



"Offering our community more than a home"

Draft Remote/Home Working Policy

Management Committee submission:	30 March 2021
Last Approved:	N/A
Date Approved:	
Next Review date:	March 2022

CHA Objectives:

- To ensure that our resources are adequate to deliver our objectives by investing in our people, demonstrating value for money and through robust procurement practices.
- To promote social inclusion by applying principles of equality and diversity to everything we do.

Regulatory Standards:

- The RSL is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. And its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these objectives.
- The RSL manages its resources to ensure its financial well-being, while maintaining rents at a level that tenants can afford to pay
- The governing body and senior officers have the skills and knowledge they need to be effective
- The RSL conducts its affairs with honesty and integrity.

This policy can be made available on request in a variety of different formats, such as on CD, in large print and translated into other languages.



supporting
social
employers

1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Remote/Home working (remote working), is where an employee works away from their employer's location for all or part of their working week on a permanent or ad hoc basis. The practice has been around for a long time but has become necessary due to the pandemic and increasingly popular to promote flexibility within the workplace and to attract and retain talent within the workforce.
- 1.2 Remote working can be:
- an original contractual arrangement from when the employee commenced employment,
 - requested by an employee as part of a flexible working statutory entitlement,
 - a reasonable adjustment,
 - a change in organisational culture to provide employees with choice and utilise the benefits of remote working
 - Implemented by Clydebank HA, following the necessary consultation and contractual change processes.
- 1.3 There are two types of remote working:
- **Occasional:** employees have a contractual work base (i.e. office location), but work remotely on an ad hoc basis, through informal arrangements with their team and line manager.
 - **Contractual:** employees that work off-site as defined in their contract of employment for a specified period of their working week.
- 1.4 Clydebank HA does not currently consider any of its employees to be contractual 'homeworkers'. This policy enables us to permit certain employees to work from home on occasion, due to business or personal circumstances. The following procedures, therefore, are relevant only for the occasional circumstances where employees may be permitted to work from home. Clydebank HA recognises the flexibility and benefits it can bring to both the employer and the employee.
- 1.5 The Policy also considers potential contractual arrangements (Appendix 1), should this practice be permitted in the future.

2.0 Policy Principles

Clydebank HA's Remote/Home Working Policy aims to:

- Benefit the business from timeous high-quality reports, policies and projects by giving appropriate staff the opportunity to do normal office-type work at home, without interruptions.
- Ensure our high level of service is maintained at all times.
- Better meet the demands of our service requirements.
- Promote our culture of inclusion.
- Integrate into and complement our health and wellbeing strategy.

- Support and embed our commitment to our environmental sustainability practices.
- Set out the parameters to ensure the above conditions are met.

3.0 Occasional Remote Working

3.1 For occasional remote working, an employee works their contracted hours from the location specified in their contract of employment. However, on occasion, it may be more effective if an employee has an ad hoc day working remotely (maximum 2 days per week). This can be effective when managing certain situations such as:

- Disruptions to dependants care arrangements,
- Project work,
- Adverse weather,
- Commuting disruptions,
- An injury where the employee is fit to work but is unable to commute to their contractual work location.
- Requested by employer due to unforeseen circumstances, e.g. pandemic

3.2 In all the above situations, work will be carried out effectively and efficiently with the appropriate resources, including an electronic device, e.g. laptop or tablet with sufficient broadband speed and functioning phone.

3.3 All situations for occasional remote working will be discussed individually with the employee's line manager, and they will consider the request balancing employee and business pressures and provide a decision. Section managers will discuss with employees how remote working arrangements will work within teams and sections, including any rota for office cover and existing working patterns

3.4 In addition, if staff have permission to work at home regularly, this will not apply when they are required to cover for another colleague(s) who is absent on holiday, sick leave, etc. Clydebank HA reserves the right to withdraw the home working arrangement for business reasons at any time, and with immediate effect.

4. Line Manager's Approval

4.1 Each request for home working must be individually discussed with and approved by a management team member, who will assess each request against the requirements set out by this policy.

5. Performance Management

5.1 Clydebank HA has a culture of trust and respect for all. Performance Management will be carried out in the same way as if employees were in the office. As in the office, if the quality or volume of work while working remotely is not at the required standard, this will be addressed via Clydebank HA's performance management process initially on an informal basis. Matters will be managed confidentially with individual employees.

- 5.2 To ensure Clydebank HA achieves value for money, home working will be managed by results (rather than managing time and the way the task is done). The line manager will therefore agree with the employee the outcomes of work to be produced at home and expect those to be delivered. As long as it brings the desired benefits to the business, it would not matter at what time of the day the work is done.

6. Health & Safety

- 6.1 Only employees who have attended a suitable Health & Safety Awareness training course will be eligible. An employee will only be permitted to work from home where the management team member is satisfied with the individual's maturity and knowledge of safe working practices.
- 6.2 A health and safety assessment will be carried out according to Clydebank HA's health and safety checklist (Appendix 2), which covers VDU risks and general precautions for house-holder electrical safety. Domestic electrical supply configurations are out with the control of the employer and are the responsibility of the staff member. Employees will perform their assessment, and their line manager will then validate results during a discussion or remote visit. The employees will be expected to report any changes that may affect the arrangements in the future (in which case another assessment may be necessary).
- 6.3 Prior to permitting an employee to work from home, the employee will be given a copy of the HSE guidance note INDG 226 (Appendix 2) and this Policy on Homeworking and will sign a statement confirming that he/she has read both documents and will take all reasonable precautions to ensure his/her safety and that of any others who may be affected by their work (e.g. children in the home). Such statements will be filed by the Health & Safety Administrator (HSA).
- An employee will only be permitted to take home equipment that has been subject to a suitable and valid inspection and test regime (e.g. PAT).
 - No employee will be permitted to hold any meetings within their home apart from telephone or video conferencing.
 - Any accident/incident/near miss occurring during the time an employee is working from home will be reported without delay to the HAS/Line Manager, who will deal with the situation as appropriate.

7. Technical Support

- 7.1 The Association's IT infrastructure is capable of supporting this form of remote working with remote access to calendars, emails and documents. Staff who seek approval to work from home would be required to use the Association's computer equipment and have their own home broadband at sufficient speed in place.

- 7.2 Employees can then log into the Clydebank HA network using the remote access software set up by the Data Protection and Compliance Officer and IT consultants.
- 7.3 Clydebank HA will, where practical, provide the appropriate equipment and/or software to allow people to work remotely. The employer would not pay for installation of landline telephones or the bills, as employees would be able to use CHA mobile devices provided to them.
- 7.4 Where the office has been affected by a disaster, staff may use their own or the office IT equipment, only if basic firewall and anti-virus software has been installed on their home computers, to protect the Association's office IT systems from any harm.

8. Costs/Allowances

- 8.1 Employees who, on occasion, work remotely will not have expenses approved for items such as for paper/ink/subsistence/internet service/wear and tear on equipment. It is considered that the saving in time and money getting to/from work is a reasonable notional offset to any minimal personal cost of occasionally working remotely.

9.0 General Data Protection Regulations:

- 9.1 The organisation will treat your personal data in line with our obligations under the current data protection regulations and our own Data Protection and Management of Information Policy. Information regarding how your data will be used and the basis for processing your data is provided in Clydebank Housing Association's employee privacy notice.

10.0 Equal Opportunities

- 10.1 Our commitment to equal opportunities and fairness will apply irrespective of factors such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage, and civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

For Office Use Only – Actions

Customer Consultation Required/Arranged	No
Intranet Update	Yes
F Drive Update	Yes
Website Update	No
Leaflet change required?	No
Newsletter Promotion?	No
Other information updated, e.g. posters, automatic email responses, post cards, answering machine messages, etc.	No
Equality Impact Assessment completed	Yes

Appendix 1 - Example

1. Contractual Remote Working (For information only)

1.1 Contractual remote working could occur in the following circumstances:

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- Making a Flexible Working Request: An employee with the required continuous service can request via their statutory entitlement to request Flexible Working.
- Organisational Culture and Practice: Clydebank HA will consider contractual remote working where it is practical and meets the needs of the Association.

2. Flexible Working Request

2.1 Employees wishing to request remote working as a contractual arrangement can discuss the request with their line manager and follow up with a formal request in writing by following Clydebank HA's Flexible Working Policy. The process outlined in the policy will be followed.

2.2 Any decision to accept or reject the application will be based on Clydebank HA's business needs and requirements at the time of the request and, in line with our Flexible Working Policy. Any change to the employee's working arrangement would be regarded as a permanent contractual change and therefore, must be confirmed in writing. Due to the change being permanent, a 3-6 month (depending on the nature of the role) trial period will take place first before any permanent change takes effect.

3. Organisational Culture

3.1 The Association acknowledges the benefits remote working can bring providing services delivery is not diminished, such as:

- the efficiency of performance,
- health and wellbeing of employees and,
- the positive environmental impact through reduced commuting
- addressing the continuing impact of Covid-19 pandemic in relation to social distancing and required office space

3.2 Clydebank HA may support a culture of remote working as a permanent contractual arrangement in the future as long as business and service delivery needs are met and enhanced. Clydebank HA trusts its employees to fulfil their contractual obligations concerning their job role. Whether an employee is working remotely or, at the Association's business premise locations, the expectation on performance standards would remain the same.

3.3 Clydebank HA believes a model of blended working is best and therefore will not consider requests for full time contractual remote working. This means a mixture of remote and onsite working, which brings the most benefits for both business and employees. It allows for continuing face to face social interaction, collaboration, along with enjoying the benefits of remote working. For this reason, remote

working will be for between 1-2 days per week maximum (pro-rata for part-time staff).

- 3.4 Clydebank HA appreciates that not all employees will request to work remotely as they may prefer to attend the office for their working week.
- 3.5 Section managers will discuss with employees how remote working arrangements will work within teams and sections, including any rota for office cover and existing working patterns. Once the agreed between employees and the appropriate manager, confirmation will be provided in writing. A trial period of 3 months will be set before confirming permanent contractual changes.
- 3.6 Any permanent changes to a work location is a contractual change of employment and agreement will always be sought in the first instance.

4. Trial Periods

- 4.1 At the end of a trial period, the arrangement will either be amended or confirmed. The decision at the end of the period will not be a surprise; this will be due to regular communication on the effectiveness of the working arrangement throughout the trial. Any adjustments can be made during the trial and can be put forward by the line manager or by employees.

5. Contractual changes

- 5.1 If contractual remote working has been agreed, Clydebank HA will write to the employee to confirm the change and any associated terms with the change.

6. Costs/Allowances

- 6.1 There may be expenses that can be claimed directly by employees from HMRC. Please refer to HMRC website for the most up to date information.

7. Travel Expenses

- 7.1 Work-related travel expenses will be paid at the rate stated in your terms and conditions of employment, and as specified in Clydebank HA's Expenses policy.

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Appendix 2

Clydebank HA's health & safety checklist for employees working remotely. This list is not exhaustive and should be used in conjunction with section 3.20 of the Health and Safety Manual.

Electrical Equipment

The safety and maintenance of the domestic electrical supply/installation is the responsibility of the house-holder. *Clydebank HA* will only take maintenance responsibility for any equipment it directly supplies.

House-holder checklist:

- Ensure electrical equipment is turned off when not in use and before performing any checks
- Check plugs are not damaged
- Check domestic electrical supply is suitable for the equipment in use
- Check plugs are correctly wired and that the outer cable covering is gripped at the point it enters the plug or equipment.
- Check outer covers of equipment are sound and have no loose parts or missing screws
- Check all leads and cables routinely against damage to the outer covers
- Check for burn marks or other signs of overheating
- Repair any electrical equipment with the potential to harm
- Check and secure all trailing wires – the best way is to use power outlets nearest to the equipment. Where this is not possible tuck trailing wires securely under desks etc. and out of typical walkways
- Do not have young children unsupervised in any area where you are using electrical equipment

Working with VDU's

Clydebank HAs self-assessment tool will be used to ensure workstations are set up appropriately.