

HARLOW COUNCIL

Addendum to Health and Safety Policy

Home Working

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Introduction

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places specific duties on employers to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of employees as well as the health and safety of other persons who may be affected by their work activities.

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 employers must assess significant risks to the health and safety of both employees and other persons who may be affected by their work activities.

Failure to comply with the requirements of this policy is a disciplinary offence, which in serious cases could lead to dismissal.

General Statement – Scope of the Policy

Harlow Council recognises the importance of flexible working and considers that where practicable home working should not be discouraged.

When the Council agrees to an employee working from home they are in fact agreeing to part of that employee's home becoming a place of work, and as such all of the above legislative requirements apply.

This policy applies to office type working where a member of staff regularly works at least one day a week at home.

This policy does not apply to members of staff who have arranged a home link into the Council's computer system, which is used for occasional access to emails etc.

Assessing the risk

Before agreement is given it will be necessary for the Health and Safety Team to make a home visit in order to carry out a risk assessment of the location and work activities. The assessment will include:

- Suitability of the location within the premises for home working to be undertaken
- Layout of the work station and suitability of the chair
- Availability of, and requirement for, power supply and fire extinguisher
- Peripheral requirements such as printer and storage, document holder
- PAT testing of any electrical equipment
- Possible impact of the home working on the safety of other persons/dependants within the home

Once the assessment has been undertaken details of any measures to be put in place will be sent to the individual, their Line Manager and Human Resources. It will be the Line Manager's responsibility to ensure that they are implemented.

IT Services

IT Services will not normally provide computer equipment unless by prior arrangement with the Officers Line Manager. A home link can be arranged to be installed and an initial home working assessment will be undertaken by the Health & Safety Team.

Ongoing arrangements

It is the responsibility of the individual member of staff to notify their Line Manager and the Safety Team of any significant changes to the work location, including a change of address. They must also notify anything else that may have an impact on the initial assessment and the risks to the health and safety of either themselves or other persons within the home.

It will be the responsibility of the individual's Line Manager to ensure that periodic reviews (at least annually) are undertaken. This is necessary to ensure all control measures remain effective and that no significant changes to the working arrangements have occurred since the initial assessment.

The review will primarily be by way of completing a periodic review form, which can be found on the Health and Safety section of the Kaonet and once completed the form will be forwarded to the Safety Team. If it is considered that there have been significant changes then a further home assessment will be undertaken.

Since the Covid 19 pandemic, (lockdown/working from home - began March 2020 onwards), the majority of staff have carried out home working arrangements. All staff should have regular communication with their Manager and have completed the home working DSE Assessment. Any specific issues or concerns should be discussed in liaison with you Line Manager/Team Leader in consultation with the H&S Team, who may follow up with a zoom/online/home assessment as required.

Summary

Although Harlow Council, wherever practicable, encourages home working it is necessary to ensure that it is undertaken safely and with minimal risk to either the employee or other persons within the home. The three most important things to be certain of are that:

- Before permission is given a home risk assessment is undertaken by the Safety Team and all necessary control measure implemented
- The employees Line Manager reviews the working arrangements on a periodic basis
- An annual self-assessment is undertaken by the individual – the Health and Safety Team will carry out a home visit if there has been any significant changes to the home working environment
- IT Services will not normally provide computer equipment unless by prior arrangement with the Officers Line Manager, or install the home link until after the initial assessment has been undertaken
- The employee notifies their Line Manager and the Safety Team of any significant changes to the working arrangements. Line Manager ensures that periodic reviews of home working arrangements are undertaken

Revision History

Revision date	Previous revision date	Summary of Changes	Changes marked
August 2006	None	Original Draft document	
22/04/2008	August 2006	Updates from Draft. Inserted Revision History. Logo changed	No
2/9/2008	22/4/2008	Ongoing arrangements section updated to include use of review form	
1/2014	9/2008	Reviewed and updated	No
April 2020		Reviewed and updated	No
Nov 2021	April 2020	Inclusion of Covid working from home statement	No
Nov 2023			