

Frodsham Town Council

Occasional Homeworking/Working away from the Office Policy

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1. Introduction

1.1. Homeworking on an occasional basis is a recognised flexible working practice which, in appropriate circumstances, can help staff balance their work and personal lives, achieve business objectives and have a positive impact on the environment.

1.2. Occasional homeworking involves using the staff member's home as a base for work, on an occasional basis, instead of the staff member coming into a recognised workplace.

1.3. This policy also covers staff working away from the office in another location other than the home.

2. Scope

2.1. Whilst this policy applies to all staff regardless of length of service, it is recognised that some roles will be more suitable to occasional homeworking than others.

2.2. To work effectively homeworking has to primarily meet the business needs of the service as well as the individual.

2.3. Factors that managers should consider as part of the approval process include:

- the objectives of the homeworking;
- the suitability of the job for occasional homeworking;
- the performance level of the individual member of staff, including the confidence in them to work remotely and without regular supervision the suitability of the worker's home for homeworking, eg agreed method of communication, access to colleagues, information, and technology;
- the outcome of a risk assessment;

2.4. Taking work home occasionally, on an ad hoc basis, to concentrate on a particular project or task may be suitable where a specific task needs dedicated and focused input and/or could be dealt with more efficiently at home, eg saved travelling time and lack of interruptions.

3. Occasional homeworkers

Occasional Homeworkers are expected to:

- agree homeworking arrangements with their line manager;
- be available and contactable during the agreed working hours;
- carry out the required risk assessments;
- comply with all FTC policies and procedures that relate to both practices and professional conduct whilst working, whether this be in their home or on the FTC premises;
- keep secure and locked any documents or data that belongs to the FTC
- be vigilant that their screens may be overlooked by others possibly resulting in an unauthorised disclosure;
- take reasonable care of any FTC supplied equipment for homeworking;
- report any broken or defective FTC provided IT equipment to the FTC
- report any damaged, lost or stolen equipment, including FTC documentation or data belonging to the FTC through informing their line manager;
- report any accident or incident within 24 hours (or as soon as the incident has become known) to the FTC.

4. Standards and Practice

4.1. Conditions for Occasional Homeworking

- **Hours** - all occasional homeworkers' usual hours of work will apply. Staff working from home are still subject to the terms of the *Working Time Regulations* and should be reminded of this so that they do not routinely work in excess of normal office hours.
- **Contact** - all occasional workers will be expected to be available by telephone during normal working hours. The right of a staff member not to disclose his/her address and telephone number, except to immediate colleagues, should be respected. However, an agreed method of contact with their manager and other colleagues, both internal and external, must be maintained when working from home.
- **Compliance with Policies and Procedures** - all occasional homeworkers must comply with all FTC policies and procedures whether working from home or at the FTC.
- **Equipment** - FTC does not undertake to supply any equipment as a result of an agreement for occasional homeworking. However it may, at its discretion, supply equipment such as a portable laptop and peripherals or remote connection facilities to work securely from an individual's own PC.
- **Team working** - the absence of an occasional homeworker must not create additional workload for other staff members or otherwise affect operational efficiency or effectiveness.
- **Absence** - the usual provisions relating to reporting sickness absence and other reasons for not being able to report to work will apply in accordance with the appropriate FTC policies.
- **Environment** - an occasional homeworker needs a home working environment which offers:
 - ❖ suitable "office" space;
 - ❖ adequate equipment including computer, broadband connection, telephone line, etc;
 - ❖ freedom from interruptions and distractions;
 - ❖ security and confidentiality;
 - ❖ ability to meet Health and Safety requirements.

4.2. Risk Assessment

- A risk assessment (see Appendix 1) must also be undertaken by the staff member. This should include a workstation self-assessment.
- The self-assessment checklist should be completed and a copy of the assessment should be kept on the staff member's personnel file.

4.3. Health and Safety

- 4.3.1 The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requires all employers to ensure as far as is 'reasonably practicable', the health, safety and welfare at work of employees. This duty is extended to employees working at home.
- 4.3.2 Prior to the commencement of occasional homeworking a work station self-assessment and risk assessment of the proposed area and equipment (to include furniture and electrical equipment, telephones, etc) must be carried out. This should be recorded on the risk assessment.
- 4.3.3 The equipment used by homeworkers (whether owned by FTC or provided by the homeworker) must be safe to use, fit for purpose and not give rise to any health and safety risks. The equipment should be maintained in efficient working order and in good repair.
- 4.3.4 FTC will be responsible for maintaining FTC equipment.
- 4.3.5 Occasional homeworkers must ensure that all equipment owned by FTC is kept securely including whilst in transit.

4.4. Insurance

- 4.4.1 FTC will be responsible for any necessary insurance of equipment supplied by them and employee liability insurance.
- 4.4.2 It is the responsibility of the occasional homeworker to provide adequate home buildings and contents insurance. FTC will not accept liability for damage caused to the home or its contents.

4.5. Information Management, Equipment and Support

- 4.5.1 The Town Clerk must liaise with Prism IT Services to provide appropriate access to IT facilities for working from home. Prism IT services will determine the most appropriate method of providing secure access depending on the requirements and circumstances of the individual.
- 4.5.2 Support of non-FTC provided equipment is strictly limited to guidance only and action is taken at the risk of the individual.
- 4.5.3 Home broadband connections are the responsibility of the home user.

4.6. Security and Access to Others

Occasional homeworking staff will be responsible for taking adequate steps to ensure the security of FTC equipment in their home. Homeworking staff are responsible for ensuring that no other person can access FTC information and services (including internet access).

4.7. IT Security

- 4.7.1 If the materials or information the homeworker will be working on are person identifiable, it is essential that proper controls are implemented in order to protect information. All of the same controls applied at the office will apply at home (eg password protection, hardware and software security standards, etc).
- 4.7.2 The use of personal devices to access applications where all information remains on secure FTC systems such as e-mail is acceptable.
- 4.7.3 The use of personal devices is permitted for work of low risk documents, eg job descriptions, provided that the final version is held as part of the corporate records structure.
- 4.7.4 No personal, sensitive or confidential information is to be downloaded onto personally owned PCs.

- 4.7.5 No personal, sensitive or confidential information is to be printed on printers located at a staff member's home.

4.8. Confidentiality and Security of Data

- 4.8.6 Staff members are expected to keep any work data used at home confidential and secure. All work data remains the property of FTC and may be required at any time. All data will be managed in line with the appropriate policy.
- 4.8.7 Staff members are not permitted to keep FTC data, either electronic or paper files, at home on a permanent basis. FTC has statutory obligations to fulfil requests for information under several acts of parliament such as Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts and it has to be able to gain access to that information at short notice.

Appendix 1. Occasional homeworking assessment

OCCASIONAL HOMEWORKING RISK ASSESSMENT

The purpose of this assessment is to assist your manager in safeguarding your health and safety whilst you are homeworking.

To be completed by the staff member and authorised by the line manager

Name:		Job Title:	
Line Manager and Job Title:		Division/ Dept:	
Home Address:		Date of Risk Assessment:	
Home/Contact Telephone Number:			
Address to which Risk Assessment applies (if different from above):			

Work Environment Checklist

This checklist is for use by staff who occasionally work at home to enable them to be sure that their workstation is safe, comfortable and practical.

		Yes	No
1	Do you have a separate work area away from the rest of the living space where you can work without disruption?		
2	Is there sufficient secure storage for confidential information both at home and in transit?		
3	Do you have enough space to work safely?		
4	Are there sufficient electrical sockets to enable you to safely plug in your laptop or computer?		
5	Is the work area clear from obstructions and tripping hazards?		
6	Do you know how to report work related accidents?		
7	Do you know how to report health and safety concerns?		
8	Is there a need for non-business or business visitors to arrive at the premises while you are home working? (Business meetings should not take place at home)		