



Remote Working Policy

November 2020

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST	
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Approved by Director:	18 NOVEMBER 2020
Effective From:	18 NOVEMBER 2020
Date of Next Review:	18 NOVEMBER 2023
Diversity compliant:	YES
Equality Impact Assessment:	LOW
Data Protection compliant:	YES
Health & Safety compliant:	YES
Procedure implemented:	YES
SDM system changes made:	N/A
Training Completed:	
Posted on SharePoint:	
Posted on website:	

Introduction and Background

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 increasingly popular used to promote flexibility within the workplace, attract, and retain talent within the workforce.

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 Forgewood Housing Co-operative, following the necessary consultation and contractual change processes.

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.

Policy Principles

Forgewood Housing Co-operative's Remote Working Policy aims to:

- Benefit the business from creative solutions, ideas and projects by allowing staff to do these remotely, 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.

Occasional Remote Working

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. 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.

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.

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.

Costs/Allowances

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

Contractual Remote Working

Contractual remote working can occur by making a Flexible Working Request: An employee with the required continuous service can request via their statutory entitlement to request Flexible Working.

Remote Working during Covid-19 Pandemic

Due to the pandemic and the associated declaration of public emergencies the Co-operative was required to shift the workforce, where possible, to working remotely.

Our approach to this has been practical, flexible and sensitive to each other's situation when working from home and where employees can gradually return to the workplace.

This remote working practice will be reviewed during the pandemic to ensure the business needs and requirements of the Co-operative, tenants and service users are met.

Flexible Working Request

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 following Forgewood Housing Co-operative's Flexible Working Policy. The process outlined in the policy will be followed. Any decision to accept or reject the application will be based on Forgewood Housing Co-operative's business needs and requirements at the time of the request and, in line with Forgewood Housing Co-operative's 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.

Trial Periods

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.

Contractual changes

If contractual remote working has been agreed, Forgewood Housing Co-operative will write to the employee to confirm the change and any associated terms with the change.

Costs/Allowances

Forgewood Housing Co-operative will contribute towards remote working expenses such as:

- An allowance if required for the employee to use their own personal mobile

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.

Travel Expenses

Work-related travel expenses will be paid at the rate stated in your terms and conditions of employment, and as specified in Forgewood Housing Co-operative's Expenses policy.

Performance Management

Forgewood Housing Co-operative 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 Forgewood Housing Co-operative's performance management process initially on an informal basis. Matters will be managed confidentially with individual employees.

Health & Safety

A health and safety assessment will be carried out according to Forgewood Housing Co-operative's health and safety checklist (Appendix 1), which covers VDU risks and general precautions for householder electrical safety. Domestic electrical supply configurations are outwith 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).

Technical Support

Forgewood Housing Co-operative's IT infrastructure is capable of supporting remote working and gives employees remote access to calendars, phones, mails and documents. Employees are required to have their broadband at sufficient speed in place. Forgewood Housing Co-operative will, where practical, provide the appropriate equipment and/or software to allow people to work remotely.

It will be required that employees have the necessary firewall and anti-virus software installed on their remote computers, to protect Forgewood Housing Co-operative's office IT system from any harm.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed on a yearly basis or as business needs arise.

Appendix 1

Forgewood Housing Co-operative'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. Forgewood Housing Co-operative 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

Forgewood Housing Co-operatives self-assessment tool will be used to ensure workstations are set up appropriately.