

Policy statement

As a Council, we will positively promote homeworking where feasible and balanced against the needs of the wide-ranging services we provide for local residents and communities. The guidance below sets out the principles of how homeworking in our organisation.

Please note that working from abroad is not permitted under any circumstances.

The Council recognises the benefits that working from home can provide for both employees and the employer and, to this end, will continue to seek to accommodate employees working from home for part of the week. We have adopted a hybrid working model therefore, all employees are expected to be based at a Council workplace for at least 50% of contracted hours and teams need to ensure adequate coverage during the full working week. This is the minimum requirement for roles that lend themselves to this way of working.

Our approach to hybrid working acknowledges that our service to the public must come first. The services we provide are necessarily located in our Borough. Alongside our key role in keeping residents and visitors safe, we must also acknowledge that we are part of the communities we serve, and we must be a visible and active presence within them.

There will be certain frontline jobs and professions where direct contact is needed with service users and residents where hybrid working is not suitable. For these such roles, homeworking can only be agreed on a flexible as-and-when basis as agreed by the line manager. For the avoidance of doubt there is no contractual right to homeworking, and it can be revoked at any time.

Homeworking is understood to mean employees conduct their role from home for part of the week with the same employment contractual obligations and commitments as if they were working in an office environment. For example, employees should continue to be contactable within the Council's core working hours (including responding to e-mails and telephone calls) but can work flexibly outside these hours in agreement with line management, where this helps support an increased work/life balance.

To be eligible for the travel allowance staff need to attend the workplace in line with the hybrid working arrangements therefore should be present at their normal place of work or undertaking work within the borough for at least 50% of their contracted hours.

The allowance is based on the number of days you normally travel to work. For each day you normally travel to work, you will receive 20% of the allowance (the minimum attendance is 50%)

The season ticket loan / travel allowance policy can be found [here](#).

This policy should not be taken as forming an employment contract and may be updated at any time.

Practical Homeworking Arrangements

General guidance on homeworking for both managers and employees is set out at **Appendix A**. Line managers have responsibility for ensuring that all necessary arrangements are put in place to enable homeworking to be effective including the health, safety and wellbeing of employees working from home.

Line managers should regularly review standard homeworking arrangements with individual staff via 1-2-1's and generally as part of team meetings including:

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- the organisation of individual home working environments including maintaining appropriate home/workspace, security arrangements for Council ICT and other equipment, materials, documentation etc.
- ensuring that individual staff are enabled to work remotely and can manage their workloads adequately, with support from the manager as required
- ensuring staff are self-motivated, can work on their own initiative and adapt to different working practices as these evolve
- are receptive to remote methods of working with their team and others, including line management arrangements, liaising with colleagues etc.

Line managers should discuss with their team any issues arising within their day to day roles whilst working remotely. Guidance and support from the Council's Health and Safety team is readily available, for example in carrying out or reviewing on-line DSE risk assessments and/or self-assessments (attached as **Appendix B** below). Where necessary, managers should undertake a risk assessment in conjunction with the employee, considering not only the working environment and DSE requirements. A separate risk assessment is required for new and expectant mothers.

Data Protection

Working with Client Personal Data

It is preferable to work with client data within the council's network. If there is a need to transfer, use or receive client data outside of the council's network this should be discussed and pre-agreed with line management. The transaction should be recorded on the network or a line of business application.

This is because key elements of compliance relate to the ability to track, monitor and evidence how personal data is handled (including received) by the council. Unless approved for exceptional circumstances, client data should not be stored on personal devices.

Sharing Personal Data

Ensure that you are authorised to share and that any transactions are done securely. Sharing should be necessary and proportionate - i.e. don't send the whole database, rather consider extracting what is needed.

Printing at home guidelines

If staff need to print information, this should be discussed and agreed with their line manager, recorded as a permitted action and followed up with actions designed to reduce the risk associated with printing at home.

- Ensure only you have access to the printed material
- Do not leave printed material lying around – secure it immediately
- Do not mix council information with your own
- Lock away any printed material so that only you know where it is
- When not in use, lock printed material away so that only you have access to it
- If posting, use recorded delivery and inform the recipient
- If posting files, consider using a courier service, following consultation with your line manager
- Maintain a list of the material you have at home
- Dispose of the printed material once no longer needed.

Disposal of Confidential Information whilst working at home

Use a shredding machine to dispose of confidential council information. IT security recommend using cross cut shredders. A shredder Level P3 or P4 is recommended.

Further details can be found here - [Data Protection and Working from Home \(sharepoint.com\)](https://sharepoint.com)

Equipment for employees working at home

Line managers may supply homeworkers with the necessary equipment relevant to the delivery of individual job roles. This equipment remains RBKC's property and will be installed and removed at Council cost. The Council may need to attend the employee's home to update, maintain or repair/replace the equipment and will give the employee reasonable notice of the need for this. Line managers may also require an employee/team to bring equipment to a Council building to be updated/replaced/ repaired.

All Council employees should take all reasonable care of RBKC's equipment and only use it for Council business. IT and telephony equipment may only be used in accordance with the Council's IT, telephony, data protection and monitoring policies.

Personal equipment that an employee uses for work purposes at home remains their responsibility. The Council is not liable for any loss, damage, repair or replacement of any personal equipment. If an item of equipment is deemed necessary for work purposes at home, the employee should contact their line manager.

The costs of electricity, water, heating, telephone, broadband and other utilities will not be covered by the Council. These costs will remain the responsibility of the employee.

Employees are expected to have suitable broadband connection to enable them to carry out their work effectively. Employees are not permitted to use work phones as a tethering point to deliver a connection when working from home.

All Council employees, must keep Council data and materials safe and secure at all times, ensuring reasonable precautions are being taken to maintain confidentiality in accordance with the Data Protection policy.

Meetings between customers/clients and employees at home are strictly prohibited. All communications should be routed through Council workplaces.

Health and safety for working at home

RBKC's health and safety policy applies equally to anyone undertaking work for or on behalf of the Council. Employees should refer to the separate health and safety policies/guidance for more information in addition to completing the on-line DSE training, risk assessment and self- assessment.

Employees are required to comply with a number of health and safety considerations in respect of the space utilised as their workplace in the home environment.

Lone Working

The Corporate Health & Safety team are available provide advice/guidance for any lone working arrangements.

The Manager and employee should ensure that they discuss the following basic checklist (which may be added to for individual teams/individuals) as part of a hybrid working arrangement.

Health and Safety

The number of hours worked should be in line with the employee's contractual hours of work and HR policy. Employees are encouraged to take regular breaks to reduce the effects of ICT fatigue (e.g.10 minutes in every hour).

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act, colleagues working at home are required to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and to comply with all aspects of RBKC's health and safety policies.

Employees need to be aware of time management issues. It's important to maintain good communications systems and formal means of contact with their line manager and colleagues to during working hours.

Accidents / Near Misses at work

Accidents must be reported immediately to the line manager using the on-line reporting system as set out in the Council's Accident/Incident Reporting Policy.

Personal Details and Safety

Employees are advised not to reveal their home address and telephone number to other colleagues of RBKC. If a postal address needs to be given out, it should be the relevant RBKC's office address. Only RBKC's mobile telephone numbers should be given out.

In addition, the laptop guidance should be read and the working from home risk assessment completed and discussed with their manager

Risk assessments

A risk assessment (Homeworking Risk Assessment form) will be undertaken between the line manager and the employee to determine any relevant risks and to prevent harm. This extends to anyone else who may be affected by their work, in respect of the workplace itself and the working arrangements should any issue arise.

The Council requires self-assessment of some aspects of the workplace by those working from home (attached as **Appendix B**). Any steps necessary from the risk assessments will be undertaken to ensure the employee has a safe workplace. Should issues be identified through the on-line DSE assessment, arrangements may be made with the Council's provider for a face-to-face assessment at the employee's premises.

A specific risk assessment will be undertaken for all new and expectant mothers. For this to take place, employees who become pregnant should notify their line manager of their pregnancy immediately. More details about what to do are available in the Council's policy on Maternity and Adoption leave.

Working time

Employees are responsible for ensuring they take their rest breaks as defined in their contracts of employment. Working time on a computer/laptop should be monitored and rest breaks of at least 15 minutes for every six hours of working must be taken. In-work breaks

should also be undertaken in accordance with health and safety guidance and/or recommendations.

Furniture

In order that employees working from home on a hybrid basis can do so safely, provision will be made for a DSE compliant chair to be supplied by the Council. To arrange this please contact Lawna Grant – lawna.grant@rbkc.gov.uk

For individual DSE assessments or advice on specialist equipment the line manager should refer the employee to occupational health. For more specific support, OH may recommend a referral to Posturite for an in-depth DSE assessment.

Further guidance regarding DSE equipment can be sought from the HR Advisers or the [Health & Safety Team](#)

ICT and other Council equipment

An employee may separately purchase a mouse and a keyboard for which a maximum of £20 will be reimbursed by the Council. Where a monitor is purchased, up to £100 will be reimbursed. In both cases, this is subject to line management approval and this must be sought prior to purchase.

Positioning of equipment

Consideration should be given to the ergonomic positioning of equipment. RBKC will provide checklists for this for the benefit of employees. All employees working from home on a hybrid basis shall complete the on-line DSE e-learning and risk assessment. Once completed, the assessment element shall be repeated annually.

Employee conduct

If hybrid working becomes unsuitable due to employee conduct or performance, the homeworking arrangement will be terminated immediately. Further disciplinary action may also be taken in line with RBKC policy.