

People Framework

Working from Home Procedure



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Tracking

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Service			

Revision History

Revision Date	Revisor	Previous Version	Description of Revision

Document Approvals

Each revision requires the following approvals:

Sponsor Approval		Name	Date

1. Introduction

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council recognises that, on occasion, there may be circumstances where it may be more beneficial or flexible for employees to work from home, for example:

- In order to complete a particular task or project
- Where a specific task needs dedicated and focussed input and could be dealt with more efficiently and productively at home, e.g. to save travelling time and prevent interruption
- Where it is difficult for an employee to get to work, e.g. due to adverse weather conditions or travel disruption
- To facilitate a short but unavoidable commitment at home, e.g. boiler repair
- As part of an agreed phased return to work

Whenever possible, working from home arrangements must be approved in advance by the manager to ensure that the impact on colleagues and the organisation is kept to a minimum.

Working from home on a regular basis may be agreed as part of a flexible working request. Please see the Council's Flexible Working Procedure.

Working from home on an occasional basis does not change the employee's place of employment as specified in their contract of employment. Unless a contractual change has been agreed following a Flexible Working request, working from home arrangements will be subject to review and change.

It is recognised that there are some employees who, due to the nature of their role, are unable to work from home.

2. Working from home during the Settling In Period

Managers are responsible for monitoring a new employee's performance and progress during the Settling In period and it is expected that new employees will attend their place of work rather than working from home during their first weeks of employment.

Managers will decide whether it is appropriate for employees to work from home during the Settling-In period, taking into consideration the nature of their role, the requirements of the service, the level of support needed and their ability to review and assess the employee's performance, capability and suitability for the role.

3. Working from home as a reasonable adjustment

Where a request to work from home is being made on the grounds of reasonable adjustment due to a disability, e.g. to enable the employee to attend hospital appointments or receive treatment, the manager must consult HR, who will seek advice from the employee's GP and/or the Council's Occupational Health provider.

4. Compliance with policies and procedures

All employees must comply with the Council's policies and procedures when working from home.

5. Caring responsibilities

Occasional home working is not a substitute for childcare or the care of other dependants. Employees must ensure that they are able to fulfil the requirements of their role whilst working from home by making adequate provision for the care of their dependants during working hours. The Council reserves the right to request evidence of the employee's childcare arrangements.

6. Absence

The usual provisions relating to reporting sickness absence will apply. Working from home is not appropriate where an employee is too unwell to attend their place of work.

Where an employee is unable to attend work due to an emergency involving a dependant or at home, the Council's Special Leave Procedure will apply.

Environment – An occasional home worker needs a home environment which offers adequate equipment including computer, broadband connection, etc., freedom from interruptions and distractions, security and confidentiality, ability to meet health and safety requirement

7. Health and safety requirements

Health and safety legislation applies to homeworkers and the Council has the same legal duty to protect their health, safety and welfare as if they were attending their normal place of work.

Before home working starts, the employee must complete a Homeworking risk assessment. The risk assessment must be reviewed by the manager and the manager must be satisfied that there is low risk to the employee and that any required changes to the working environment have been implemented.

8. ICT support

Employees must liaise with ICT to ensure that they are provided with the appropriate secure access to IT facilities for working from home.

The Council's ICT team can only offer limited support for home computers, e.g. access to the Council's network via CITRIX, and cannot be held responsible for issues arising from the use of an individual's home computer equipment to access the Council's systems.

In the event of an ICT systems failure, employees should contact their manager, who will need to establish the extent of the issue and the impact on the service before deciding on the appropriate course of action.

9. Confidentiality and security of data

Managers and employees must ensure that all Council information is kept confidential and secure at all times. Employees are not permitted to keep Council data (including electronic and paper files) at home on a permanent basis.

Employees who work from home must ensure compliance with the Council's Data Protection and ICT Security & Acceptable Use Policies at all times.

10. Insurance

Employees should ensure that all Council property is used appropriately and responsibly and that all reasonable precautions are taken to prevent damage and/or theft. Employees must report any damage or theft of Council property to their manager immediately.

Employees who work from home are covered by Council's "Employer's Liability Insurance" and Public Liability Insurance, providing that the rules of this policy have been followed.

Working from home may affect the provisions of the employee's home contents insurance policy. Employees are advised to inform their insurer prior to commencing working from home. The Council will not accept liability for damage caused to personal property.

11. Attendance and availability

Where it is agreed that an employee can work from home, they must be available and able to work, unless their absence is due to an authorised form of leave or sickness.

Employees are expected to be available to come into the office on a working from home day if they are asked to do so, e.g. in the event of the sickness of a colleague, a work emergency or to attend a meeting. Where an employee is asked to attend the office at short notice, the manager will try to provide sufficient notice to enable the employee to arrive at their normal starting time. Where this is not possible the employee's travelling time will be considered as part of their working day.

12. Communication and contact

Employees who are working from home must be readily contactable, normally by email and by telephone, during normal working hours. Employees must advise their manager of any times they will not be contactable, seeking permission as appropriate.

13. Hours of work

Employees are expected to work their normal contractual hours when working from home.

Where an employee requests a working pattern which is outside of the normal working hours of their service, this must be agreed by their manager, who will need to ensure that there is sufficient cover to meet operational demands.

14. Equipment and expenses

The Council will not provide additional equipment for home working, other than that which is provided as standard, unless this is agreed as a reasonable adjustment to enable the employee to carry out the duties of their role.

No contribution will be made by the Council towards normal household expenses attached to working from home, e.g. heating and lighting.