Finance and Resources Committee -10 February 2010

Home Working Policy Revision

Executive summary and recommendations

Introduction

The Home Working Policy has been revised predominantly to give greater clarification for the respective responsibilities when an employee works from home either contractually or in an ad hoc manner.

The objective is to ensure that HPC is able to provide adequate support for a home worker allowing them to work effectively.

Decision

The Committee is asked to discuss and agree the revised Home Working Policy.

Background information

None

Resource implications

None

Financial implications

One off charge: £240 inc vat.
Recurrent charge: £500 inc vat per annum.

Costs are approximate and per contractual home worker.

Appendices

None

Date of paper

22 January 2010

Section 3l – Working from Home

1.0   Policy

1.1   The HPC regards working from home as part of a broad package of measures which enable employees, where possible, to carry out their contracted hours of work more flexibly. Working from home is not considered an automatic solution to issues that might arise from combining work with caring or other responsibilities as it is not possible to work and undertake caring responsibilities simultaneously. The HPC does recognise, however, that home working can offer an indirect way of managing caring responsibilities more effectively by making it easier to time shift tasks.

1.2   This document has been prepared to provide a framework for managing requests to work from home; and to answer some of the questions that might arise in connection with this provision.

2.0   Application of the Policy

2.1   There are two types of home-working carried out by HPC employees, 'contractual' and 'ad-hoc'.

2.2   **Contractual** home-working arrangements are formal, permanent or long term arrangements agreed between the HPC and the employee and set out in the employee's contract of employment. All sections of this policy apply to contractual home-working.

2.3   **Ad-hoc** home-working refers to the occasional or one off arrangements that employees make with their line managers to work from home for a specific reason. Compliance with all terms of this policy is not practicable for occasional, ad-hoc home-working, but employees must:

- agree the arrangement with their line manager
- ensure that they can be contacted at all times during their normal contracted hours.
- ensure that they work in a safe manner and that they follow all health and safety instructions issued by the HPC (points 4.3 and 4.4 below)
- complete a Work Station Self Assessment
- note the IT provisions detailed in sections 5.4 and 5.6 below
- protect and secure any HPC data as detailed in section 7
- not combine home-working with caring or other responsibilities

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3.0 Features which make a job suitable for working from home

    3.1   Only jobs that can be carried out without continuous contact with other people and do not have shared office based responsibilities can be considered for home working.

    3.2   Only those positions where it is possible to organise the essential face-to-face contact of the job into periodic meetings - e.g. all taking place during one day per week can be considered for home working.

    3.3   Where access to information is necessary on a daily basis, it must be information which can be retrieved remotely, securely either by phone or electronically.

    3.4   Where work is time-sensitive there should be an ability to send it securely electronically.

    3.5   The HPC will also need to be satisfied that the proposed working environment will meet requirements under the Health & Safety at Work Act and Health & Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations, that home based workers will not be in conflict with their lease or rental agreement and that the environment is viable and practicable for set-up and support by the IT department.

4.0 Health and Safety considerations

    4.1   The Health & Safety (Display Screen Equipment) regulations 1992 mean that equipment must be safe and must not have an adverse effect on the user's health. The HPC will be responsible for providing an initial risk assessment for staff who work from home to make recommendations as to the suitability of their user space.

    4.2   The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 requires the HPC to be responsible for their employees' safety at work. To comply with the regulations the HPC will require the completion of a Work Station Self Assessment and will follow this up with periodic health and safety checks.

    4.3   All employees who work from home have a duty to ensure that they work in a safe manner and that they follow all health and safety instructions issued by the HPC.

    4.4   The revised RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995) regulations place a duty on the HPC to find out about accidents, incidents, injuries from work related activities. Home workers, are required to report any work related accidents/incidents.

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5.0   Responsibilities

5.1   **Managers**

- ensure that there is sufficient space in the home to work and the equipment installed meets Health & Safety standards;
- liaise with the Facilities Manager to ensure that the relevant Work Station Self Assessments are carried out. Assessments must be reviewed annually or following a significant change e.g. the employee becomes pregnant, moves house or sets up their workstation in a different room
- establish with the employee the core hours of home working;
- ensure that home based employees have the same access to training and information as employees at the HPC's Kennington offices;
- maintain regular contact with home workers;
- hold regular supervision meetings with home workers. This will include providing clearly defined targets to manage results by;
- ensure that HPC information is secure and remains confidential;
- ensure that appropriate post and stationery arrangements are in place for home workers;
- ensure that a Contract Variation form has been completed and authorised in good time, bearing in mind that the IT department need at least three months notice to implement home working arrangements
- ensure that all costs (including IT set-up and equipment) can be met from the departmental budget. Costs for desks and chairs come from the Office Services budget.

5.2   **Home workers**

- must have suitable accommodation at a permanent address and not envisage moving frequently;
- must attend required meetings at Park House or any other HPC designated place;
- ensure that sickness reporting and certification for such absences is in accordance with the HPC's sickness absence procedure, and ensure that other leave such as Annual and Special leave are certificated in line with the HPC's policies and procedures;
- ensure that they do not carry out other commitments such as caring for a child or adult during the agreed working hours;
- must make every reasonable effort to make themselves available during IT working hours for any support issues;
- must ensure that nobody other than HPC authorised employees use the HPC equipment and services which are provided for the sole use of the HPC employees;
- must have signed the IT Policy prior to commencing home working;

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- must ensure that they take health and safety considerations into account and work in a safe manner, and follow all health and safety instructions issued by the HPC.
- must complete a Work Station Self Assessment and discuss the assessment with their Line Manager and the Facilities Manager
- must have completed the compulsory IT user training within the three month set-up period prior to commencing home working;
- must be able to return to office-based work until any technical, connectivity or fault issues which may arise have been rectified;
- must obtain the prior agreement of their manager for any hours worked outside of the 'core' hours;
- must obtain the consent of their landlord/freeholder/mortgagee that Home Working is permissible;
- must carry out responsibilities relating to equipment owned by the HPC e.g. protect and secure HPC data;
- must inform their home and contents insurer that extra equipment has been provided by the HPC.
- Must resolve any technical issues with their personal broadband provider, router, telephone line etc where it is relied upon by the individual to work from home

5.3   Human Resources Department

Human Resources' responsibilities are to advise managers and employees on the application of this policy.

5.4   IT Department

- provide support for any IT equipment owned by the HPC;
- will be available for support between the hours of 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays);
- support the HPC provisions as outlined in the table in Appendix I
- support any Service Level Agreements in place for those who are contracted to work from home.
- adopt a reasonable endeavours policy in providing support for employees who are ad-hoc home workers
- where necessary resolve issues for contractual home workers with a home visit. Where practicable Home Workers will be required to bring HPC owned and managed equipment into the HPC office to effect a resolution to issues.

5.5   Facilities Department

The Facilities Manager will review Work Station Self Assessment forms and liaise with the employee and line manger before agreeing any outcomes or actions

5.6   Provision of IT and Other Equipment

5.6.1 For security, maintainability and performance reasons, the HPC can only provide home working access to its internal IT systems via a broadband service.

5.6.2 For all contractual home workers the HPC will provide and cover the cost of installation of equipment (broadband and new landline if necessary), monthly broadband costs and telephone calls to the HPC (if using a personal phone line the employee can reclaim costs through employee expenses on submission of an itemised telephone bill).

5.6.3 For ad-hoc home users HPC will not provide or cover the cost of installation of equipment (broadband or telephone line) or monthly broadband costs. The HPC will not configure any router or provide support for the employee's personal broadband.

5.6.4 For roaming employees who access services outside of the Kennington office and the home, the HPC provides 3G mobile cards. This technology is not suitable for anything other than intermittent and low usage requirements. This is not a recommended method for home working due to its low bandwidth and dependence on a strong mobile phone signal.

5.6.5 Please refer to Appendix I for details of the provisions.

6.0   Third parties and insurance

6.1   Employees working from home are required to inform relevant third parties. This includes insurers, local authorities and mortgage providers or landlords.

6.2   Any equipment provided will be insured by the HPC. Employees working from home are required to inform their home and contents insurer that extra equipment has been provided by the HPC and that they are working from home. Any changes to premiums will be reimbursed by the HPC (the HPC will reimburse the difference).

6.3   The HPC will require proof that no difficulties will arise with mortgage or lease agreements or other relevant third parties as a result of working from home.

7.0   Security in the home

7.1   Home based working may require an employee to use or process confidential information at their home. Employees working from home are required to protect and secure any HPC data. This includes an awareness of computer viruses which can cause damage to their files. Software and files are confidential and remain the property of the HPC. Employees working from

home are obliged, regardless of location, not to disclose this information. Lockable storage files will be made available where necessary.

Type of home worker	HPC Provisions	Home worker Provisions
Contractual home worker	• Telephone line • RJ45 cabled router (No software installed) • Broadband service (where HPC own ISP [Internet Service Provider] contract) • Enable router availability in users office** • Laptop - screen, keyboard, mouse (riser, wrist/footrest if required) • Printer and/or scanner on assessment • Chair and desk on assessment • Analogue phone on assessment	• Broadband must be available in area
Ad hoc home worker	• Laptop - this may be a pool laptop	• Broadband service • Router* • Min. 2Mb Broadband • Landline • Phone • Chair and desk • Router configuration
Roaming***	• Laptop • 3G Card	• Landline • Phone • Chair and desk

*Service issues for ad hoc users will be addressed by investigation with the laptop returned to Park House. Issues with home worker's personal broadband services are the responsibility of the employee to resolve. This may require the employee to upgrade to an RJ45 cabled router.

**Set-up of router in the Kennington office before delivered to user.

*** Roaming users should not rely upon the 3G card as an effective method for home working. This technology is not suitable for anything other than intermittent and low usage requirements. This is not a recommended method for home working due to its low bandwidth and dependence on a strong mobile phone signal

The contents of this appendix may change occasionally in line with technology changes.