NORTHAW & CUFFLEY PARISH COUNCIL
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IN COLLABORATION WITH SLCC, NALC, OVW, COUNTY ASSOCIATIONS

Home working Policy & Procedure

1. Introduction

Northaw and Cuffley Parish Council is committed to promoting flexible working to facilitate effective and efficient operations. This policy outlines the conditions under which the Council will permit employees to work from home and details the procedures necessary to facilitate such arrangements.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Northaw and Cuffley Parish Council.

3. What is Home Working?

Definition: Home working refers to the arrangement where employees use their home as a base for work, instead of commuting to a physical workplace.

While home working presents many advantages, a thorough assessment is necessary to determine whether it is suitable for the individual and their role.

4. Types of Home Working

Occasional Home Working:
Taking work home on an ad hoc basis may be suitable in circumstances such as:

- When a specific task requires focused, uninterrupted time.
- When commuting is difficult due to adverse weather, personal commitments, or proximity to fieldwork locations.

5. Regular Home Working:

Regular home working involves working from home for a set percentage of time, with the balance spent in the office. It is appropriate in cases such as:

- Where the role requires minimal face-to-face interaction.
- To accommodate flexible working patterns that suit personal commitments.

6. Employee Characteristics

Not all employees are suited to home working, and both the benefits and drawbacks should be carefully weighed. A trial period may be useful to assess suitability.

Helpful characteristics for successful home working include:

- Self-motivation and discipline.
- A flexible and organised approach to managing tasks.

- The ability to work without direct supervision.
- Comfort with working in isolation and managing time effectively.
- The ability to switch off from work and maintain a healthy work-life balance.

7. Application Process

Employees wishing to apply for regular home working should submit a request to the Clerk, who will present it to the Human Resources/Staffing Committee for review. The committee will consider factors such as:

- The employee's role and impact on team dynamics and service delivery.
- The feasibility of completing tasks from home.
- Monitoring and communication methods.
- Equipment and cost considerations.
- The employee's suitability for home working (referencing the characteristics above).

If approved, a health and safety assessment of the home environment must be completed before a formal Home Working Agreement is established.

8. Assessing the Home Environment

Home workers are entitled to the same health and safety protections as office-based employees. Before any agreement, the employee must demonstrate a suitable home environment, including:

- Adequate workspace for concentration.
- Security and confidentiality.
- Compliance with health and safety requirements.

Employees may be required to complete a Health and Safety Home Worker Self-Assessment Checklist. If any risks are identified, these must be addressed before finalizing the home working arrangement.

9. Home Working Agreement

If approved, a formal home working agreement will be issued. Employees must sign and return this agreement, which will be stored in their personnel file.

10. Provision of Equipment

The Council may provide, install, and maintain equipment necessary for home working, based on the frequency and nature of the home working arrangement. Examples of equipment include:

- Occasional home working: Remote access to Council IT servers.
- Regular home working: PC/laptop and mobile communication tools.

Council-owned equipment remains the property of the Council and may be recalled at any time. IT support will be provided during standard hours, excluding home visits.

11. Insurance

The Council will provide third-party insurance for employees working from home, as well as coverage for any Council-owned equipment. Employees are advised to inform their landlord, mortgage provider, or insurance company about their home working status.

12. Health and Safety

Home workers must comply with all Council health and safety policies, including reporting any work-related accidents and completing regular Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessments.

13. Data Security

Employees must follow all IT security and confidentiality protocols. They are responsible for safeguarding any Council information or materials stored at their home.

14. Working Hours

Flexible working hours apply to home-based staff as they do to office-based staff. Any changes to working hours must be pre-approved by the Clerk. Total working hours should not exceed contractual obligations unless previously agreed upon.

15. Expenses

Employees may claim mileage for work-related journeys beginning and ending at home. Other expenses will be reimbursed upon receipt submission, in line with office-based policies. Home

working allowances will only apply if the Council mandates home working during emergencies, such as pandemics or natural disasters.

16. Moving House

Employees who move must complete a new Health and Safety Home Worker Self-Assessment Checklist. If their new home is unsuitable for home working, the agreement will be reviewed and may be terminated.

17. Review of a Home Working Agreement

Home working arrangements will be reviewed periodically, at least once a year, to assess suitability and performance. If performance is unsatisfactory, the agreement may be terminated.

18. Termination of a Home Working Agreement

Either party may terminate the home working agreement with three months' notice. In exceptional cases, such as a data breach or failure to comply with the policy, the Council reserves the right to terminate the agreement immediately.

This policy is non-contractual and will be reviewed as necessary to ensure it remains fit for purpose.