

**18. Homeworking**

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**Policy**

The Board of Directors and the Chief Executive of the Society recognise their responsibility for protecting the health & safety of colleagues and others who may be affected by the Society’s business activities. Everyone understands the need for clear and robust policies in the workplace to ensure the business runs well and everyone works safely. Homeworking is an extension of the workplace and it is important that the same high standards are in place at all times.

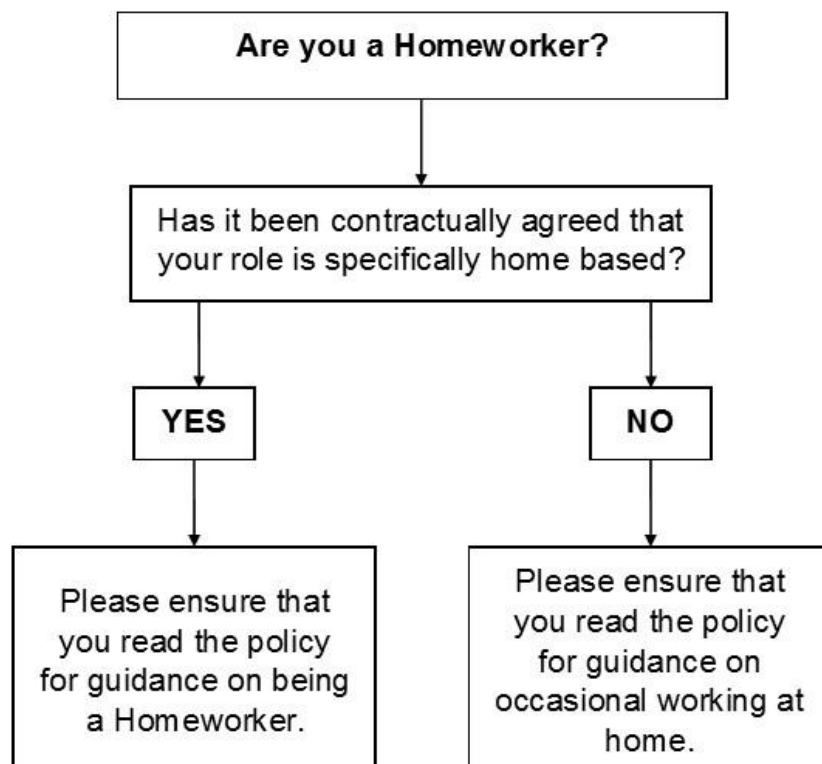
**Who comes under this policy?**

Any Society colleague who is undertaking home working as part of their job / tasks required to perform that job. Homeworkers are those colleagues that the Society employs specifically to work from home and this has been agreed contractually.

Colleagues who have laptops and work at home on occasions; checking emails in the evening etc. are not classed as homeworkers for the purpose of this policy but should read through the guidance in this policy.

**What do I need to do next if I am a Homeworker?**

You must now read through this Homeworking policy in full and ensure you understand what is required of you to ensure you are fulfilling your responsibilities as a colleague of the Society.



**Homeworkers Policy**

The following areas must be considered by the GGM prior to the roles of homeworking being agreed within their area of the business. General / Operations Managers will carry responsibility for ensuring that this policy is then implemented for colleagues undertaking homeworking.

## **Organisation of work and time**

It will be the responsibility of the GGM to ensure that where homeworkers are employed by the Society a schedule for homeworkers has been agreed in advance. This will provide a framework for both managers and colleagues so that there will be a common understanding of what will be produced (i.e. the work outputs - quality and quantity) and in what time frame.

## **Communication and teamwork**

The Society believes in team working for all colleagues and this is just as important when there are homeworkers. It is important to hold team and individual meetings and keep all team members informed and involved in decisions and general developments.

If contact is required in an emergency then contact will be made in the same way as for office-based colleagues. This may involve contact during the evenings, holidays or while sick if the situation demands it.

## **Privacy and monitoring of work**

Homeworkers will be given the same right to privacy out-of-hours as office based colleagues. Home visits, where necessary, will generally be arranged at times acceptable to the homeworker.

## **Data Protection**

The Society is responsible for taking the appropriate measures to ensure the protection of data. Both managers and colleagues should refer to the relevant Data Protection Policy for further details.

## **Specific Roles & Responsibilities**

### **Operational / General Managers and other Managers**

All managers have a general duty regarding health & safety of colleagues and others, under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HASAWA) and other legislation. The legislation applies whether colleagues are working in a conventional office or managing people remotely at home. This general duty is qualified by the principle of 'as far as is reasonably practicable'.

Managers must ensure:

- That a sufficient risk assessment of all the work activities is undertaken. Colleagues can conduct a self-assessment (using the appropriate Society forms), with managers carrying out a further assessment if any issues are identified from the colleague's report.
- In the case of homeworkers, it is acceptable for assessments to be carried out by the colleague provided they have been properly trained to do so.
- All assessments need to identify the hazards that are present so that decisions on how to manage such risks can be made.
- The homeworker has been informed of the Society's Health & Safety Policies and Procedures.
- The homeworker applies these policies correctly.

## **Colleagues**

Colleagues must take reasonable care of their own health & safety and the health & safety of others who may be affected by what they do or do not do (e.g. for homeworkers this will include other family members, neighbours and visitors).

Colleagues undertaking homeworking must also:

- Co-operate with the Society on health & safety matters and use work items and equipment correctly. It is their responsibility to report all employment- related hazards.
- Ensure that risk assessments have been carried out either by themselves (using the Society procedure within this policy) or by a representative of the Society.
- Ensure hazardous manual handling is avoided.
- Understand that domestic electrical system is the homeworkers' own responsibility.
- Understand that all faults which may be a hazard within the specific homework area to their own or others' health must be reported.
- Understand that homeworkers can stop work in the event of serious danger arising from the work they are doing, and they should inform their manager immediately.
- Ensure that they have informed their insurer where homework is to be a substantial part of working time. (There may be some additional premium payments levied by the insurers. Alternative insurers may be available at no extra cost), agree beforehand what will be regarded as the 'work area' within the home and agree to maintain the work area to ensure it is free of hazards.

## **Occasional Working at Home**

This intended for use by colleagues who carry out occasional work at home only and is not for use by contractually agreed homeworkers. For a variety of reasons and with varying degrees of frequency many colleagues undertake part of their work away from their normal place of work (E.g. - Head Office).

Whilst it is expected that normally colleagues will be in the workplace it is accepted that there will be circumstances where an individual and the relevant manager agree that it is mutually beneficial for that individual to work at home or elsewhere. The purpose of these guidelines is to bring clarity and consistency to arrangements for working at home whilst maintaining a certain degree of flexibility in the detail.

## **Scope**

These guidelines cover all colleagues whose duties may include the type of work described in below.

## **Principles**

These guidelines are based on the broad principles that working at home:

- Is not a right but is based on an underlying management philosophy of trust and mutual benefit;
- Is at the line manager's discretion following consultation and discussion with the individual;

- Is voluntary;
- Is not intended to create a situation where colleagues will feel obliged to work excessive hours;
- Does not change terms and conditions;
- Does not attract subsidy since the benefits are seen as being mutual;

## **Procedure**

### **Approval**

Working at home requires prior arrangement with the appropriate Line Manager. This is so that the appropriate manager knows the whereabouts of the individual and that there is no possible confusion about why that individual is not at his or her normal place of work.

### **Contact Details**

Since one of the main advantages of working at home is to complete a piece of work with minimum distraction it is understood that anyone working at home should not be interrupted unnecessarily. However, individuals working at home must always give contact details e.g. location, home telephone number and (where appropriate) mobile telephone number, to the line manager. Individuals must be able to take telephone calls and to make themselves available at the workplace if necessary.

### **Health and Safety**

Most of the work undertaken at home by colleagues is administration, paper based work or work on a computer. In general, this is not work involving high risk. Colleagues periodically working from home will not be classified as 'homeworkers' and therefore there is not a requirement to carry out the detailed risk assessments that would otherwise be mandatory under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

However guidance is available to individuals working from home to remind them of general risk assessment principles, to raise their awareness of potential risks to health & safety which may result from working at home and indicating possible action that can be taken to create safe working conditions and the right working environment.

## **IT / Equipment**

### **General**

Most of the work undertaken at home by colleagues only requires access to basic equipment e.g. computer, internet, telephone.

### **Insurance**

The Society's current insurance policy covers use of equipment such as laptops at home in respect of theft and accidental damage up to a certain limit and subject to conditions in relation to excess payments. However, it is important to note that any equipment left unattended in a vehicle will not be covered.