

## COVID-19 HOMEWORKING POLICY

### INTRODUCTION

Whilst Tayside Contracts is making plans for its recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, many employees will be encouraged to continue to work from home for all or part of their working week. This is to support arrangements for physical distancing in offices and to comply with the Scottish Government's Route Map for moving out of lockdown by working from home where possible through to phase 4.

The current homeworking arrangements are exceptional, and this arrangement does not guarantee a right to work from home indefinitely.

This policy is subject to review prior to 30 June 2021 and will be revised in response to any updated Government legislation and/or guidance.

### SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy applies to all full-time, part-time, permanent and temporary office based and non-frontline employees within Tayside Contracts.

### COVID-19 HOMEWORKING ARRANGEMENTS

Employees who can work from home should do so, temporarily, during the COVID-19 pandemic and phased move out of lockdown. However, an employee's contractual place of work will remain as it was prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and government lockdown.

If an employee is unable to work from home, managers should consider access to the office as a reasonable alternative. However, any office working must be undertaken in accordance with Tayside Contracts' Generic Office Based [Risk Assessment](#).

Managers will be required to assess the suitability of the job, the suitability of the employee, and the suitability of the employee's home for homeworking under the terms of this policy, using the homeworking risk assessment below. Managers also need to consider other issues such as information security, access to equipment and resources.

Many employees working from home during this time are managing childcare and other caring responsibilities and employees are encouraged to talk to their line manager about what support they need to achieve the right balance between care and work commitments i.e. an adjustment to working pattern and/or working hours may be appropriate.

Managers should set clear expectations regarding homeworking and this includes agreeing the following:

- When employees will be available to work
- How employees/managers will keep in touch
- How work-life balance will be managed
- Rules around storing information and data protection
- How performance will be managed and measured
- Who employees should contact if they have any problems or their current circumstances change

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY FOR WORKING AT HOME**

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 applies to employees working at home as it does to those based in Tayside Contracts' premises. An assessment of health and safety risks in the employees' home, including those relating to Display Screen Equipment (DSE), must be undertaken by the employee. This assessment should also cover other aspects such as secure storage.

The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992, apply to workers who use DSE daily, for continuous periods of an hour or more. These regulations do not apply to workers who use DSE infrequently or for short periods of time.

The Health and Safety Executive advise that there is no increased risk from DSE work for those working at home temporarily, in circumstances covered by this policy, and in this situation, employers do not need to do home workstation assessments, but employees can and are encouraged to complete their own basic assessment at home. To ensure Tayside Contracts meets its statutory obligations employees will be required to conduct a 'Homeworking Self Risk Assessment' (see appendix 1).

Managers will be required to review the risk assessment with the employee and address any identified risks appropriately; should this not be possible Tayside Contracts reserve the right to prevent the individual from working from home. In such cases alternative methods of working will be considered.

Managers must ensure that employees feel the work they are being asked to do at home can be done safely, they have the correct equipment to work safely, regular contact is maintained and reasonable adjustments are made as and when required.

Every employee has a duty to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and of those who may be affected by what they do. In the case of those working at home, this will include any family members and others in their home. Employees should inform their manager of any health and safety risks or any homeworking arrangements that need to change.

Any COVID-19 homeworking agreement is made on the basis that employees will work at the address stated on the risk assessment. If an employee makes any changes at home which may

affect any measures taken to protect their health and safety, they must inform their line manager to allow an updated risk assessment to be undertaken.

If an employee or any other person is injured at home due to a Tayside Contracts' work activity the employee must report the incident to their manager using the ARF1 form.

Employees working from home should make use of the health and wellbeing resources available [here](#)

## **EQUIPMENT, RESOURCES AND INFORMATION SECURITY**

The principles of the IT Security Policy and Data Protection Policy will apply when homeworking and employees who are working at home must familiarise themselves with these policies. Employees who are sharing a workspace with another household member must minimise the potential risk for unauthorised access to data e.g. face away from one another, lock computer screens when not in use, and use earphones/headphones when making calls.

It is expected that employees use current resources provided by Tayside Contracts such as Laptops, Cisco Jabber, Mobile Phones, Microsoft Teams and Office 365. Remote access can be provided to allow employees to access the network from home; this can be requested through IT via the Remote Access request process.

During the COVID-19 crisis, employees are encouraged to take their office desktops home to replicate their workstation as far as reasonably possible. This may include desktop monitors, computer chairs, laptop docking stations, keyboard and mouse, and adapted equipment where possible i.e. ergonomic keyboards or screen covers. Any office equipment taken home should be recorded with IT/Property as appropriate.

Generally, Tayside Contracts will not provide employees with additional equipment or office furniture such as desks to work from home; however, if an individual requires specialist equipment or ancillary equipment related to their particular role/home set up e.g. a headset for confidentiality reasons, the manager should consider if this is required as part of a reasonable adjustment or normal provision of equipment request.

Expensive/larger equipment that the employee does not need daily will be made available at a local Tayside Contracts' premise should it be required i.e. printers, scanners etc.

Any equipment provided to work from home will be subject to regular testing and must be approved prior to use at home i.e. PAT testing.

## **REVIEW AND TERMINATION OF AGREEMENTS**

Any homeworking arrangement will be subject to ongoing review and may be terminated if the arrangement is no longer suitable due to service requirements, the suitability of the job, suitability of the person or suitability of the home (as identified using the homeworking risk assessment).

## **SICKNESS ABSENCE**

You must follow Tayside Contracts' Sickness Absence Notification Procedures if you are unable to attend work due to sickness or any other reason.

Employees who are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 are required to self-isolate for 10 days and employees who live with another who is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 are required to self-isolate for 14 days. Provided the employee is well enough to work from home they can continue to do so, otherwise, they should report as sick and not return to work until they are symptom free and fit to do so. This will be recorded as sick leave, but employees will be paid their normal pay.

## **TIME AND ATTENDANCE**

Employees authorised to work from home should 'clock in/out' using the Time and Attendance System as normal for commencing and finishing work, including breaks.

Employees are not permitted to accrue flexi-time beyond their standard working week, unless specifically requested to work additional hours by their line manager. Only employees who are undertaking work that is directly linked to the provision of essential services will be asked to work additional hours of overtime during this crisis period.

Employees are responsible for regulating their own working time and taking appropriate breaks and should ensure they are not exceeding the maximum working hours or taking less than the minimum work breaks as set under the Working Time Regulations 1998. Legally required rest breaks are:

- At least 20 minutes break during each working day lasting more than 6 hours.
- Time period between stopping work one day and beginning the next is not less than 11 hours.
- Have at least one complete day each week when no work is done.

## **DEPENDENT CARE**

Where appropriate, adequate dependent care must be arranged during the hours the employee is homeworking to enable agreed performance/outputs to be achieved. Some employees may require a more flexible homeworking arrangement and this may include working different hours, agreeing that the employee may not be able to work a full day or full week, reducing work targets or being flexible about deadlines where possible.

## **BUSINESS MILEAGE**

Employees incurring business mileage, as per the terms set out in Tayside Contracts' Motor Vehicle Policy, can continue to claim travel and subsistence expenses where appropriate.

## **ALLOWANCES**

Tayside Contracts does not pay any homeworking allowances. However, employees required to work from home regularly (i.e. a minimum of 2 whole days per week) can, if they chose,

claim tax relief for some of the bills they have to pay as a result of having to work from home. The tax relief is based on what an employee has spent and the rate at which they pay tax e.g. if an employee has spent £60 and pay tax at a rate of 20% in that year, the tax relief they will receive is £12.

Employees who wish to claim this tax relief should refer to the HMRC website for further information on how to apply:

<https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/working-at-home>

## **INSURANCE AND TAXATION**

Homeworking should not affect an employee's home and contents insurance however employees must check with their insurance provider that their current policy provides adequate cover for working from home. Employees should check with their provider that contents cover is adequate for the type of work being undertaken and that home cover provides adequate cover to protect from damage to their home. Any costs incurred will be met by the employee.

Tayside Contracts' Employers Liability Insurance and Public Liability Insurance will cover any employees and equipment and/or property belonging to Tayside Contracts, so long as the appropriate risk assessment has been completed satisfactorily.

Homeworking should not affect an employee's council tax or mortgage, however employees must check with their relevant council and mortgage lender prior to working from home.

## **POLICY VIOLATIONS**

Failure to comply with this policy or any other employment policy may result in individuals being investigated and disciplinary action taken against them in accordance with Tayside Contracts' Disciplinary Policy.

## **RELATED POLICIES**

The Homeworking Policy links to the following policies which can be accessed on the Intranet, or requested from your line manager or from the HR Admin Team:

- Flexible Working Policy
- Display Screen Equipment Assessment Policy
- IT Security Policy
- Performance at Work Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Sickness Absence Management Policy
- Notification of Sickness Absence and Return to Work Procedure
- Data Protection Policy
- Motor Vehicle Policy

The above list is not exhaustive.

## **CONSULTATION**

Tayside Contracts' recognised Trade Unions have been fully consulted on this employment policy.

## **POLICY REVIEW**

The COVID-19 Homeworking Policy will be reviewed by 30 June 2021 or as required by legislative changes or Government guidance.

## **DATA PROTECTION LEGISLATION**

Tayside Contracts respects the privacy of our employees, any personal data processed during the application of this policy will be in line with Data Protection Legislation. Further information on how we may process personal data for the purpose of applying this policy can be found in our Privacy Notice.

**Should you have any queries or require further clarification regarding any aspects of this policy or related policies please contact, HR Services on 01382 812721 or [employment.policies@tayside-contracts.co.uk](mailto:employment.policies@tayside-contracts.co.uk)**

**If you would like this document translated into another language or in another format such as audio or large print then please contact Angie Thompson, Equalities and Communications Manager on 01382 834165 or [angie.thompson@tayside-contracts.co.uk](mailto:angie.thompson@tayside-contracts.co.uk)**



**HOMEWORKING SELF RISK ASSESSMENT**

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	
<b>Job Title:</b>	
<b>Line Manager:</b>	
<b>Type of work to be carried out at home:</b>	
<b>Hours per week to be worked at home:</b>	

<b>Question</b>	<b>Yes/No /N/A</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Action Required</b>
Do you have a desk and chair available within your home that you consider suitable, which will enable you to carry out your work tasks?			
Have you previously carried out a Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessment during your time with Tayside Contracts?			
Have you raised any special requirements in your DSE assessment (footrest/specialist chair etc.)?			
Can this setup be replicated at your home workstation?			
Would you require any additional equipment to facilitate homeworking safely?			
Can you adjust the brightness and contrast of your computer/laptop screen to a suitable level?			
Is your computer/laptop screen clear, legible and free from flickering?			
Can you adjust the height of your screen so that your eyes			

are level with the top of it? *a laptop riser may be required			
Can you adjust the position and tilt of your keyboard so that it is comfortable for use? *a laptop riser may be required			
Is the keyboard clean and are the keys in a legible condition?			
Is there adequate lighting available?			
Can you easily adjust the heating to a comfortable level?			
Is there a suitable amount of space available to you to carry out your duties?			
Does the workspace provide suitable privacy and freedom from distraction?			
Is the area free of slip and trip hazards?			
Is there a suitable amount of socket space to accommodate your work equipment?			
Are sockets and fixed wiring in a good condition?			
Are your work electrical appliances (Laptop/tablet/phone etc.) in good visual condition and free from obvious signs of damage?			
Have all your work appliances been PAT tested within the specified time period (Contact IT to find out how often portable appliances require testing)?			
Are there suitable means of escape should there be a fire within the premises?			
Are there smoke detectors in place on each level of the premises?			
Are flammable sources (paper etc.) suitably managed and kept away from heat sources			



(candles, cigarettes etc.) within the premises?			
Is your workload managed so that you can take regular breaks from your computer?			
Are you able to easily contact your line manager to raise any issues you may encounter?			
Are you able to easily contact Tayside Contracts IT department regarding any issues you may encounter?			
Could you easily contact emergency services should this be required?			
Are you aware of any additional health and safety hazards or concerns which may impede your ability to work safely from home?			
<b>DATA PROTECTION IMPACT</b>			
Will you be working with personal data in your home?			
Which categories of personal data will you be working with i.e special category			
Will you be required to take physical copies of the data you require home?			
Will you be accessing the personal data from a work or personal device?			
If using a personal device, how where and for how long will you store your work?			
Will you be accessing a secure network?			
Which Tayside Contracts systems will you be accessing			

while working from home? E.g. Snowdrop, Integra, Q-Pulse			
Is your WIFI at home password protected?			
Do you have any additional protection on your home WIFI connection? i.e. anti-virus protection, malware etc.			
Do you have somewhere secure to store personal data before and after your working hours or during breaks?			

<b>Print Name:</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Line Manager:</b>	
<b>Signature</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Review Date:</b>	