



City of Westminster

HEALTH & SAFETY INFORMATION

FLEXIBLE AND HOMEWORKING POLICY

CONTENTS

<u>SECTION:</u>	<u>PAGE NO</u>
DEFINITION	3
INTRODUCTION	3
ASSESSMENT OF THE HOME	4-5
MANAGERS RESPONSIBILITIES	5
HOMEWORKERS	5-6
TRADE UNION / EMPLOYEE HEALTH & SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES	6
UNIT/GROUP HEALTH & SAFETY ADVISORS/MAGAERS	6
SOURCES OF ADVICE	6
FLEXIBLE / HOMEWORKING CHECKLIST	8-13
PROCESS MAP OF HOMEWORKING	14
USEFUL INFORMATION	17
RELATED DOCUMENTS	16

CORPORATE POLICY ON HOMEWORKING

DEFINITION OF A HOME-WORKER

A home-worker is a person employed to work from home for an employer. (HSE IND(G)226L)

INTRODUCTION

This policy gives guidance to managers and home-workers on the health and safety issues involved in home-working. The Health & Safety at Work etc. Act (HASWA) 1974 places duties on employers and employees. Managers have a duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of their employees, including home-workers.

Most of the Regulations made under the HASWA apply to home-workers, as well as to employees working at an employer's workplace. For example, these include the following regulations:

- Management of Health & Safety at Work Amendment Regulations 2006
- Display Screen Equipment Regulations 1992
- Manual Handling Operations 1992
- Provision & Use of Work Equipment 1998
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Amendment Regulations 2004,

Under the Management of Health & Safety at Work Amendment Regulations 2006, employers / managers are required to carry out a risk assessment of the work activities that will be carried out by the home-worker. Managers must ask potential homeworkers to complete the homeworking checklist, which involves identifying the hazards relating to the home workers activities. Managers can then assess whether enough steps have been taken to prevent harm to them, or to anyone else who may be affected by their work.

It is possible that employees will be issued with mobile telephones for use whilst home and/or flexibly working. The council's position regarding the use of mobile telephones. mirrors that of Government advice following the Stewart report in 2000. The report concluded that "exposure to RF radiation below guidelines does not cause adverse health effects to the general population".

However the Government has recognised the risks from distraction whilst using mobile telephones hence the recent legislation regarding the use of mobile telephones whilst driving.

Distraction would not normally be regarded a significant risk when using the mobile telephone at home however employees will be discouraged from using mobile telephones in areas of higher risk such as crossing busy roads.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Corporate Health & Safety Policy Statement

Any incidents must be reported using the Corporate Accident/Dangerous Occurrence procedure

ASSESSMENT OF THE HOME

A **risk** is the chance or likelihood, great or small, that someone will be harmed by a hazard.

A **hazard** is anything that may cause harm.

As with all work activities, home-workers must be subject to a full risk assessment once the checklist has been completed to allow the manager to make a decision regarding the suitability of working from home from the information given. A home visit to assess the suitability of a representative sample of staff may be undertaken. Training and information is particularly important, as there will be no direct supervision of work. To ensure that home-workers practice safe working arrangements, monitoring procedures must be developed.

Appendix 1 is the flexible worker checklist, which should be used by the home-worker or other people as a result of the work activities at home. Consideration should be given to the:

- Employees suitability for home-working
- Suitability of premises
- Proposed work area.
- Equipment being used.

Decide who may be harmed and how

From the checklist, managers must decide who may be harmed and how. This may include home-workers themselves, or the elderly, children and/or visitors. Factors such as disability, pregnancy and other health issues must also be taken into consideration.

Assess the risks and take appropriate action to remove or reduce the risk.

In controlling the risks, managers should develop a safe system of work by considering the following:

- Eliminate or minimise the risks.
- Adapt work layout, equipment, etc.
- Provision of training, information and instruction.

In order to ensure that all the risks have been identified, an action plan should be developed for all home-workers. The line Manager must ensure all home-workers and those who may become home-workers, complete the home-working checklist attached as appendix 1.

When this has been completed, the Line Manager must then consider what actions are required to control the risks that have been identified. This may include the purchasing of

new equipment, change in work practices, etc. The assessment should have an implementation plan, and the findings should be discussed with home-workers.

Record the Findings

Managers must record the findings and keep all checklists and action plans on file, as they may be required at a later date for legal or any other reason.

Review the Assessments

Line Managers must monitor and review the homeworking checklists as necessary. This is to ensure they remain valid and the control measures are appropriate. In addition, reviewing the checklist and action plan will also follow if an incident occurs; or the purchasing of new equipment or if there is a change in work practices.

MANAGERS

- Managers have a responsibility to look at what may cause harm to their staff whilst home-working, or other people as a result of the work being carried out in the home. Therefore, a suitable risk assessment should be undertaken from the homeworking checklist.
- Where appropriate, Managers may have to commission a professional to visit to the home of the home worker to assess the risks if the home worker has concerns about working from home. Appendix 2 of this policy is designed to assist Managers in gaining adequate information from the home-worker via PROCESS MAP (appendix 2). In most cases, this procedure should be sufficient.
- Managers must ensure what steps need to be taken to prevent harm to the home-worker, or anyone else that may be affected by the home-working activity.
- Where a home-worker is disabled or suffering from a medical condition, advice can be sought from their Unit health & safety manager/advisor. The Occupational Health Provider may also need to be contacted if appropriate.
- Managers must also ensure home-workers are adequately trained (e.g. Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Awareness), and be provided with suitable equipment and support.
- Managers must commission a fully qualified professional to carry out a verification procedure on an agreed percentage of staff. This must be agreed at consultation meeting.

HOME-WORKERS

- Home-workers have a legal duty to co-operate with their employers on matters of health & safety.

- They must report all faults relating to their work that may be a hazard to themselves and others.
- They also need to report accidents.
- Home-working must cease in the event of serious or imminent danger arising from their work. This will not affect the employees rights.

TRADE UNION / EMPLOYEE HEALTH & SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES

- Trade Union / Employee Health & Safety Representatives can represent home workers in consultation with managers about health and safety matters.

UNIT HEALTH & SAFETY ADVISORS / MANAGERS

- Unit Health & Safety Advisors/Managers can provide both general and specific health & safety advice on home-working.
- Highlight training courses to ensure managers are competent to fulfil their responsibilities.
- Assist in the monitoring the process of home-working to ensure compliance with legislation.
- Liase with external professional bodies on issues in relation to home-working.

SOURCES OF ADVICE

Unit/Group Health & Safety Advisors / Managers:

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Contact Name:</u>	<u>Location:</u>	<u>Ext.</u>	<u>Fax</u>
Central Services	Joyti Parmar	3rd floor, City Hall	3290	2142
Adult &Community Service Community	Christine Godfrey	3rd floor City Hall	6082	2283
Education Children Services	P Dempsey E Andrews	(3rd floor) City Hall	2451 2368	(3404)

Built Environment& City Managment Transportation/ Environment & Leisure / Community Protection	John Doherty	3rd floor City Hall	2964	2665
Occupational Health Services	Fiona Burke Charmilla Sritharan	17 th Fl, City Hall 17 th Fl, City Hall	x 1963 x 7025	

Flexible Working Checklist

EMPLOYEE NOTE ~ Please read the [guidance](#) before completing the form

MANAGERS NOTE ~ Manager’s guidance

This form has been designed to provide the information to enable your manager to make a judgement on the suitability of you Flexible working.

Consideration will be given to:

- Your suitability for home-working
- Suitability of premises
- Proposed work area
- Equipment being used

Your observations are essential in assisting your manager/advisor to achieve Westminster City Council's objectives of ensuring a safe system of work and a safe place of work.

The questions reflect current Health & Safety Executive guidance on matters of flexible / homeworking / working alone and work with Display Screen Equipment (DSE).

It is important that you respond to all the questions as honestly as possible. Misrepresenting the facts could lead to you receiving inappropriate advice with resulting adverse effects. Your manager will review this assessment.

Unit/Group Health and Safety Manager/Advisor.

NAME: _____ **Unit/Group:** _____

ASSESSMENT DATE: _____ **JOB TITLE:** _____

1. EQUIPMENT

If allocated, please describe the equipment provided:

Model:

M No: _____ Date issued to you: _____
(on side /rear of equipment)

Has the equipment been portable appliance tested? _____ If so when ? _____
(This is an annual electrical test to ensure that it is safe to use – there is usually a sticker stating it has been tested and the date of testing)

2. TIME

On average how many days will/do you work a week from home?

3. ABOUT YOU WHEN WORKING FROM HOME

Will/Do you take regular breaks from your computer?

Will/Do you experience any discomfort in your back, shoulders or neck?

Will/Do you experience tired and sore eyes and/or headaches?

Do you feel that you would be adopting an awkward working position ?

4. DISPLAY SCREEN

Can you tilt and swivel your screen easily, if required?

Will there be/Is there any glare on the screen?

Will there/Is the image on your screen clear, and free from flicker?

Will there be/Is there enough room in front of the keyboard to support your wrists during pauses in typing?

Will there be/Is there enough room for your paperwork?

If not, would you benefit from a document holder?

5. DESK & CHAIR

Are you providing your own chair?

Is your chair stable, and can you adjust the seat height and backrest to support your posture, especially your back?

Are you forced to sit awkwardly when working from home? (As far as possible you should be able to sit straight facing the computer)

Is the height of the table/desk comfortable for you?

Can you put your feet flat on the floor when sat back on your seat?

6. ENVIRONMENT

Describe the environment where the workstation is to be established and the display screen equipment is to be used:

Is the room to be dedicated to the sole use of the workstation?

Will others have access to the room during your use of the workstation when working from home such as young children/pets?

Do you have adequate ventilation in the workspace?

Is there excessive noise in the area of work?

Can you access your workstation/area easily?

Is the combination of the level of lighting and the type of finish on the work surface such that there is no glare? (Higher levels of lighting and gloss finishes on work surfaces may create glare)

7. ELECTRICAL HAZARDS

Do you have adequate phone and plug sockets to use your equipment?

Are there any trailing cables?

If so, can you arrange the furniture to avoid trailing cables?

Are the cables correctly wired and maintained?

Are there any burn marks on the cable(s) or equipment to suggest overheating?

Is the equipment located in a safe place so that it does not cause harm to yourself and others?

8. MANUAL HANDLING

Will/Do you handle loads that are heavy, bulky, difficult to grasp or unstable?

Will/Do you find yourself pulling /pushing furniture each time you need to work from home?

9. COMMUNICATION

Do you have a landline telephone?

Do you have a council mobile phone?

Are you aware of the procedures to follow in case of an accident, sickness, and equipment breakdown? Your unit should have these in place.

10. FIRST AID & FIRE

Will you be working from home alone?

Are you aware of the correct procedure to report accidents/injuries/near misses?

Do you have access to suitable first aid facilities?

Is a smoke alarm installed?

Do regularly check to ensure that the battery is working ?

11. SOFTWARE

Is the software suitable for the task?

Is there anything that would limit you to work effectively from home using the laptop/home computer ?

Is it easy to use the software with the homeworking connections?

Have unnecessary slow system response times been eliminated?

12 PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

Will you be using any of your own equipment?

If yes, please specify:

Has this personal electrical equipment been Portable appliance tested?
(This is an annual electrical test that is carried out by a qualified electrician)

13. FURNITURE

Do you feel that any one of the following would be required to make you feel more comfortable at your workstation?

Footrest	Wrist rest
Mouse rest	Document holder
Anti-glare screen	Other (please specify)

Do you have appropriate cupboards/containers for storage?

14. INFORMATION & INSTRUCTION –

Risks of desktop computer/laptop use

- Laptops are designed to work flexibly. However, adopting good workstation practice will eliminate or reduce work related upper limb disorders that may be associated with incorrect laptop use.
- Awkward/Inadequate static seating positions can have the potential to lead to discomfort in back, shoulders and the neck.
- The interface of working with a screen in a static position for long periods of time may also appear to lead to discomfort
- More information can be found in the Corporate DSE Policy at :

- Depending on the style of flexible working, laptops are a security risk. Ensure that laptops are always carried in laptop rucksacks provided. Mobile laptop bags are recommended when commuting to and from work to reduce the risk of injury.
- Please read the **Correct workstation set-up guidance** below

Correct workstation set-up

- Best Practice is where possible, when Flexible working, ensure the use of a desktop keyboard, monitor and mouse using the KVM switch and docking station provided through the portal. This will ensure a more comfortable working position
- Where this is not possible, safe use of laptop must always be placed directly in front of you, on a flat surface, within comfortable reach
- Your chair should provide you with adequate back support whilst leaning back, your feet should be resting flat on the floor with your thighs at right angle
- Ensure that you sit upright, with your eyes level with the top of your laptop monitor or your desktop monitor
- Always have regular breaks away from the screen to avoid static positions on the computer or laptop
- The full training is available via DSe~Learning at :the wire3/dse

The following information/guidance applies to flexible/homeworking. Please familiarise yourself with the list below. They are available on The Wire or ask your manager. Alternatively contact Corporate Health & Safety on ext 0207 641 3290/2803:

15. DECLARATION

Were you given a choice on flexible/homeworking?

I accept and fully understand the concept, discipline and safe working practice of flexible working. The information provided is a true reflection of my potential suitability to action my chosen work style.

Employee Signature..... Date

I have read and understood Managers Flexible Working Guidance and will consult with the employees chosen work style taking into consideration:

- The suitability for home-working
- Suitability of premises
- Proposed work area
- Equipment being used

Managers signature Date

Agreed review date for the assessment:

MANAGERS GUIDANCE TO FLEXIBLE WORKING CHECKLIST

- The purpose of this Flexible Working Checklist is for the manager to make a suitable judgement, based on the information provided on the form, whether or not the employee is suitable to work from home.
- Judgement and suitability should be based on the number of day's the employee plans to work from home, suitability of the premises, the work area and the equipment to be used.
- Advice/guidance is available from your Health & Safety Manager/Advisor. The questions in this checklist reflect the guidance given on working from home from the Health & Safety Executive (HSE). Please refer to the **Corporate Homeworking Policy on the WIRE** which outlines the process.
- If the manager requires the employee to work from home and the information provided on the form states that the home is not a suitable place, an action plan will need to be agreed to bring the location up to the required standard and compliant. Most of the equipment is available/funded through the portal. Desks/chairs are at manager's discretion.
- If the employee identifies that he/she is suffering from a particular health problem or work related upper limb discomfort, the manager has the discretion to reject homeworking to avoid the risk of further injury and give the option of a fixed desk or have a limited number of homeworking days. Health & safety managers'/Advisors guidance/assistance should be sought. The employee will require a workstation assessment to be undertaken.

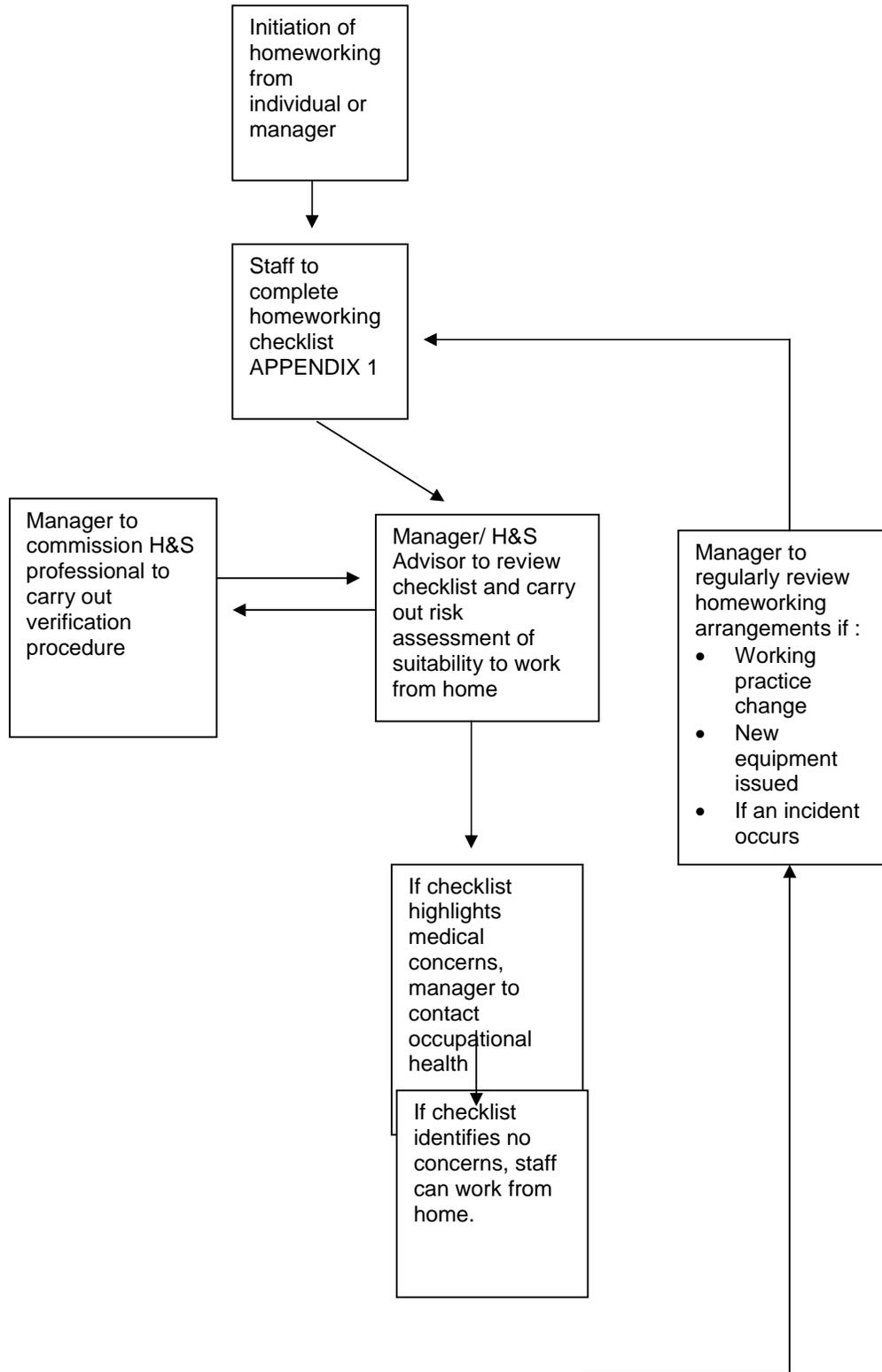
EMPLOYERS RESPONSIBILITY

- Correct provision of work equipment for the work that is expected to be completed
- Maintenance of equipment
- Portable appliance testing of all electrical equipment
- Adequate information on how to use the equipment so that the job can be done safely
- Any additional equipment provision to work to reduce workstation related ailments
- To commission a qualified advisor to visit the home-worker when required
- To regularly monitor and support all home-workers
- Provision of basic First Aid equipment

EMPLOYEES RESPONSIBILITIES

- To report any hazards that have the potential to cause harm to yourself and others to the relevant person
- To report any sickness to the relevant person following correct procedures
- To be responsible for your own electrical equipment that is used for the purposes of work

PROCESS MAP OF HOMEWORKING



SOME USEFUL INFORMATION

- Home working – HSE Guidance for Employers and Employees on health & safety.
- Health & Safety At Work, etc. Act (HASWA) 1974
- The Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Regulations 1992
- The Law of VDU's: HSE - Easy Guide in making sure your office complies with the DSE Regulations 1992 (as amended 2002)
- The Management of Health & Safety at Work Amendment Regulations (MHSWR)2006
- The Manual Handling Operations 1992
- Getting to grips with Manual Handling – IND(G)143L
- The Provision & Use of Work Equipment (PUWER) Regulations 1998
- The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) ACOP 2002
- Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations (PPE)1992
- Electricity at Work: Safe Working Practices1985
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases, and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR)1995
- The Health & Safety First Aid Regulations 1981
- Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act 1993
- The Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH)

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Further information on home working and flexible working process can be accessed dedicate dedicated council intranet page – wire via:

<http://wirecms/hr/flow/>

Policy Revision Record			
First Issue	Review Date	Reviewed	By Whom
October 2003		February 2009	H&S Team
	February 2010	February 2010	H&S Team
	February 2011	January 2011	H&S Team
	January 2012		