

PATCHWAY TOWN COUNCIL

HOME WORKING POLICY



The Council recognise that to provide high quality services to the public, modern working practices should be developed and encouraged where productivity and performance improvements can be made, and work-life balance can be maintained.

Occasional Homeworking may be appropriate in the following circumstances:

1. To allow the opportunity to work on a particular piece of work more effectively, avoiding office environment interruptions.
2. To prepare urgent important policies and procedure to meet essential Council requirements and make improvements;
3. To provide a solution to a temporary problem which renders an employee unable to travel to work.

In these circumstances, it should be noted that the office is the normal place of work, and as such, there is no automatic right for employees to work at home, and any such arrangement will therefore be exclusively agreed with the Town Clerk. Where it is felt that it will be necessary or beneficial to work from home on an ad hoc basis, agreement should be sought in advance from the Town Clerk, and this should include required performance outcomes.

The Town Clerk may refuse the request for operational or practical reasons. If the Town Clerk requires to work from home, the Chairman should agree.

Employees are responsible for completing their contractual hours and they must take a half hour break for every 6 hours worked, in line with the Working Time Regulations. It is important for all employees to be mindful of health and safety and not work excessive hours.

The relationship between individuals, teams and managers must be based on trust. Time worked must be accurately recorded,

HEALTH AND SAFETY MATTERS

Staff working on any homeworking arrangement have a duty to ensure that they comply with the Council's Health and Safety Policy. As a guide the following points should be adhered to:

- Wires connected to IT equipment should be tidy and pose no risk to the user or others.
- Electricity outlets should meet the relevant safety standards to protect equipment. The employee must ensure that no electricity socket is overloaded by the overuse of multi-socket adapters
- A suitable desk or furniture with a comfortable chair and sufficient uncluttered space for the home PC or laptop and peripherals is essential to prevent risk of postural problems. If employees use a wrist rest or footrest in work, they may take these home whilst homeworking.
- Sufficient lighting to allow reading comfortably is required. However, the light should not be positioned directly in-front or behind the user and, ideally, should be above, but also slightly behind, the desk.
- Employees must not attempt to use a PC / laptop that has suffered any damage. If any liquid is spilled on or near the computer, or if any physical damage or blow is inflicted to the computer, then it should be immediately switched off and left unplugged from the mains electricity.

Adopted: 18th October 2022.

Review: October 2023

- A user must never attempt to open the external casing of a laptop nor attempt to repair or upgrade any of the Council's computer equipment or software. In any such circumstance, the equipment should be returned to the office for maintenance. Particular care of the mains power adapter must be taken which must be protected from damp, moisture or physical harm.
- If an employee has any injury to the wrist, hand, or eye, they should avoid using the PC / laptop. Employees must ensure that they take regular breaks away from the PC / laptop.

Data Access

Patchway Town Council and the Clerk to the Council will ensure that other household members do not have access to personal data as defined in the General Data Protection Regulation 2016. Appropriate security measures must be considered and put in place to satisfy the requirements of the Act. This extends to security of electronic files, disposal of confidential waste, locking away the home/office computer and an automatic laptop log off time after a specified period of inactivity.

Employees must be aware that they have a duty of confidentiality to protect all information, particularly personal information, from unauthorised access. Care should be taken to ensure the security of such information and ICT equipment at home. Failure to do so could be a breach of the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and potentially lead to disciplinary action.

Each home worker will use their own independent laptop and separate UDB drives will be used.

Working from home may be suspended where needs of the service require physical presence in the workplace. Examples include:

1. covering for absence within the team;
2. attendance at meetings, whether formal or informal;
3. peaks in workload, expected or unexpected.

Abuse of the scheme

All homeworking arrangements are based on trust. If it is felt that an employee may be abusing these arrangements, then this will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Code.