

Aiskew & Leeming Bar Parish Council

Home Working Policy

(Adapted from NALC Model updated 9 Aug 24)

Adopted Date: 20 May 2026

Review Date: May 2027 (Or unless significant change prior).

Signed.....

Name.....

Date.....

Summary

This template policy on homeworking includes a how-to guide on how to use the template, and the information should be tailored to meet the specific needs of your parish or town council. Parish and town councils should contact their [county association](#) for HR-related support, and we strongly recommend that they seek HR guidance when drafting policies.

How to manage a homeworker

Homeworking is the term generally used to describe employees whose contract gives their home as their place of work and who work from home in practice. Homeworking can provide benefits for both an employee and the council; however, it is important to effectively and consistently manage homeworking employees to ensure that these benefits are realised.

- Review — If an employee formally requests a permanent arrangement to work from home, refer to the flexible working policy and review whether you can agree. Where you allow homeworking on an ad-hoc basis, consider whether the work is suitable to be undertaken at home, that the home environment is suitable, and whether it can accommodate their request. In some cases you may agree to an employee working permanently at home from the outset and this should be reflected in their contract of employment.
- Prepare — If you agree to the employee carrying out homework, assess health and safety hazards or risks for the homeworker by carrying out a risk assessment. Ensure the employee is fully aware of potential health and safety risks, the council's health and safety policy and accident reporting procedures. If the work involves dealing with confidential or sensitive information, ensure documentation is held and processed in line with GDPR. Agree on how you will communicate with the homeworker, and review this to ensure they keep up-to-date with council business and avoid isolation. Consider which practical matters need to be dealt with, including what equipment will be provided (furniture, secure cabinet and equipment such as PCs and phones) and the infrastructure for their use (broadband/phone lines, etc.). Think about what insurances are required. Ensure that both the Council and the employee's personal insurance policies properly cover the employee's work at home.
- Finalise — Ensure the employment contract reflects contractual change; consider including the tax-free homework allowance. If not included as part of the employee's initial contract, finalise the arrangements in writing by drawing up a homeworking agreement to be signed by the employee, which refers to all the above points. Clarify your expectations on communications and availability. The homeworker should be available during work hours; ensure these are clear. Depending on the arrangement, agree on how often the employee should visit council offices (and for what reasons). Ensure you review the arrangements occasionally and ask the homeworker to repeat the risk assessment annually or when there is a change.

Suitability for homeworking

When considering if homeworking will be successful, take into account the following:

- Requirements of the role
- The individual's self-discipline
- The need for face-to-face interaction with others
- The ability to work without direct supervision
- The individual's communication and organisational skills
- The suitability of their home as a workplace
- Data security

Obligations

Employers' health and safety obligations apply to homeworkers like they do to employees who work on council premises. The council is, therefore, under a duty of care to take care of the health, safety and welfare of every homeworker, and this duty includes a responsibility to ensure premises and equipment are safe.

Policy

The Council recognises the advantages of home-based working although it doesn't suit everyone, and some job roles may not be appropriate to undertake at home.

This policy describes the working arrangements and expectations that will apply if you work from home.

Scope of this policy

It applies to all staff who are home-based whether full time, part time or fixed term. It does not apply to office-based staff who work from home on an ad-hoc basis. If you are considering whether to request home-based working, please refer to the Flexible Working Policy.

Safe working environment

Health and safety for home-based staff applies in the same way as office-based staff, insofar as is reasonably practicable, that you work in a safe manner and that you follow all health and safety instructions issued by us.

You must complete and submit a 'Home Based Workers Risk Assessment' to the Clerk. This is a checklist for you to identify any possible hazards in your home working area. Following completion of the checklist, measures may need to be taken to control any risks identified. This checklist should be completed annually, or more frequently if there are any changes to your arrangements such as new equipment or changes to your home-office space.

You must complete and submit a workstation risk assessment and ensure that this remains up-to-date. If you have any questions about the risk assessment, or if you identify any potential risks when carrying out the assessment, you should refer these to the Clerk in the first instance.

Some of the most important considerations include: -

- If possible, an area should be set aside from the rest of your living space to ensure that you are able to work from home without distractions,
- Your home office should have adequate space for you to work safely and comfortably,
- Your desk should be large enough to accommodate your equipment and paperwork,
- You should have sufficient storage and your workspace should be organised so equipment is close to hand,
- Your work area should be well lit, with natural lighting if possible,
- Equipment and sockets should be situated to avoid potential trip hazards, and,
- You must also ensure that you visually check the cables of any electronic equipment supplied to you regularly (and at least every 6 months) and report any defects.

We reserve the right to visit you at home at agreed times for work-related purposes, including health and safety matters and to inspect, service or repair equipment (e.g. for PAT testing).

Facilities and equipment

The council will provide you with the following equipment for you to work from home and we will maintain and replace these items when necessary.

- [Desk,
- Office chair
- Filing cabinet (which will be lockable for those staff who hold personal data)
- Printer/scanner
- Laptop computer
- Photocopier
- Mobile telephone]

It is your duty to ensure that proper care is taken of the equipment provided to you and to let the Clerk know of any need to maintain or replace the equipment. Should the risk assessment identify any further equipment that is necessary, please discuss this with the Clerk.

All equipment provided by the council is for you to work safely and effectively at home and cannot be used for personal use by you or your family.

All equipment will belong to the council and you will be required to return it to us promptly should you leave our employment. If we are unable to make suitable arrangements, we may collect the equipment and any documents before your last day.

Hours of work

As a home-based worker, your contract of employment will specify the hours when we expect you to be at work and contactable by telephone or email. There may be times during the working day when you are not available in which case these should be flagged to the Clerk (or the Chair of the Council) with prior authorisation.

You must be mindful to take adequate rest breaks which should be, as a minimum:

- A break of at least 20 minutes during each working day over 6 hours,
- A daily rest break of at least 11 continuous hours, i.e. the time between stopping work one day and beginning work the next day, and,
- At least one complete day each week when no work is done.

Potential conflicts of interest

During your hours of work, the council expects that your work environment enables you to work effectively and that you are not distracted by domestic matters. It is not appropriate to combine homeworking with caring for a dependant.

If there is an emergency and you need to attend to a non-work matter, then you should notify the Clerk (see the Dependant Leave Policy).

Data protection

As a home-worker you are responsible for keeping all documents and information associated with the council secure at all times. Specifically, homeworkers are under a duty to:

- Keep filing cabinets and drawers locked when they are not being used,
- Keep all documentation belonging to us in the locked filing cabinet at all times except when in use,
- Set up and use a unique password for the laptop computer, and,
- Ensure that documents are saved to the server rather than the laptop computer's hard drive.

[Furthermore, the laptop computer and other equipment provided by us must be used only for work-related purposes and must not be used by any other member of the family at any time or for any purpose.]

If you have a telephone conversation where you are discussing confidential work matters, you should ensure that such calls take place in privacy to avoid inadvertent breach of confidentiality.

Visits to work premises

On occasions you may need to attend council offices for training, performance assessment meetings, team briefings etc. This will normally not be frequent, and the dates and times of such visits will be agreed in advance.

Insurance, mortgage or rental agreements

Whilst our Employer's Liability Insurance extends to home based staff, and any council equipment installed in your home will also be covered, you should ensure that any agreement with your landlord or mortgage lender allows you to work from home, and that your house buildings and contents insurance will not be invalidated by you working from home.

This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.

Notes

The Good Councillor's guide to being a good employer provides advice and guidance around how to manage a homeworker.

Guidance

Where there is text in [square brackets] this part may be updated or be deleted if not relevant. An alternative option may have been provided.

Important notice

This is an example of an employment policy designed for a small council adhering to statutory minimum requirements and does not constitute legal advice. As with all policies it should be consistent with your terms and conditions of employment.

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This document has been written by Worknest HR – a company that provides HR advice and guidance to town and parish councils. Please contact them on 01403 240 205 for information about their services.