

WORKING FROM HOME POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. POLICY STATEMENT

North Yorkshire Advocacy recognises that there may, on occasion, be circumstances when it would be more beneficial or flexible for staff to work at home, either on a permanent basis, or in order to complete a particular task, for example a special project or funding bid, however, it is not possible to offer home working to all staff as the requirements of the organisation will not be suitable for such arrangements.

This policy deals with situations where:

- the member of staff is based at home and works at home
- the member of staff is based at home but works mainly 'on the road'
- occasional one-off home working
- situations where the employee prefers to work from home and has an option.

2. AGREEMENT TO WORK FROM HOME

Where an employee makes a request, prior permission is required before an employee can work at home. The employee should make the request to the Chief Executive. Consideration will be given to any such requests and a decision regarding the suitability of working at home will take into account all relevant circumstances. The decision of the Chief executive is final. North Yorkshire Advocacy reserves the right to withdraw their approval for home working if it is believed it is being abused or for any other reasonable needs of North Yorkshire Advocacy to carry out its business.

For certain posts, the North Yorkshire Advocacy may determine that the normal place of work, or 'base', is the home of the employee. Any variation to this would constitute a variation to the terms and conditions of the employment.

It is possible that a post could involve some time based at home and some time based in the office.

3. QUALIFYING CONDITIONS

Working at home is totally dependent upon certain criteria being fulfilled, these being that the employee:

- has obtained prior agreement for home working from the Chief Executive
- does not have other commitments with North Yorkshire Advocacy, or elsewhere at that time, including dependent care responsibilities that would conflict with the requirement to work. It is not considered appropriate to combine home based working with dependent care. Employees are expected to make appropriate arrangements for the care of any dependents during working hours. Home working should not be viewed as an alternative to paid dependant care.
- has notified both the Chief Executive of her/his hours of work and location
- has a contact telephone number and is available to be contacted during the nominated times

4. WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Workload, reporting and monitoring

All arrangements for monitoring, supervision, setting workloads, etc., will be agreed with the Chief executive in line with normal procedures.

For one-off home working, the precise project or task must be agreed beforehand.

4.2 Equipment

Employees who are required to work from home would in most circumstances have equipment supplied by the employer.

Where an employee chooses to work from home, and this is agreed by the Chief Executive, they would provide their own equipment.

Any equipment provided by North Yorkshire Advocacy for the purposes of working at home will be inspected and maintained by the employer. The member of staff is required to take reasonable care of all equipment, to keep it secure and to use it in accordance with operating instructions, and the Data Protection policy. They must ensure that any such equipment provided is returned at the end of the arrangement. Any equipment must NOT be left unattended in any vehicle at any time.

4.3 Insurance Cover

Employees are advised that working from home may affect the provisions of any home contents insurance and are advised to inform their insurers prior to commencing working from home. Computer equipment will be insured through the insurance policies. Laptops are insured while in suitable secured premises or on the person. They are not insured when left unattended in vehicles.

4.4 Personal Details and Safety

Employees are advised not to release their home address and telephone number to non-members of staff. Employees are advised not to meet volunteers, clients, or customers at home.

4.5 Confidentiality and access

Equipment and files should only be accessible to the employee and safeguarded from access by other members of the household and visitors in line with the Data Protection Policy. The Chief Executive should have access at a reasonable time to equipment and any paper records kept at an employee's home.

4.6 Review of home working arrangement

At any time, the agreement to work from home may be reviewed by the employee or Chief Executive. This policy is also subject to review and does not form part of any contract of employment.

5. HEALTH AND SAFETY

The employer has a duty to protect its staff's health and safety at work in accordance with the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the regulations made under it.

Employees are required to comply with the employer's Health and Safety policy while they are at work and to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of any third party with whom they come into contact during the course of their employment.

6. REPORTING SICKNESS ABSENCE

In the event that the member of staff is sick during a period of working at home then the normal employer's sickness reporting rules must be followed.

7. TRAVEL COSTS AND OTHER EXPENSES

Claims may be made for travel to appointments from and to the 'normal place of work', i.e., the employee's home. This normally includes travel costs for journeys to the main office for occasional meetings, provided the office does not become a 'permanent work place' as defined by HM Revenue & Customs guidance.

North Yorkshire Advocacy will negotiate with employees based at home to provide essential equipment, but heating, lighting, etc. Costs will be covered by the employee. The organisation will cover the costs of consumables – stationery, etc.

8. COMPLIANCE

Failure to comply with any aspect of this policy or related policies such as Health & Safety and the Data Protection policies may constitute a disciplinary offence.