ensure the individual is aware of these risk factors. Ensure familiar with home working policy and in agreement.
2.	Carry out an ergonomic assessment of the home environment for suitability	Is there sufficient space for all equipment? Are there others who may be affected or who may impact on the home environment, such as pets, noise from neighbours or adjacent businesses? Is there sufficient heating, lighting, ventilation? Will there be glare onto the screens? Is there a need for non-business or business visitors to arrive at the premises? Are there facilities for sanitation, personal hygiene and food preparation?
3.	Carry out a risk assessment at the premises	Ensure the employee has a plan of escape in case of fire. Ensure emergency medical treatment can be summoned and that this can be expected to arrive within a reasonable time, Check floor surfaces for loose or damaged floor coverings and highlight these to the employee. Is there a danger of slips, trips and falls? Ensure there is cable management. Could the employee be hit by a moving object, could items fall on them?
4.	Identify any specific health and safety training	Lifting and handling, Use of Display Screen Equipment, etc.

***Post Agreement for Home Working***

<b>No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Detail</b>
5.	Ensure a DSE assessment is carried out	Complete DSE documentation and where there are particular concerns, arrange for a DSE assessor to visit the home.
6.	Agree quarterly inspections of the home workplace by the employee for faults in equipment supplied by the	Ensure the results of the inspections are recorded and, where faults are reported, actions taken.

	Trust, including visual inspections of cables.	
7.	Agree accident and hazard reporting procedures.	All accidents that cause an injury, all incidents that do not cause an injury and all hazards that have the potential to cause injury must be reported where the equipment or work in the home is involved. Managers must agree how this will be reported and pass it through to the HSE manager.
8.	Ensure PAT testing procedures are in place.	All equipment and leads should be PAT tested before installation. Replacement leads can be sent out and old ones sent back every four years.
9.	Agree a business visitor's procedure.	In case DSE assessors, Managers or IT need to visit premises, agree a procedure. Include prior notification of date, approx. time, name of person. Agree a password if required. There is no requirement for two people to visit the home for safety reasons.
10.	Agree procedures for routine reporting.	To ensure the employee arrives at the Home work place, safely agree a 'sign on' reporting procedure.

	<b>PTH MANAGEMENT SYSTEM</b>		<b>Appendix 5</b>
	<b>WORKSTATION ANALYSIS</b>		
<b>Proprietary and Confidential</b>	<b>PTH-CS-FR-02-41</b>	<b>Page 2 of 3</b>	<b>Rev 02</b>

For the purposes of compliance with the  
Health & Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992

Please answer the following questions and return the form to the HR Department. If you disclose any problems a PTH OH Adviser will contact you to discuss these. Please sign below to confirm your understanding.

**1) Employee Box**

Name ..... Date .....  
Signature..... D.O.B .....  
Job Title ..... Location of Workstation .....

**2) Workstation Usage**

- a) Is the use of the display screen an essential part of your role? Yes / No
- b) Do you have to use the display screen daily? Yes / No
- c) Do you often use the display screen for periods of an hour or more? Yes / No

**3) Seating**

	<b>Yes / No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
a) Is the seat height adjustable?	Yes / No	.....
b) Is the seat back adjustable in height and tilt?	Yes / No	.....
c) Does the seat have 5-star base?	Yes / No	.....
d) Can you operate all seat controls?	Yes / No	.....
e) Can your feet touch the floor with the seat at the correct height? If not, a footrest is required.	Yes / No	.....

**4) Desk / Work Surface**

	<b>Yes / No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
a) Is the desk large enough to accommodate display screen equipment as well as other essential equipment for the task, such as documents, telephone, in-trays?	Yes / No	.....
b) Is the desk large enough to support your	Yes / No	.....

wrists and hands in front of the keyboard?

c) Is the desk stable and in a satisfactory condition? Yes / No .....

**5) Keyboard / Mouse**

**Yes / No**

**Comments**

a) Is the keyboard separate from the screen? Yes / No .....

b) Does the keyboard tilt? Yes / No .....

c) Are the keys legible and in working order? Yes / No .....

d) Does the mouse work properly? (if not it may need cleaning internally) Yes / No .....

e) Is the mouse close enough to keyboard to avoid you having to reach for it? (The keyboard and mouse should be positioned so that your elbows are at right angles) Yes / No .....

f) Is there adequate support for the elbow and forearm when operating mouse? Yes / No .....

g) Are your wrist, hand and fingers in a relaxed position when operating the mouse? Yes / No .....

**6) Screen**

**Yes / No**

**Comments**

a) Can the screen be swivelled and tilted? Yes / No .....

b) Is the screen positioned correctly? (ie. Your eyes are in line with the top to mid part of the screen) Yes / No .....

c) Is the screen free from reflections? Yes / No .....

d) Can the brightness be adjusted? Yes / No .....

e) Can the contrast be adjusted? Yes / No .....

f) Is the image stable and legible? Yes / No .....

g) Is the screen adequately clean? Yes / No .....

**7) Working Environment**

**Yes / No**

**Comments**

a) Is there sufficient work space beneath and around the desk to allow you to vary body posture? Yes / No .....

b) Is ambient light level satisfactory? Yes / No .....

c) Are sources of reflection on the screen being controlled? Yes / No .....

- d) Are windows/skylights fitted with adequate means of adjusting natural light levels? Yes / No .....
- e) Are the temperature, humidity and ventilation levels satisfactory? Yes / No .....
- f) Is excessive noise a problem? Yes / No .....
- g) Should a document holder be available? Yes / No .....
- h) Are data and power cables properly routed and secured to prevent mechanical damage and minimise tripping hazards? Yes / No .....

Are there any concerns you have about your workstation that you would like to discuss with an OH Adviser?

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Additional notes from OH Adviser .....

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Signed by OH Adviser..... Print Name.....