

CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DRAFT WORKING FROM HOME POLICY

May 2006
Version 3

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NOTE

Wherever the designation “Manager” is used throughout this policy, it is taken to mean Head of Service, Head Teacher, Line Manager, Supervisor and the Officer in charge or anyone who has responsibilities for employees in the course of their work.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This document sets out the policy and outlines the protective and preventative measures to be implemented by Caerphilly County Borough Council (the Authority) to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees in relation to individuals working from home.
- 1.2. This policy sets out the arrangements and responsibilities for managing working from home activities within the Authority.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1. The Authority recognises that its employees are its most valuable resource in delivering high quality services to the community and will take all practical steps to ensure the health and safety of the Authorities employees.
- 2.2. The Authority recognises there are inherent risks associated with working from home and will take steps to control these risks.
- 2.3. Where working from home is necessary, the risks will be controlled through the correct management of working from home within the Authority. To be effective this policy requires the full co-operation of management and employees at all levels.
- 2.4. The Authority accepts it has specific duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulation 1999.

3. SCOPE

- 3.1. This policy has been agreed with the Trade Unions and applies to all employees.
- 3.2. This policy will be reviewed at least annually to ensure it is in line with current legislation.
- 3.3. The effective date of the policy is :

4. DEFINITION

4.1 Home Worker:

Home workers are those who work in their own home or in other premises of their own choice as agreed through their contract of work.

Employees are not classed as home workers if they occasionally perform work as employees from home, rather than in their usual workplace.

Even if a person working under the control and direction of the Authority, is treated as self employed for tax and national insurance purposes, it must be remembered that they may be treated as an employee for health and safety purposes.

4.2 Occasional Home Worker:

An occasional home worker is classed as an employee who has dedicated facilities available to them at an Authority site, who occasionally (not on a regular basis), as agreed with their line manager, performs work from home.

5. LEGISLATION

5.1. This policy along with its supporting procedures is designed to ensure the Authority meets its legal obligation as stated in:

- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act, 1974.
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 as amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002.
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998.
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002.
- The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992.
- The Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 1992.
- The Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981.
- The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995.
- Any other associated legislation.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

NB Please note that all employees have a legal responsibility to comply with health and safety law and the provisions of this policy. Failure to do so could result in personal and / or Corporate liability.

6.1. The Chief Executive Officer will:

6.1.1. Be ultimately responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy within Caerphilly County Borough Council.

6.2. Directors will:

- 6.2.1. Be responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of this corporate policy and associated directorate arrangements within their service areas.
- 6.2.2. Ensure that appropriate resources are made available for the effective operation of the policy including training.

6.3. Managers with responsibilities for employees will:

- 6.3.1. Identify all persons who fall into the working from home category, as defined in section 4.1.
- 6.3.2. Notify Occupational Health of identified home workers.
- 6.3.3. Ensure visits to home workers in situ are arranged in advanced.
- 6.3.4. Undertake, or ensure that, a suitable and sufficient working from home risk assessment has been carried out for all identified individuals, the workplace and activities undertaken.
- 6.3.5. Ensure any actions identified within a risk assessment are completed and communicate the findings of the assessment and any implications to the relevant employee(s).
- 6.3.6. Co-ordinate the completion of any recommendations required as a result of the working from home risk assessment.
- 6.3.7. Ensure the working from home risk assessment is reviewed as detailed within the Authorities Risk Assessment Policy. As a minimum the assessment should be reviewed when it is no longer valid or there has been significant changes in the work to which the assessment relates.
- 6.3.8. Ensure the documented working from home risk assessment is kept until a new assessment is produced or the assessment revised.
- 6.3.9. Ensure identified home workers are suitably experienced, trained in emergency procedures, have received instructions and if necessary, training on the risks they are exposed to and also know the control measures.
- 6.3.10. Ensure that the equipment provided is correct for the job that is being undertaken and that equipment supplied is checked regularly and kept in a condition that does not cause harm to the home worker, premise or others.

6.3.11 If identified through the risk assessment, ensure that the home worker has access to adequate first-aid facilities.

6.3.12 Identify those who fall into the occasional home worker category as defined in section 4.2.

6.3.13 Where employees are identified who occasionally work from home, they are advised of the potential health and safety risks associated with working at home, including the risks to other members of the household, especially children.

6.3.14 Ensure this policy is communicated to their employees, where applicable.

6.3.15 Ensure their employees comply with this policy and associated Directorate arrangements for lone working derived from this policy, where applicable.

6.4. Each employee of the Authority will:

6.4.1. Comply with any working procedure or precautionary measure(s) introduced to minimise the risk when working from home.

6.5. The Corporate Health and Safety Unit will:

6.5.1. Ensure that this policy is subject to at least an annual review, to ensure it is line with current legislation.

6.5.2. Provide advice and information on legislation or guidance in relation to working from home.

6.5.3. Audit compliance with the policy.

6.6. The Directorate Health and Safety Officer will:

6.6.1. Ensure that any necessary Directorate arrangements are developed in accordance with the Corporate Policy on working from home.

6.6.2. Ensure the communication of the Corporate Policy and Directorate arrangements to all managers.

6.6.3. Provide advice and guidance, where requested, in relation to the implementation of this policy within their directorates.

6.6.4. Monitor the effective implementation of the Corporate Policy and Directorate Arrangements.

6.7. Occupational Health Department will:

6.7.1. Initially paper screen all identified home workers.

6.7.2. If identified through the paper screening, carry out a health assessment to ensure the employee is fit to work from home.

6.7.3. Provide advice on occupational health issues related to working from home as required.

6.7.4. Maintain records of any health assessment of employees relating to above. These records will be kept for at least forty years.

7. ARRANGEMENTS

7.1 Risk Assessments:

7.1.1 Risk assessment is a line management responsibility for those who are responsible for home workers.

7.1.2 The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 places a duty on employers (The Authority) to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the health and safety risks to which their employees (and others not in their employment) may be subjected.

7.1.3 Risk Assessments must be carried out by a competent person in line with the Authorities Risk Assessment policy.

7.2 Contents of the Risk Assessment:

7.2.1 The assessment must identify and assess any specific risks taking into account, the hazard, who is at risk, an evaluation of severity and frequency, the current controls and any residual risk remaining. It may be necessary to take the following considerations into account during a risk assessment:-

- The fitting out and layout of the workplace and the particular site where they will be working.
- The nature of any physical, biological and chemical hazards they will be exposed to, for how long and to what extent, as well as electrical hazards, lighting, repetitive tasks, and security.
- What type of work equipment will be used and how this will be handled.
- How the work and processes involved are organised.
- The need to assess and provide health and safety training.
- The requirement for any Personal Protective Equipment
- The nature of lone working risks where applicable. Please refer to the 'Lone Working' Policy as required.
- See [Appendix 1](#) for further the issues to be covered in the risk assessment.

7.2.2 Where employees are identified who occasionally work from home (see section 4.2), but spend most of their time out of the office or at different Authority locations, and have dedicated facilities available to them at an authority location, a formal risk assessment in connection with home working is not usually required, unless requested by the individual. These people must however be advised of the potential health and safety risks associated with working from home, including risks to other members of the household, especially children.

7.2.3 Managers are required to follow up any hazards identified through the risk assessment with arrangements to ensure the risk are either eliminated or adequately controlled

7.3 Assessment Records:

7.3.1 Risk assessments carried out in relation to Working from home must be kept until a new assessment is made.

7.3.2 The risk assessment shall be reviewed when there is reason to suspect that the assessment is no longer valid, or there has been a change in the work to which the assessments relates.

7.4 Medical Fitness for working from home:

7.4.1 The Authority shall check that home workers have no medical conditions, which make them unsuitable for working from home. Consider both routine work and foreseeable emergencies, which may impose additional physical and mental burdens of the individual.

7.5 Violence to Staff:

7.5.1. Please see 'Violence at work policy' if applicable.

7.6 Supervision:

7.6.1 Although home workers cannot be subject to constant supervision, it is the Authority's duty to ensure their Health and Safety at work. Managers can help to ensure that employees understand the risks associated with the job.

7.6.2. The extent of supervision required depends on the risks involved and the ability/experience of the home worker. The level of supervision is a management decision and should be based on the findings of the risk assessment. Consideration should be given to the following:

- How to manage high levels of trust and low levels of control.
- How to empower staff to work independently.
- Information to help line managers support home workers and avoid potential consequences of lone working such as stress and isolation.
- The setting of clear goals and objectives.

7.7 Emergency Procedures:

7.7.1 Home workers should be capable of responding correctly to Emergencies. The risk assessment should identify foreseeable events.

7.7.2 Emergency procedures should be established, communicated and training provided for employees.

7.7.3 If identified through the risk assessment, home workers may require access to adequate first-aid facilities.

8. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

8.1 Guidance:

- 8.1.1 Working Alone in Safety – HSE Guidance
ISBN 0717615073 INDG 73(rev)
- 8.1.2 Caerphilly County Borough Council's Policy on Violence at Work.
- 8.1.3 Caerphilly County Borough Council's Policy on Lone Working
- 8.1.4 Home working – Guidance for employers and employees on Health and safety ISBN 0 7176 1204 X INDG 226.
- 8.1.5 Working with VDU's: ISBN 0 7176 2222 3 INDG 36.
- 8.1.6 Electricity at Work: Safe working practices.
ISBN 0 7176 2164 2 HSG 85.
- 8.1.7 A guide for new and expectant mothers who work.
ISBN 0 7176 2614 8, INDG 373.
- 8.1.8 Basic advice on first – aid at work
ISBN 0 7176 2261 4 INDG 347.
- 8.1.9 Upper limb disorders in the workplace.
ISBN 0 7176 1978 8 HSG 60.
- 8.1.10 Using work equipment safely.
ISBN 0 7176 2389 0 INDG 229 (rev1)
- 8.1.11 Maintaining portable and transportable electrical equipment.
ISBN 0 7176 0715 1 HSG 107.

8.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with Caerphilly County Borough Councils Health and Safety Policies as detailed below:

- 8.2.1 Corporate Health and Safety Policy.
- 8.2.2 Risk Assessment Policy.
- 8.2.3 Lone Working Policy.
- 8.2.4 Violence at Work Policy.

APPENDIX 1 - Common hazards for home workers

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The following guidance consists of common issues relating to working from home that should be considered when assessing the area where the work within the home is going to be undertaken.

1. Handling Loads – Consider any manual handling and assess as appropriate.

- Inadequate space in work area, which prevents safe movement of equipment or loads.
- Awkward lifting, reaching or handling.
- Repetitive handling that does not allow enough rest time between loads.
- Inappropriate workplace layout that results in increased twisting and stooping.
- Delivery and storage arrangements for items required during the activities that the individual is expected to undertake. For example delivery and storage of printer paper.

2. Work Equipment - If work equipment is provided for the job ensure that:

- The equipment is correct and suitable for the work that needs to be done.
- The home worker receives proper information and training on how to use the equipment, so the job can be done safely.
- The work equipment being used is checked regularly and kept in a condition that does not cause harm to the home worker or others.
- Those people who are testing the equipment or training the home worker are properly trained.
- Any Personal Protective Equipment provided is maintained and enforced.

3. Electrical Equipment

- Ensure any electrical equipment provided by the Authority is subject to testing and inspection as appropriate.

4. Display Screen Equipment and Workstations

- Ensure a DSE risk assessment is carried out if applicable, and if necessary paying particular attention to portable DSE.

5. Portable DSE

There is an increasing number of people using and tasks involving portable DSE e.g. portable computer equipment as part of their work, so the associated hazards need to be identified by a portable users risk assessment.

- Consider any manual handling risks when moving equipment between locations. Think about the weights to be carried.
- The risk of theft possibly involving assault during transportation and the need to take sensible precautions.
- Is there a need to provide a docking station or similar equipment at workstations where the home worker will use the portable computer in lengthy or repeated use.
- Give careful consideration to the selection of portable equipment relating to its size, weight, memory size, and power supplies.
- The need to take regular breaks; bearing in mind that increased DSE use is linked to an increasing risk of discomfort. Such users need longer and more frequent breaks or change of activity to compensate for poorer working environment, which can impact particularly on posture.

6. Housekeeping

- Ensure your work area is kept to a satisfactory standard. (e.g. trailing cables, boxes.)

7. Chemicals

- If chemicals are to be used, refer to the COSHH policy and contact your Directorate health and safety officer.

8. New and Expectant Mothers

- Ensure a risk assessment is carried out on new and expectant mothers, taking into account any specific issues related to working from home

APPENDIX 2: Hazard Guidance for the completion of a Home Worker Risk Assessment

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The following tables provides guidance for the hazards and control measures that should be considered when carrying out a Home worker risk assessment.

Hazard	<u>Who is affected</u>	<u>Consequences/ How affected</u>	<u>Examples of control measures</u>	<u>Relevant Regulations</u>
Display Screen Equipment	Home worker; Family members; Visitors; Young children;	Upper limb strain From seating position or Repetitive movement	Machines are suitable for intended purpose. Use and maintenance restricted to authorised persons only. Machines are checked regularly and kept in good condition. Provision of suitable seating. Home workers should take regular breaks. Home workers should have received adequate training.	The Health and Safety (DSE) Regulations 1992.
Manual Handling	Home worker; Family members; New or expectant mothers;	Musculoskeletal strain or back strain	Avoid heavy, bulky loads or materials; Avoid steps and steep ramps; Ensure home workers have received Manual Handling training and instruction	The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992
Work Equipment	Home worker; Family members; Visitors; Vulnerable persons/ Young Children.	Trapping; entanglement; electrical risks; musculoskeletal problems	Ensure equipment is suitable for intended use; Ensure equipment is safe for use; Maintained in safe condition; Suitable lighting is provided; Only used by trained /authorised users who has received adequate instruction and information.	The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
Electricity	Home worker; Family member; Visitors; Vulnerable persons/ Young Children	Electric Shock or Fire.	Plugs are correctly wired and maintained; Plugs, leads, wires and cables are checked regularly and kept in a condition that does not cause harm.	Electricity at Work Regulations 1989

Hazard	<u>Who is affected</u>	<u>Consequences/ How affected</u>	<u>Examples of control measures</u>	<u>Relevant Regulations</u>
Isolation	Home worker; Family members; Visitors; Young children;	Stress and Depression	Regular face to face contact between Authority representatives and home worker Same information and support for home workers as on-site workers, including information on social events Facilitate communication with other home workers and on-site workers to provide mutual support Home workers should take regular breaks	The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (HSE, 2000 a)
Fire	Home worker; Family members; Visitors; Vulnerable Persons/ Young Children	Physical Injury Burns Lung Damage Breathing difficulty	Switch equipment off when not being used Only allow home worker to use the equipment Ensure electrical equipment tested annually Ensure smoke alarms are installed and effectively situated. Ensure battery alarms can be tested regularly Provide home worker with power surge protector Introduce a very simple fire evacuation plan for the family Ensure clear escape route to outside	The Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997

Violence	Home worker; Family members; Visitors; Vulnerable persons/ Young Children.	Physical injury Psychological stress	Prior notification of any work related visits to the home worker Any work related visitors must carry verification I.D. Suggest improved lighting at front and rear entrances Provide home workers with general security training	The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (HSE 2000 a)
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Please Note: The above list of hazard examples is not exhaustive and specific hazards relating to a specific individual situation may arise e.g. animals or pets.