

Homeworking Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council recognises the advantages of home-based working, and the Clerk's role is, at the date of adoption, based at home for most of their working time, supplemented by time at the Council's office or the village hall for meetings and other work, and by site visits as required.
- 1.2 This policy describes the working arrangements and expectations that apply to home-based working, and should be read alongside the Council's Health and Safety Policy and Lone Worker Policy.

2. Scope of this Policy

- 2.1 This policy applies to all staff who are home-based, whether full time, part time or fixed term.

3. Safe Working Environment

- 3.1 Health and safety for home-based staff applies in the same way as for office-based staff, so far as is reasonably practicable. Any working environment should be safe, with employees adhering to all health and safety and work-related policies.
- 3.2 All home working employees are required to complete and submit a 'Home Based Workers Risk Assessment', retained by the Parish Clerk and Chair of the Staffing Committee. This identifies any possible hazards in the home working environment, and following completion, measures may need to be taken to control any risks identified.
- 3.3 This assessment should be completed annually, or more frequently if there are changes to arrangements such as new equipment, changes to the home-office space, or a house move.
- 3.4 Some of the most important considerations include:
- where possible, an area should be set aside from the rest of the living space to allow work without distractions;
 - the home office should have adequate space to work comfortably and safely;
 - the desk should be large enough to accommodate equipment and paperwork;
 - the home working space should preferably have sufficient storage and be well organised, with equipment close to hand;
 - the work area should be well lit, with natural lighting if possible;
 - equipment and sockets should be situated to avoid potential trip hazards; and
 - regular visual checks should be carried out on cables of any electronic equipment supplied, with defects reported accordingly.

4. Visitors and Meetings

- 4.1 The Clerk does not receive members of the public at their home. Where a member of the public or other party wishes to meet the Clerk, the Clerk will first establish the visitor's details and the purpose of the meeting. Meetings will normally take place at the village hall rather than at the Clerk's home.

5. Facilities and Equipment

- 5.1 The Council may provide equipment to enable working from home and will maintain and replace items when necessary.
- 5.2 It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that proper care is taken of any equipment provided, and any faults or defects should be reported to the Council as soon as possible. Should the risk assessment identify the need for further equipment, this should also be reported to the Council.
- 5.3 All equipment provided belongs to Honeybourne Parish Council, and upon termination of employment it is expected to be promptly returned. Items are recorded on the Council's Asset Register.

6. Hours of Work

- 6.1 A contract of employment will specify the hours of work, with the expectation that an employee is contactable by telephone or email. There may be times during the working day when an employee is not available, in which case this should be flagged to the Chair of the Council with prior authorisation; this does not include comfort breaks.
- 6.2 All employees are by law permitted 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.

7. Potential Conflicts of Interest

- 7.1 During hours of work, the Council expects that a work environment enables effective working and that there is minimal distraction from domestic matters.
- 7.2 In the case of an emergency requiring attendance relating to a non-work matter, notification should be given to the Chair of the Council.

8. Data Protection

- 8.1 Employees are responsible for keeping all documents and associated information secure at all times. Specifically, homeworkers are under a duty to ensure:
- that filing cabinets and drawers are locked when not being used;
 - that all documentation belonging to the Parish Council is safely secured except when in use;
 - that passwords are set up on all IT equipment and applications;
 - that documents are saved to cloud-based software; and
 - that sensitive telephone conversations take place in privacy.

9. Insurance, Mortgage or Rental Agreements

- 9.1 Honeybourne Parish Council's Employers' Liability Insurance extends to home-based staff and covers Council equipment in the home working environment.
- 9.2 Employees may also be required to seek permission from their landlord or mortgage lender to allow for a working-from-home arrangement.

9.3 Employees are also required to report their home working status to their own insurance provider, to ensure no infringement invalidates the domestic policy.

10. Home Working Risk Assessment Template

10.1 The following template should be used to complete the annual Home Based Workers Risk Assessment referred to at clause 3.2.

Date:

Assessor:

Location of Assessment:

Risk	Yes/No	Action Required
Desk Area		
Do you have adequate space to work comfortably?		
Is there enough space underneath your desk to stretch your legs?		
Are there trailing electrical cables around your working area that need to be tied up?		
Is your working area warm, well-lit and well-ventilated?		
Do you need a desk lamp to improve lighting?		
Is your working area clutter-free so that you can focus easily on the task?		
Display Screen Set-Up		
Is your desk chair set up correctly? Is your lower back supported, are there armrests, and are your feet flat on the floor?		
Do you have enough surface space on your desk to work comfortably?		
Are your keyboard and mouse clean and within easy reach, without having to stretch?		
Is your display screen clean and positioned so there is no glare from a window or light?		
Is your display screen level with your eyes so it does not cause discomfort to your neck or head?		
Can you easily reach everything you need without twisting and straining your upper body?		
Fire and Electrical Safety		
Are smoke detectors working and checked regularly, e.g. every month?		

Do you regularly dispose of waste, including papers, to prevent a build-up of fire 'fuel'?		
Does any electrical equipment spark or show signs of burns, and so need removing from use?		
Do any wires look damaged or frayed and so need removing from use?		
Do you regularly inspect your electrical equipment to check for signs of wear and tear?		