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PEACEHAVEN TOWN COUNCIL

HYBRID WORKING POLICY FOR STAFF

1. INTRODUCTION

Peacehaven Town Council is committed to ways of working that meets both its and employees' needs. Having reviewed the changing work environment, the Council has formally adopted a policy of supporting staff to have a better work-life balance, as well as continuing to deliver vital services to the community. This policy sets out how informal hybrid working arrangements can benefit staff and the Council as the employer, as well as how such arrangements can be put in place.

2. SCOPE

This Hybrid Working Policy applies to all members of staff who can complete all or part of their work from home. No member of staff will be expected to work from home without their full agreement unless Government guidelines specifically state a working from home rule where this is possible to do so.

It is acknowledged that not all roles are suitable for working from home. The official Place of Work will remain as the office at Community House.

This policy is separate to staff's statutory rights to request Flexible Working; the statutory process involves a contractual change to terms and conditions. Hybrid Working is about informal arrangements to split working time between home and the office. For the statutory process, please visit <https://www.gov.uk/flexible-working>.

3. DEFINITION OF HYBRID WORKING

The policy allows for a hybrid way of working, with time split between home and the office, and/or other locations, to be agreed in advance with line managers, and in accordance with this policy. The business premises will continue to be the main working base and employees will be expected to attend meetings at Community House when required.

4. AGREEING TO WORK FROM HOME

Any employee who wishes to, and can, work from home for part, or all, of their duties may request to do so. No formal application is needed; however staff should speak to their line manager, who will make an assessment and decide on their suitability for homeworking. Factors to be considered will include:

- Whether the role can be done just as effectively away from the office by someone working on their own.
- Self-motivation and discipline.
- Ability to work without direct supervision.
- Ability to complete work to deadline.
- Ability to use appropriate IT equipment, software and video conferencing competently.

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- Satisfactory completion of any period of training
- Whether the home is suitable and the necessary equipment is available to the employee.
- The well-being of the employee.
- Time sheets recording hours worked at home or in the office to be completed weekly.

In the event of a disagreement concerning a discussion to work from home, the employee has the right to raise this with the Personnel Committee. Staff should try to resolve disagreements regarding home working with their line manager, in the first instance.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Council as an employer has a duty of care to its employees and will carry out a risk assessment before homeworking can be approved. There will always be greater risks for lone workers with no direct supervision or anyone to help them if things go wrong. The employee's line manager will keep in touch on a regular basis, at least daily, to ensure that the employee is healthy and safe. If contact is poor, workers may feel disconnected, isolated or abandoned. This can affect stress levels and mental health.

For those people who are working at home on a long-term basis, the risks associated with [using display screen equipment \(DSE\)](#) must be controlled.

If working outside of the main office becomes a long term, or permanent arrangement, a home workstation risk assessment will be carried out and appropriate adjustments made, or additional equipment provided. Please refer to the Display Screen Equipment (DSE) workstation checklist <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg36.pdf> for further details.

The Council will provide, at no expense to the employee, any additional equipment required e.g., IT equipment and advice on control measures.

Employees also have a responsibility for their own health and safety. There are some simple steps they can take to reduce the risks from display screen work:

- breaking up long spells of DSE work with rest breaks (at least 5 minutes every hour) or changes in activity
- avoiding awkward, static postures by regularly changing position
- getting up and moving or doing stretching exercises
- avoiding eye fatigue by changing focus and undertaking rest breaks
- maintaining eye health by undertaking regular eye tests and use of glasses as required. The Council will pay for a eye test every two years where needed.

The Council will have regular discussions with workers to assess whether additional steps are needed, for example where they report:

- aches, pains or discomfort related to their DSE arrangements
- adverse effects of working in isolation, on remote IT systems or unable to access support systems provided in the workplace
- working longer hours without adequate rest and recovery breaks

6. LONE WORKING POLICY

The Lone Working Policy will apply to all members of staff who work from home for part or all of their contracted hours.

7. ABSENCE

Procedures for reporting sickness, for requesting annual leave and time of in lieu are unaffected. Please refer to the Staff Handbook for further information.

8. WORKING HOURS AND PATTERNS

Information regarding availability of staff i.e., which days and hours are worked, should be communicated with the rest of the team.

9. EXPENSES

Whilst the Council does not current offer a home working allowance, staff may be eligible to claim expenses, in accordance with HMRC regulations. Staff can check eligibility and make claims as necessary by visiting <https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/working-at-home>.

10. MORTGAGE, LEASE AND INSURANCE ISSUES

The employee should inform their mortgage provider or landlord of their intention to work from home. They should also check that there isn't anything preventing them working from home, in their mortgage agreement, restrictive covenants in the deeds, lease or insurance.

The employee should inform their insurance company of their intention to work from home and obtain from their home insurer confirmation of cover should work equipment cause damage and for a claim from a third party. Non-disclosure could invalidate the home insurance policy.

Council property and claims by a third party should be covered by the employer's insurance policy.

11. THE EMPLOYER'S ACCESS TO THE EMPLOYEE'S HOME

The Council will on occasions require access to the employee's home by arrangement. For example:

- Initial set-up of equipment.
- Maintenance of equipment.
- Health and safety assessment
- Electrical equipment testing.

If the employee moves home, a further health and safety risk assessment will be required.

12. ATTENDANCE AT THE OFFICE

The employee will be required to attend at the office from time to time for the purpose of meetings with their line manager, colleagues, suppliers, members of the public, councillors and other stakeholders, access to specialised equipment and computer systems. Individual working arrangements will be discussed with the line manager. Meetings must not be held at the employee's home and staff will not unreasonably refuse to attend the office for meetings or other work-related activities.

Additionally, some duties can only be carried out in the office.

13. SECURITY

The employee may only store information on their provided computer or laptop. Laptops must not be left unattended such as in a car. All emails must be by using their Council email address. Personal email addresses must not be used for Council business. On termination of employment, all equipment, files etc. must be returned to the office. The Council's GDPR policies continue to apply to all staff, regardless of working from home or working from the office.