

Occasional Working From Home Guidelines

Relevant to:	All LJMU Staff
Responsibility for Document Review:	Director People and Organisational Development
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RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

List here any documents that relate to the creation of this guidance

RELATED POLICIES & DOCUMENTS

List here any internal policies or documents that are relevant to this guidance

Guidelines for Occasional Working from Home

It may be appropriate for some employees from time to time to carry out some of their duties at home. Such arrangements may be made on the basis of an informal agreement with their Line Manager/Director or Dean. There are obviously potential benefits for both the employer and the employee in such arrangements but it is important to be aware of the implications and of the responsibility of the parties.

It should be noted that this procedure covers occasional work from home only and if an employee or prospective employee requests to be designated a home-worker further advice should be sought from your Business Partner. For the purposes of this policy, occasionally will be defined to represent no more than 20% of working time calculated on a monthly basis.

Benefits

Working from home can provide a number of benefits to both the employee and the organisation, these include:

- Greater flexibility in working hours
- Higher quality work due to improved morale and fewer interruptions
- Retention/recruitment of employees – wider pool of candidates
- Reduced travelling times

Opportunities and Responsibility for Working from Home

Working from home can be considered where there is no requirement for close supervision or regular interactions in order for work to be completed and where working away from the University would not affect the quality of the work. Consideration must also be given to the work of the individuals team and requirement for communication.

It is not considered appropriate to combine home based working with dependant care. Therefore employees must be made aware that working from home is not a substitute for making arrangements for care of dependants.

Employees must be available and contactable during agreed working hours. Requests to work from home should be made to your line manager in the first instance.

Health & Safety

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act an employer has to take reasonable steps to protect the health, safety and welfare of its staff, the University also has an agreed Code of Practice, details of which can be found at cwis.livjm.ac.uk/hse/Codes. There is a duty to carry out risk assessment in relation to work activities for all staff. This does not mean that it will be necessary to visit the homes of every member of staff who carry out some percentage of their work at home. For occasional work from

home it will usually be sufficient to bring to their attention possible hazards. This can be done by issuing the document Guidelines for Occasional Working from Home. Employees will also be responsible for completing their own workstation assessment on their home work station, this is required by the Display Screen Equipment Regulations, further details can be found at <https://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/HSU/65144.htm>

If you feel a member of staff is working from home more regularly please contact Health & Safety Unit for further advice.

Stress

Working at home for some people will help reduce potential levels of stress; they will be free from distractions and interruptions, time usually spent travelling to the University will be eliminated along with the stress of public transport and traffic jams. However there is also the possibility for feelings of stress or anxiety resulting from; working alone, long periods of home working may lead to feelings of isolation; it may be difficult to avoid domestic crises which may lead to feelings of guilt about backlog; ill health problems may go unnoticed and also there is no clear beginning or end of the working day which may lead to excessive hours. Prolonged periods of working at home are therefore not recommended and it is essential that regular communications is maintained.

Legal Implications

Working from home is perfectly legal and will not affect your residential council tax or the VAT on fuel bills. However employees must ensure that any work equipment used at their home is covered by their home insurance and must complete the University Loan of University Equipment form, further details can be found at https://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/fin/secured/finance_JMUStaffOnly/116410.htm

In addition employees also need to be aware that any area of the home used exclusively for work purposes may mean they are subject to Capital Gains Tax.

Employees also need to be aware of the cost of using your home telephone/fax/computer etc.

There may also be some tax implications if you have any University property at your home and you use it for your own personal use.

Working from Home – Guidelines for Managers

Employees can approach their line manager with a request to work from home occasionally. Any such requests must be considered carefully, should the request be made under the right to Request Flexible Working the application should be considered under the Flexible Working Procedure in conjunction with these guidelines.

Suitable tasks

- A high degree of written rather than manual work
- Work is to be performed on an individual basis or with clearly defined areas of individual work which has clearly defined objectives and can be subject to performance measurement
- Work that does not require frequent input from other colleagues

Selection of Employees for Home Working

Not all individuals will be suitable candidates for home working and on receiving a request the line manager should assess the employee against the following criteria:-

- Self motivation
- Self reliance and discipline to work to deadlines
- Initiative, flexibility and time management skills
- Ability to deal with reduced social contact and isolation
- Ability to cope with additional pressures or working at home where the demands of family life are hard to ignore

The manager should use the above characteristics to establish evidence to support or decline an application. Copies of assessments should be forwarded to People and Organisational Development for the employees personal file.

Agreeing a request

If a manager assesses the individual as suitable for occasional working from home they should ensure that the employee is aware of the health and safety issues, this can be done by issuing the employee with the employee guidelines and ensuring that risk assessments are carried out, a record of risk assessment should be forwarded to People and Organisational Development for the employees personal file. Employees working from home are covered by the Display Screen Regulations and must complete a risk assessment on their home work station.

In addition the manager should agree with the employee, clear guidelines of what is expected. These should include:-

- Clear tasks and objectives
- Procedure for assessing and monitoring performance and output

- Communication arrangements including agreement of when and how the employee can be contacted, it should also be defined who may be given access to the employees home phone number
- Any training & development needs identified as a result of the agreement
- Details of any University equipment used at home
- Details of how the agreement can be terminated by either side

The above should be confirmed in writing and a copy forwarded to People and Organisational Development for the employees personal file.

Occasional Working from Home – Guidelines for Employees

From time to time it may be more appropriate for you to work from home for example to complete a piece of work with the minimum of disruption.

If you wish to be considered for occasional working from home you should approach your line manager. If you are requesting home work under your statutory right to request Flexible Working you should apply using the procedure set out in Flexible Working – Guidelines for staff, details are available from the People and Organisational Development or on the People and Organisational Development pages of CWIS.

If your request is successful then your line manager will provide you with an agreement setting out the terms of your agreement. In addition you also need to follow the general principles as set out below.

Security

Employees must take care to ensure the security of work in their home, this will include;

- Security and confidentiality of University equipment and information
- No access of friends and family to work
- Protection of home computers and their links, employees must ensure that work moved by disk does not transfer viruses to University machines

Health and Safety

For occasional working from home it is not necessary for the University to visit your home however you will be required to familiarise yourself with the potential hazards which are outlined below, in addition further information is available at:

<https://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/HSU/65144.htm>

Display Screen Equipment

If you do work at home using a computer the Display Screen Equipment Regulations apply and you should undertake an assessment of your workstation to make sure it does not present any health and safety hazards. Details of completing an assessment can be found on <https://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/HSU/65144.htm>

Electrical and Other Work Equipment

Employees are responsible for the safety of the wiring/electricity circuit in their homes but should complete the Visual Inspection list for Electrical Equipment. Attached) In addition, it is important to ensure that any electrical equipment, for example laptop computers provided for work at home is safe and regularly maintained and employees should bring in such equipment for checking in accordance with

Faculty/Service maintenance agreements and should also ensure that any personal equipment used is also maintained regularly

Hazardous Substances

Employees are prohibited from taking hazardous substances from the work place to home.

Visual Inspection Checklist for electrical equipment – for Occasional Homeworking

Looking for any damage to the electrical equipment can prevent most of the faults that can cause harm. Please complete and return to your line manager.

	Yes	No
Did the University test any electrical equipment before you took it home?		
Are plugs free from physical damage?		
Can any wires be secured or stored carefully so as not to present a trip hazard?		
Is the outer covering of cables and wires free from damage?		
Is the outer cover of equipment undamaged without loose parts or screws?		

Name of Home worker	
Service/Faculty	
Date:	