



The Anglia Revenues Partnership

Homeworking/Home Enabled Scheme Policy

Council Tax & Benefits Service
Author: Rod Urquhart

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DOCUMENT SPONSOR

Breckland - Rob Walker

Forest Heath – Liz Watts

East Cambs – Andrew Killington

St Edmundsbury – Liz Watts

DOCUMENT AUTHOR:

Rod Urquhart

Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership

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HOMEWORKING/HOME-ENABLED SCHEME POLICY

1. Introduction

The purpose of any homeworking or home enabled scheme is to improve conditions for employees and productivity to the organisation by providing flexibility in working practices meeting both the needs of the organisation and the individual.

It is recognised that as ARP expands, the business needs are changing and as such the policies that are in place need to be reviewed to help meet these needs.

The master of this document can be accessed in [ARP Homeworking Policy Document Draft.doc](#)

2. Policy statement

Breckland Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council will work together as The Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) under authority of Section 101(b) of The Local Government Act and will provide development training to enable the partner Councils to meet their obligations as an employer.

This policy will be available to all internal and external stakeholders and will be on the Councils' websites www.breckland.gov.uk, www.forest-heath.gov.uk, www.eastcamb.gov.uk www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk

3. Who can work from home

All staff within the ARP can request to work from home where their service area allows this and provided that agreement has been sought from their line manager.

The exceptions to these will be:

- a) Admin staff or Customer Services – As this service requires team members to be in the office to open post & deal with items received or deal with face to face enquiries home working is not allowed.
- b) No Business Case – Where the business case cannot be justified i.e. the increase in productivity does not outweigh the costs of set up.
- c) Insufficient room – Where the Officer does not have a designated working area at home.

- d) Incompatibility – Some Officers may not wish to work on their own, preferring the company of their colleagues.

4. Overview of the scheme Homeworking

a) Time and Place of work

Homeworkers will be able to work the same hours as their office colleagues i.e. from 7:00 am until 7:00 pm and there are no core hours within this time span. There may be exceptions to this, subject to business need, however approval must be sought from the relevant line manager.

Homeworkers may agree hours locally with their line manager but regard must always be had for the constraints of IT availability and provision of the services to the customer.

The place of work will be in line with the Officers contractual arrangements.

b) Keeping in touch (Office days)

It is essential that homeworkers regularly attend the main offices so that they are kept up to date with current processes, legislative changes and ARP news. As such it is recommended that a full time Officer will come into the offices 8 days per month. This is at the discretion of the line manager, taking into account office cover and business requirements. The number of days will be adjusted for part time Officers in line with their pro rata hours worked.

The Partnership reserves the right to suspend homeworking arrangements during busy periods, such as end of year or in the event business continuity operation, in order to ensure continuation of service.

c) Suitability for Homeworking

The Partnership has a duty of care towards its Officers. As such, Officers requesting to be dedicated homeworkers will be required to undertake psychometric tests to assess their suitability to work from home, on their own and with only limited interaction with their colleagues. The tests will be undertaken with Managers from ARP and an Officer from the relevant, employing Authority's HR Team.

d) IT Equipment, Furniture & Broadband

The Partnership will provide the necessary IT Equipment to enable the Officer to work from home. It is the responsibility of the Officer to treat this equipment with care and ensure no damage is done. Any faulty equipment will be replaced, however damaged equipment may be replaced but the cost of replacement charged to the Officer.

It is the responsibility of the Officer to make a working space available in their home that meets the requirements set down in Health and Safety Legislation and that the workspace is free from background noise. It is also the responsibility of

the homeworker to provide a suitable working environment e.g. desk, chair and office sundries.

It is the responsibility of the Officer to ensure a broadband line is in place and fully functional. The cost of installing any broadband line is to be borne by the Officer. However an allowance may be paid to the Officer on a monthly basis, in line with the Inland Revenues Approved Rate (ILAR), this is currently £3 per week for 2012/13, increasing to £4 per week from 1st April 2014, subject to the Partner Authority's approval.

e) Termination of Employment

All equipment is to be returned to the Partnership prior to the Officer leaving the organisation. The cost of any damaged or missing equipment may be charged to the Officer.

f) Systems Downtime

In the event of Systems downtime the following protocols will be invoked.

- **Planned System Downtime**
The Officer will be advised in good time and the Officer can either come into the office or request leave / flexi, at the line manager's discretion.
- **Unplanned System Downtime**
ICT and the Officer's line manager must be contacted in all cases. Where the downtime is less than 1 hour there will be no deduction from the Officer's time sheet. If the downtime is greater than 1 hour or there is a total system failure then the Officer must contact their line manager to discuss the options available. The options may include making up the hours at a mutually suitable time, taking leave or flexi leave.

g) Termination of Homeworking

An Officer may at any time request that they are office based. The procedure for returning the IT Equipment, as shown in 4(e) is then followed. Alternatively if the Partnership feels that the homeworking solution is not working then it will call the Officer in and discuss the options available.

5. Overview of the scheme Home enabled workers

a) Time and Place of work

Home enabled workers will be able to work the same hours as their colleagues i.e. from 7:00 am until 7:00 pm and there are no core hours within this time span. There may be exceptions to this, subject to business need, however approval must be sought from the relevant line manager.

Home enabled workers must agree home working days with their line manager but regard must always be had for the constraints of IT availability and provision of the services to the customer.

It is essential that a dedicated office space is available that meet health and safety regulations requirements. Additionally this office space should be free from background noise of any kind.

The place of work will be in line with the Officers contractual arrangements.

b) Suitability for Home enabled working

The Partnership has a duty of care to its Officers well being, as such psychometric tests may be undertaken for Officers requesting to be home enabled. This test will assess the suitability of the Officer to work from home, on their own and with only limited interaction with their colleagues. The tests will be undertaken with Managers from ARP and an Officer from the relevant, employing Authority's HR Team.

c) IT Equipment, Furniture & Broadband

The Partnership will provide the necessary IT Equipment to enable the Officer to work from home. It is the responsibility of the Officer to treat this equipment with care and ensure no damage is done. Any faulty equipment will be replaced, however damaged equipment may be replaced but the cost of replacement charged to the Officer.

It is the responsibility of the Officer to make a working space available in their home that meets the requirements set down in Health and Safety Legislation and that the workspace is free from background noise. It is also the responsibility of the homeworker to provide a suitable working environment e.g. desk, chair and office sundries.

It is the responsibility of the Officer to ensure a broadband line is in place and fully functional. The cost of installing any broadband line is to be borne by the Officer.

d) Termination of Employment

All equipment is to be returned to the Partnership prior to the Officer leaving the organisation. The cost of any damaged or missing equipment may be charged to the Officer.

e) Systems Downtime

In the event of Systems downtime the following protocols will be invoked.

- **Planned System Downtime**
The Officer will be advised in good time and the Officer can either come into the office or request leave / flexi, at the line manager's discretion.
- **Unplanned System Downtime**
ICT and the Officer's line manager must be contacted in all cases. Where the downtime is less than 1 hour there will be no deduction from the Officer's time sheet. If the downtime is greater than 1 hour or there is a total system failure then the Officer must contact their line manager to

discuss the options available. The options may include making up the hours at a mutually suitable time, taking leave or flexi leave.

f) Termination of Home enabled working

An Officer may at any time request that they are no longer home enabled. The procedure for returning the IT Equipment, as shown in 5(d) is then followed. Alternatively if the Partnership feels that the home enabled solution is not working then it will call the Officer in and discuss the options available.

6. Abuse of the Scheme

Should employees be found to be in breach of the principals and operating instructions described within this policy, disciplinary action may be taken. With the exceptions of specific abuses, which constitute gross misconduct, employees who abuse the system can be withdrawn from the scheme and put back to being office based, as advised by HR and in consideration of the circumstances. The following action constitutes gross misconduct:

- Deliberately damaging Homeworking Equipment

This list is not exhaustive and in addition there may be other offences of a similar gravity that would be considered to constitute gross misconduct.

7. Equality

ARP is committed to equality of opportunity and valuing diversity in both the provision of services and in its role as a major employer.

We believe that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

We are committed to the elimination of unfair and unlawful discrimination in all our policies, procedures and practises.

We are determined to ensure that no member of the public, employee or job applicant receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of their age, child care or other caring responsibilities, disability, gender, HIV status, language, marital status, race, religion, sexuality, membership or non-membership of a trade union, or by any requirement which cannot be shown to be justifiable.

Author	Rod Urquhart
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