

Home Working

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Home Working

1. Introduction

Homeworking on an occasional basis or to support agreed regular flexible working (staff will work regular 'default' hours from home), is a recognised flexible working practice which, in appropriate circumstances, can help staff balance their work and personal lives, achieve business objectives, and have a positive impact on the environment.

Homeworking involves using the staff member's home as a base for work, on an occasional basis or an agreed work pattern, instead of the staff member coming into a recognised workplace.

2. Purpose of this Policy/Procedure

The policy sets out the framework for homeworking and aims to:

- provide a clear and manageable procedure for homeworking for employed staff
- provide the basis for a clear understanding of the homeworking scheme for the benefit of BrisDoc and staff member
- make clear the responsibilities of the manager and homeworker
- ensure homeworkers work safely and securely with preventative measures for hazards or risks.

3. Scope

Whilst this policy applies to all staff regardless of length of service, it is recognised that some roles will be more suitable to homeworking than others.

To work effectively homeworking has to primarily meet the business needs of the service as well as the individual.

BrisDoc is committed to ensuring the health, wellbeing and safety of staff working from home and these will be primary considerations in any agreement.

There is no automatic right to work at home and such working is voluntary and by agreement with the line manager. Each individual request for homeworking will be considered on its merits.

Factors that managers should consider as part of the approval process include:

- the objectives of the homeworking;
- the suitability of the job for homeworking;
- the performance level of the individual member of staff, including the confidence in them to work remotely and without regular supervision. Staff members who are subject to formal or informal conduct or capability proceedings will not normally be eligible for homeworking arrangements, particularly where they require close supervision and coaching by their manager to make the necessary improvements. However, it is recognised that there may be occasions where homeworking can help individuals improve their performance;
- the suitability of the worker's home for homeworking, e.g., agreed method of communication, access to colleagues, information, and technology;

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- the outcome of a risk assessment;
- the impact on, and inter-relationship with, other members of the team.

Taking work home occasionally, on an ad hoc basis, to concentrate on a particular project or task may be suitable where a specific task needs dedicated and focused input and/or could be dealt with more efficiently at home, e.g. saved travelling time and lack of interruptions.

Taking work home where it involves personal or sensitive information must only be done with Line Manager's approval and where appropriate safeguards for the information have been applied.

4. Definitions / Glossary

Homeworking - is simply carrying out agreed work from home, with the support and agreement of your Line Manager (BrisDoc)

5. Ownership and Responsibilities

5.1. Role of line managers

Line managers are responsible for:

- considering how homeworking can be effective, for the individual, BrisDoc and our environment;
- being flexible in their approach to homeworking requests and opportunities, ensuring each decision to allow homeworking is based on a sound business case;
- ensuring that the work output of staff designated as homeworkers is managed and deadlines are met;
- ensuring the health and safety of staff applying to work at home, including a risk and DSE assessment (see Appendix 2) to ensure all work will be undertaken safely and securely;
- reinforcing the staff member's responsibility for confidentiality and securing of data in line with BrisDoc data security policies;
- ensuring the wellbeing of staff including regular contact and communication to include and inform staff;

5.2. Homeworkers

Homeworkers are expected to:

- agree homeworking arrangements with their line manager;
- be available and contactable during the agreed working hours;
- carry out the required DSE and risk assessments;

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- comply with BrisDoc policies and procedures that relate to both practices and professional conduct whilst working, whether this be in their home or on BrisDoc premises;
- keep secure and locked any documents or data that belongs to BrisDoc in accordance with BrisDoc Information Governance rules;
- be vigilant so that their screens are not overlooked by others, to avoid the possibility of any unauthorised access to information or disclosure;
- ensure that whilst talking with patients their conversation can not be overheard by other household members thereby keeping it confidential;
- take reasonable care of any BrisDoc supplied equipment for homeworking;
- report any broken or defective BrisDoc provided IT equipment to the Digital Team and also inform their line manager;
- be responsible for the loss or damage to equipment where the security policy has not been observed;
- report any damaged, lost or stolen equipment, including BrisDoc documentation or data belonging to BrisDoc via the Incident Reporting Portal and through informing their line manager;
- report any accident or incident within 24 hours (or as soon as the incident has become known) to BrisDoc using the Incident Reporting Portal and also inform their line manager that such an incident has been reported
- allow remote access to home working kit, for data audit and compliance to policy on request.

6. Standards and Practice

6.1. Conditions for Homeworking

- **Hours** - all homeworkers' usual hours of work will apply. Staff working from home are still subject to the terms of the *Working Time Regulations* and should be reminded of this so that they do not routinely work in excess of normal office hours. All employees, regardless of their work location, are advised to take at least a 30-minute rest break for every 6 hours worked. Many staff working from home forgets or choose not to take a break but this is not advised as it can affect your health and your productivity. It is recommended that you take a 5-minute break from the screen in every hour, this could be a change of task such as to make a telephone call. It is important to establish a work schedule when working from home. Many homeworkers find that they work long hours as there is no clear signal to the end of the day. It is important to set yourself time limits so that you do not find it difficult to end your day.
- **Expenses** – BrisDoc will not contribute any expenses related to working at home, e.g. Utility costs including broadband

Contact - all homeworkers will be expected to be available by telephone during their normal working hours. The right of a staff member not to disclose his/her address and telephone number, except to immediate colleagues, should be respected. However, an agreed method of

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contact with their manager and other colleagues, both internal and external, must be maintained when working from home.

- **Compliance with Policies and Procedures** - all homeworkers must comply with all BrisDoc policies and procedures whether working from home or at BrisDoc. This will include the BrisDoc's Code of Expectations and *Information Security Policy* found on 'radar'/GP TeamNet. **In particular, in the 'removed' environment of home, adherence to IG policies must be maintained.**
- **Equipment** – BrisDoc does not usually undertake to supply any equipment as a result of an agreement for homeworking but may at its discretion, supply equipment such as a portable laptop (where a minimum of three days a week are at home) and peripherals or remote connection facilities to work securely from an individual's own PC. This will involve accessing BrisDoc's servers securely using the authentication tools provided by BrisDoc. Any equipment provided will remain the property of BrisDoc which must be returned when it is no longer required for work purposes and/or when the staff member leaves BrisDoc.
- **Team working** - working from home must not create additional workload for other staff members or otherwise affect operational efficiency or effectiveness.
- **Caring responsibilities** - homeworking is not a substitute for childcare or care of other dependents, although it can help with these as part of a flexible working arrangement. Homeworkers with dependents must ensure that they are able to fulfil the requirements of their post whilst working from home by making adequate provision for the care of their dependents during working hours.
- **Absence** - the usual provisions relating to reporting sickness absence and other reasons for not being able to report to work will apply in accordance with the appropriate BrisDoc policies.
- Employees who were not planning to work from home but report that they are sick, should not choose or be expected to work from home instead of coming in to work. It is important to rest from work.

There are some situations where working from home is advised during a phased return from a long-term sickness absence. You should seek advice from HR in these circumstances.

- **Environment** – a homeworker needs a home working environment which offers:
 - suitable "office" space;
 - adequate equipment including computer, broadband connection, telephone line etc;
 - freedom from interruptions and distractions;
 - security and confidentiality;
 - ability to meet Health and Safety requirements.

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6.2. Application Process

6.2.1. Members of staff who wish to apply to work from home should first discuss the possibility with their line manager.

6.2.2. These discussions should consider the reasons for the request and arrangements in respect of, for example, telephone calls and e-mails; management of staff (if applicable); IT equipment and data security.

6.2.3. If approved, the staff member must then make a formal application by completing and submitting the *Request for Homeworking* form (see Appendix 1) and discussing with their line manager.

6.2.4. A risk assessment (see Appendix 2) must also be undertaken by the applicant. This should include a workstation self-assessment (See DSE seating and posture diagram in appendix 3)

The self-assessment checklist should be completed and the contents discussed and approved by the line manager prior to the commencement of homeworking. A copy of the assessment should be kept on the staff member's Personnel file.

6.2.5. Each occasion of homeworking must be agreed by the line manager. A request might be refused, if notice is too short if cover is required for the staff member's absence.

6.2.6. The manager may wish to agree specific objectives and feedback arrangements with the individual.

6.2.7. The arrangement to work from home will be reviewed regularly at agreed intervals and may be terminated at any time by either the staff member or BrisDoc.

6.3. Health and Safety

6.3.1. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requires all employers to ensure as far as is 'reasonably practicable', the health, safety and welfare at work of employees. This duty is extended to employees working at home.

6.3.2. Prior to the commencement of homeworking a work station self-assessment and risk assessment of the proposed area and equipment (to include furniture and electrical equipment, telephones, etc.) must be carried out. This should be recorded on the risk assessment form at Appendix 2 and discussed with and approved by the line manager.

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Further guidance (including a work station self-assessment form) is available from BrisDoc's *Operational Policy on Display Screen Equipment and the Workplace Environment*, a copy of which is available on BrisDoc's intranet. Should any queries arise, further advice may be sought from the Services Health and Safety Advisor.

6.3.3. The equipment used by homeworkers (whether owned by BrisDoc or provided by the homeworker) must be safe to use, fit for purpose and not give rise to any Health and safety risks. The equipment should be maintained in efficient working order and in good repair.

6.3.4. BrisDoc will be responsible for maintaining BrisDoc equipment. Any concerns regarding BrisDoc equipment must be immediately raised with the line manager.

6.3.5. Homeworkers must ensure that all equipment owned by BrisDoc is kept securely including whilst in transit.

6.3.6. If an incident occurs whilst working from home, the member of staff must report the incident in accordance with the provisions of the *Incident Management Policy*.

6.4. Insurance

6.4.1. Homeworkers working under this policy, with the knowledge and consent of their manager, are covered by BrisDoc's insurance arrangements.

6.4.2. BrisDoc will be responsible for any necessary insurance of equipment supplied by them and employee liability insurance.

6.4.3. It is the responsibility of the homeworker to provide adequate home buildings and contents insurance. BrisDoc will not accept liability for damage caused to the home or its contents.

6.5. Information Management, Equipment and Support

6.5.1. The line manager and staff member must liaise with the Digital Team to provide appropriate access to IT facilities for working from home.

6.5.2. The Digital Team can provide limited telephone-based support to staff whilst working from home. Any further support required for BrisDoc owned IT equipment will take place on BrisDoc premises.

6.5.3. Support of non-BrisDoc provided equipment is strictly limited to guidance only and action is taken at the risk of the individual. The Digital Team cannot be responsible

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for issues arising from the use of an individual's home equipment to access BrisDoc systems.

6.5.4. Home broadband connections are the responsibility of the home user. The Digital Team will not contact broadband suppliers to investigate this type of problem.

6.6. Security and Access to Others

6.6.1. Homeworking staff will be responsible for taking adequate steps to ensure the security of BrisDoc equipment in their home. Homeworking staff are responsible for ensuring that no other person can access BrisDoc information and services (including internet access). Guidance for this is detailed in Appendix 4 of this document.

6.6.2. Reasonable private use of BrisDoc property loaned to support home working is acceptable. However, other members of the staff member's family are not permitted to use it.

6.7. IT Security

6.7.1. All homeworkers are expected to follow all of the BrisDoc's IT security policies and procedures to protect BrisDoc's and patient confidential information or information of a sensitive nature to our business. If the materials or information the homeworker will be working on are person identifiable, it is essential that proper controls are implemented in order to protect information. All of the same controls applied at the office will apply at home (e.g. password protection, hardware and software security standards, etc).

6.7.2. The following requirements must be adhered to.

- The use of a home PC, personal lap top or other device is not permitted for any work that contains patient or staff identifiers or is of a confidential or sensitive nature, e.g. patient notes, job references, etc. unless it is via BrisDoc's secure remote access facility. Otherwise residual information may still be stored on the device which would be accessible by others who have access to the device and will also need to be disposed of in line with BrisDoc's IT Disposal Policy.
- The use of personal devices to access applications where all information remains on secure NHS systems such as e-mail and the Intranet is acceptable.
- All documents must be produced and stored in compliance with the BrisDoc's *Records Management Policy*. The use of remote access applications should be used to store files on BrisDoc's servers.
- The use of personal devices is permitted for work of low risk documents, e.g. job descriptions, provided that the final version is held as part of the corporate records structure.

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- Any work taken home must be transported securely; using either a BrisDoc supplied laptop or via an individual's NHSMail OneDrive storage.
- No personal, sensitive or confidential information is to be downloaded onto personally owned PCs.
- No personal, sensitive or confidential information is to be printed on printers located at a staff member's home or other properties outside BrisDoc.
- It is the staff member's responsibility that any home device is properly licensed for the software used in the homeworker's device.

6.8. Confidentiality and Security of Data

6.8.1. Staff members are expected to keep any work data used at home confidential and secure. All work data remains the property of BrisDoc and may be required at any time. All data will be managed in line with the appropriate policy.

6.8.2. Staff members are not permitted to keep BrisDoc data, either electronic or paper files, at home on a permanent basis. BrisDoc has statutory obligations to fulfil requests for information under several acts of parliament such as Freedom of Information and Data Protection Acts and it has to be able to gain access to that information at short notice.

6.8.3. No records are to be stored at home, even overnight unless by agreement your line manager, Caldicott Guardian or the Data Protection Officer.

Record types include, for example:

- Health records
- Human Resource records
- Occupational Health records
- Personnel files.

This list is illustrative and not exhaustive. Indeed, any record that can uniquely identify an individual will fall within this category.

6.9. Failure to comply with this policy

A failure to comply with this policy will be investigated and may result in disciplinary action being taken which could potentially lead to dismissal.

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7. Dissemination and Implementation

7.1. A copy of the policy will be stored electronically in the HR section of the BrisDoc's document library on 'radar'/GP TeamNet.

7.2 A copy of the policy will be circulated to members of the HR team and line managers to enable them to support implementation.

7.3 A clear communication will be sent to managers to make them aware that the policy has been issued and that they are responsible for cascading the information to their staff members, including staff members who do not have regular access to email.

8. Monitoring compliance and effectiveness

Element to be monitored: There will be a review, by the line manager, of the appropriateness of homeworking at via the staff members PDR. This will include assessments to ensure the Health and Safety and IT Security requirements are being maintained.

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Appendix 1. Request for homeworking

REQUEST FOR HOMEWORKING

Before a formal application is made, the staff member should discuss the situation with their line manager.

Full Name:	Job Title:
Location:	Dept:
Line Manager:	Hours Worked:

<p>1. I would like to apply for Homeworking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <p>Date of commencement:</p> <p>Subsequent to the completion of this form, you will need to obtain the prior agreement of your manager for each occasion of homeworking. Before the first episode of homeworking, you will also need to complete a Workstation Self-Assessment Form. See DSE seating and posture diagram in Appendix 3.</p>
<p>2. I confirm that appropriate arrangements have been put in place and agreed with my manager in order to cover the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• telephone calls and e-mails,• managing staff in my team,• contact details to enable my manager and colleagues to contact me• during working hours,• record of the hours worked from home (to be reviewed if these are excessive)• IT equipment• alternative arrangements should home connection become unavailable• securing and maintaining confidentiality.
<p>I have read, understood and agree to comply with BrisDoc's policy and guidelines on Homeworking.</p> <p>Signed: _____ Date: _____</p> <p>Agreed by (Line Manager): _____ Date: _____</p>

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Appendix 2. Homeworking and DSE assessment

HOMEWORKING RISK AND DSE ASSESSMENT

The purpose of this assessment is to assist your manager in safeguarding your health and safety whilst you are homeworking.

To be completed by the staff member and authorised by the line manager

Full Name:	Job Title:
Line Manager and Job Title:	Dept:
Home Address	Date of Risk Assessment
Home Contact No	Address to which Risk assessment applies (if different from above)

<p>Work Environment Checklist This checklist is for use by staff who work at home to enable them to be sure that their workstation is safe, comfortable and practical. See DSE seating and posture diagram in appendix 3.</p>

		Yes	No
1	Do you have a separate work area way from the rest of the living space where you can work without disruption and maintain confidentiality?		
2	Is there sufficient secure storage for confidential information both at home and in transit?		
3	Do you have enough space to work safely?		
4	Are there sufficient electrical sockets to enable you to safely plug in your laptop or computer?		
5	Is the work area clear from obstructions and tripping hazards?		
6	Do you know how to report work related accidents?		
7	Do you know how to report health and safety concerns?		
8	Is there room for a PC to fit comfortably on a desk?		
9	Do you have sufficient workspace to avoid placing items on the floor?		
10	Is existing lighting adequate for computer work and reading?		
11	Are appropriate communication channels in place for contact with colleagues and managers?		
12	Are you happy that workload targets have been agreed and are achievable?		
13	Have you received suitable and sufficient instruction on your hardware and software?		
14.	Do you need support to make any adjustments to work at home safely? Chair, Table, screen riser, external keyboard/mouse		
15	Is there a need for non-business or business visitors to arrive at the premises while you are home working? (Business meetings should not take place at home)		

If the answer to questions 1-14 is **No**, or the answer to question 14 is **Yes**, the line manager must ensure that the home environment is appropriate for work. Please consult BrisDoc's Health and Safety Advisor for further advice on risk assessment.

This checklist has been completed to the best of my knowledge. I confirm that I will be able to work at home safely and effectively. If, for any reason, circumstances change and I feel that I will no longer be able to do so, I understand it is my responsibility to report it to my line manager as soon as reasonably practicable.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

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Appendix 3. DSE seating and posture diagram

Reproduced from the HSE document: The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 (DSE Regulations),

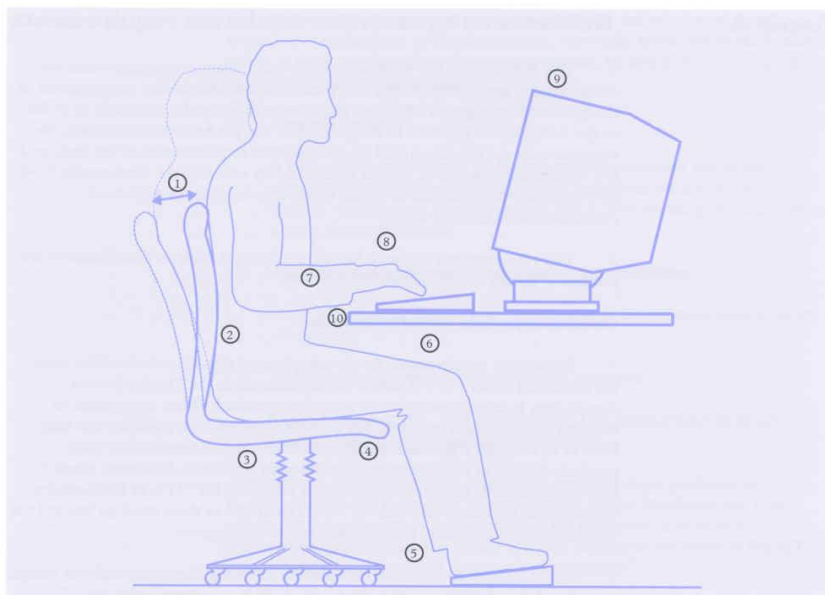


FIGURE 2

SEATING AND POSTURE FOR TYPICAL OFFICE TASKS

- ① SEAT BACK ADJUSTABILITY
- ② GOOD LUMBAR SUPPORT
- ③ SEAT HEIGHT ADJUSTABILITY
- ④ NO EXCESS PRESSURE ON UNDERSIDE OF THIGHS AND BACKS OF KNEES
- ⑤ FOOT SUPPORT IF NEEDED
- ⑥ SPACE FOR POSTURAL CHANGE, NO OBSTACLES UNDER DESK
- ⑦ FOREARMS APPROXIMATELY HORIZONTAL
- ⑧ MINIMAL EXTENSION, FLEXION OR DEVIATION OF WRISTS
- ⑨ SCREEN HEIGHT AND ANGLE SHOULD ALLOW COMFORTABLE HEAD POSITION
- ⑩ SPACE IN FRONT OF KEYBOARD TO SUPPORT HANDS/WRISTS DURING PAUSES IN KEYING

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Appendix 4 - How to Manage your PC

PC or Laptop is password protected	<input type="checkbox"/>
Windows 10 or Windows 11 Professional is installed	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is recommended that you configure the computer's software to automatically update. Have Windows updates, antivirus software, any web browsers, and especially browser plug-ins to automatically install updates. Basically, if there's a way to have a program automatically update, configure it to do so, so the computer always has the latest software.	<input type="checkbox"/>
USB Headset and Camera or integrated camera and microphone	<input type="checkbox"/>
Paid Anti-Virus installed and kept up to date NOT a free product e.g AVG Free <i>Paid antivirus solutions offer more comprehensive and robust protection than free solutions. A paid antivirus solution will generally include all the features and benefits of the free version, as well as some additional functionalities that will keep the user and Their access to BrisDoc's platform safer and supports BrisDoc's Cyber Essential compliance.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PC Min 8 GB Memory	<input type="checkbox"/>
Laptop should be a personal device, NOT a family or employer/corporate laptop	<input type="checkbox"/>

Internet Connection

If you have wireless in place, ensure that it is not open and the default password is changed and is secure.	<input type="checkbox"/>
10 MBPS+ internet connection, more if family utilisation at the same time or supplied via a shared line. NB. You can check internet connection speed using www.speedtest.net or www.broadbandspeedchecker.co.uk	<input type="checkbox"/>
The internet connection must be located in the remote workers usual place of residence. The use of hotel or public Wi-Fi is not supported/or allowed. The use of personal mobile hot spots will be supported, but must be declared as the method of connection	<input type="checkbox"/>

Whenever leaving your computer unattended always choose to lock your PC by Application as shown below.

- Press the **Win+L** keys
- **Ctrl+Alt+Del** keys and click/tap on **Lock**.

General advice for use of portable technology

You should:

Place your laptop on a suitable work surface (ie a table preferably 72cm high)

Connect and use a separate keyboard and input device

If using a laptop, place the laptop on a laptop stand to raise the screen height (lightweight portable ones are available)

Use an appropriate office chair particularly if the use is prolonged, and make sure it is adjusted appropriately

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Remember the basic principles of good working posture (see Appendix 3)

- Use a cushion or pillow to support the small of the back if the chair is not adjustable
- Take longer and more frequent breaks than you would normally.

8. Tables

Date	Reviewed and amended by	Revision details	Issue number
May 18	D.Lowndes	1 st Review by TC	1.1
June 18	D.Lowndes	2 nd Review SH/CLN	1.2
June 18	D.Lowndes	Issue for Final Review	1.3
August 18	D.Lowndes	Tweaks for final issue	1.4
Nov 18	D.Lowndes	Amends after KR feedback	1.5
Nov 19	D.Lowndes	Annual Review	1.6
April 20	D.Lowndes	Amendments to reflect working remotely in times of COVID19	1.7
July 20	D. Lowndes	Amendments to reflect working remotely in times of COVID19	1.8
November 20	N. Gazzard	Amendments	1.9
January 23	D Lowndes	Annual review, remove refs to Covid and USB use, staff to co-owners and addition of line manager RotaMaster profile update for the co-owner	2.0