



Tenterden Town Council

Home Working Policy

Reviewed	Adopted
Reviewed by Staff & Employment sub-committee	20/03/2024
Approving committee: Finance & General Purposes	08/04/2024
Policy version reference	Version 1
Next review	April 2026

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1. Introduction

Tenterden Town Council (“the Council”) recognises that there may be occasions when an employee works from home. The Home Working Policy enables home working to support the Town Councils business and employee needs and demands. It remains flexible whilst identifying the responsibilities, measures, and the risk-based approach to be carried out within the home environment to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our staff.

2. Purpose of this policy

- a) To provide a clear and manageable procedure for occasional home working.
- b) To provide the basis for a clear understanding of the occasional home working scheme for the benefit of the Town Council and staff member.
- c) To make clear the responsibilities of the Town Clerk and occasional home worker.
- d) To ensure occasional home workers work safely and securely with preventative measures for hazards or risks.

3. Definition

Home working under this policy, involves using the employee’s home as a base for work, on an occasional basis, instead of the employee coming into the workplace. Under this policy, the definition of what constitutes occasional working, will be determined by the Town Clerk and may vary according to the requirements of the role and personal circumstances. This policy requires that home working is only undertaken at the employee’s home and not at any other location.

4. Conditions

- a) Due to the nature of individual tasks, some roles within the Council are not deemed suitable for home working.
- b) Home working arrangements should work for both the Council and the employee. In general, the Council will be supportive of employees working from home as long as core business needs are met, and the employee can meet all the requirements of their role from home.
- c) Arrangements or requests, for occasional home working will be agreed by the Town Clerk or in their absence by the Deputy Town Clerk.
- d) Risk assessments of the home working environment, in line with legal requirements, must be undertaken (Appendix 1).
- e) This policy enables the requirement for a checking in/checking out procedure, the nature of which will be determined by the Town Clerk.
- f) When working from home employees are responsible for ensuring they are contactable during normal working hours. This should be via a Council mobile telephone (where provided) or the employee’s home or mobile telephone numbers. Microsoft Teams is also an acceptable means of being contactable. Details of personal telephone numbers will remain confidential within the Council; messages will be taken and forwarded on.
- g) The working environment should be distraction free with work time for working.
- h) As a general rule it is not considered necessary for those working from home to require supplies of stationery etc. Large volumes of printing and collating of documents should be carried out on Town Council premises.
- i) Under no circumstances should home working be used as an alternative method of meeting carer requirements

- j) Home working agreements will be reviewed in light of any change of circumstances, whether relating to employee, work they are required to undertake, or the working environment.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Employer Responsibilities

- a) **Health & Safety** - In line with the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 (“the Act”) and their Health & Safety Policy the Council will ensure, as far as reasonably practical, the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees, including those working from home. The Council reserves the right to inspect home working premises in order to ensure that the Act, current risk assessments and Council policies and procedures are being adhered to. Reasonable notice will be given to employees before any inspection.
- b) **Insurance** - The Council accepts liability for accidents which are proven to have been caused by the authorised use of equipment provided by them in line with any instructions issued.
- c) **Data Protection, Security & Confidentiality** - Council employees will be instructed that in instances where their colleagues are working from home, they will not disclose any personal details e.g. telephone numbers to anyone outside of the Council.
- d) **Running costs and expenses** – Where the employee is choosing to work from home, the Council will not contribute towards costs – for example, heating and lighting.

5.2 Employee Responsibilities

- a) **Health & Safety** - Employees are expected to carry out their work in such a way as to ensure, as far as reasonably practical, that there is no risk to health and safety to themselves, members of their family or visitors.
- b) **Insurance** - Occasional home workers working under this policy with the knowledge and consent of their manager are covered by the Town Council’s insurance arrangements. The Town Council will be responsible for any necessary insurance of equipment supplied by them and employee liability insurance. It is the responsibility of the occasional home worker to provide adequate home buildings and contents insurance. The Town Council will not accept liability for damage caused to the home or its contents.
- c) **Accidents, Incidents & Dangerous Occurrences** - In line with the Council’s Accident Reporting Procedure, employees must inform their line manager of any accidents, incidents or dangerous occurrences which take place whilst working at home. The initial report should be via telephone with the appropriate paperwork being completed on the employee’s return to the workplace.
- d) **Policies and Procedures** - All work carried out on Council business is covered by the requirements of the Council’s policies and procedures, even if this work is undertaken at home.
- e) **Data Protection, Security & Confidentiality** - Arrangements for home working should ensure that the employee can maintain the security and confidentiality of documents within the home environment whilst complying with Data Protection legislation and the town council’s e-mail, internet and computer use policies & procedure (employees should be aware that even when using their personal equipment to undertake Council business they must comply with this procedure). Employees should make sure that when leaving your computer that the desktop is locked through a password protected screen saver - ensuring data and information security. Confidential documents should not be removed from the town council offices, if access is needed only electronic versions should be used.
- f) **Remote Access** – To enable remote access, employees can use their Council issued laptop (or other device) and office 365 account allowing full remote working with collaboration tools including

Microsoft Teams, Outlook, Word and Excel. All Data Protection, security and confidentiality measures and policies must be adhered to.

- g) **Wi-fi** – Should there be a failure of the Wi-Fi, the employee is expedited to revert to office working.
- h) **Equipment** - Equipment required for home working will depend on the nature of the work being undertaken. The type and extent of equipment beyond the Council issued laptop, monitor, keyboard and mouse will be based on the risk assessment. If any equipment owned by the Council is subsequently lost or damaged by an employee that employee shall be expected to pay for its replacement, if not covered by insurance.
- i) **Notification** – It is the responsibility of the employee to inform any relevant parties of their intention to undertake occasional home working. This could (for example), include their landlord if resident in rented accommodation. The employee must determine who should be notified and take appropriate steps to do so.

6. Disputes

Should any dispute arise in respect of this policy, these will be referred to the Staff and Employment sub-committee for determination.

This policy is non-contractual and may be amended from time to time.