

Deafblind Scotland Policy on Homeworking

Policy Statement

This guidance is intended to support employees to carry out their contractual duties outwith their main place of employment, 1 Neasham Drive, Kirkintilloch, with the emphasis being on homeworking. This policy aims to outline what the organisation expects from employees whilst working from home to ensure every attempt to maintain business continuity is made whilst protecting the health and safety of employees. Deafblind Scotland will continue to support all members of staff and will make every reasonable effort, adjustments, to individual employee needs.

Due to the current COVID-19 health crisis, Deafblind Scotland are encouraging staff to work from home if possible. For many of us, this will be the first time we've had to do this, therefore an amendment to this Policy in relation to the pandemic is attached - Appendix I helping you get the most out of this experience, while being mindful of your own wellbeing.

Key Principles of Homeworking :-

- (i) The dispensation to work from home, if given, is a dispensation only as to location. It is not a dispensation to reduce hours or the full time focus and attention on the organisation's business.
- (ii) The dispensation to work from home is given if it is in the best interest of the organisation and its operations. The acid test is whether or not the organisation benefits from the arrangement – the dispensation is not given simply to suit the personal circumstances of the employee.
- (iii) This is a dispensation. The organisation reserves the right to rescind this arrangement as required by the interests of the business. Reasonable notice of any such withdrawal of a dispensation will be given.
- (iv) You remain an employee of Deafblind Scotland wherever you work, and as such all Policies and Procedures apply to all staff working remotely.
- (v) Working time regulations must be complied with.

Regular Working from Home

In order for employees to work from home on a regular basis, prior agreement by the Organisation is required. In this context, regular means an arrangement whereby the employee works from home on one or more days each week.

There are effectively two reasons why the organisation would permit working from home:-

a) Compassionate Grounds:-

If there are temporary personal circumstances that make it extremely difficult for a member of staff to attend their normal place of work, then on the recommendation of their Line Manager, a dispensation to work from home may be given for a short period of time.

b) Business/Commercial Reasons

If Deafblind Scotland judges that the most appropriate location for an employee to perform his/her function is at home rather than our office then with the recommendation of the Line Manager and the agreement of the organisation a dispensation will be given.

In deciding whether regular home working is appropriate, the organisation would normally expect some or all of the following criteria to be met:-

- (i) The employee's normal role is not office based i.e. it is a field based role and the geographic area covered by the employee is closer to their home than Deafblind Scotland's office i.e. it would save business travelling time from our office to working locations.
- (ii) The employee works independently from others. In other words, if the employee forms part of a team that requires communication with others on a regular, ongoing basis they are unlikely to be suitable for working from home.
- (iii) The employee is not in a support role that requires constant interaction with other members of their work group who are office based. If they are then they are unlikely to be considered appropriate for home working as the essence of these support roles is that they are present to assist and support colleagues in the office.
- (iv) The employee can access all files and information required from his / her home.
- (v) The employee complies with the following conditions covering
 - a. Insurance
 - b. Health & Safety
 - c. General working requirements

Occasional Working from Home

Working from home for single days now and again is at the discretion of the Line Manager and approved by Chief Executive.

Pay

Employees who work from home will be paid their applicable salary or hourly rate for a defined number of hours of work as per contracts of employment. Provision of overtime only by agreement of line managers.

Sickness Absence.

If an employee is unable to work at home due to sickness, this must be reported using the Organisation's sickness absence policy and procedure.

Insurances

From an insurance point of view, "working from home" is generally viewed differently from "operating a business from home". As long as the employee's home is only used as a base from which he or she works i.e. it is not used for meetings with colleagues and customers and/or suppliers never visit the home for work purposes, then it is likely to be viewed as working from home and the employee will be covered by the Organisation's liability insurance policies.

It is the responsibility of the individual employee to carefully check their own home insurance policies/mortgage provider or landlord to satisfy themselves that there is no requirement to declare or notify their insurers of any regular work use of their property.

The employee should obtain from their home insurer confirmation of cover should work equipment cause damage and for a claim from a third party. If this results in a premium rise then it is at the discretion of Deafblind Scotland to reimburse the employee the difference.

Employee Performance – employees who work from home will require to submit an activity report on a weekly basis. Meetings will be held regularly with Line Managers to manage individual employees to ensure they are updated on a regular basis with regard to training, development, team working, communication and support.

Health & Safety

The Workplace (Health, Safety & Welfare) Regulations 1992 do not apply to domestic premises therefore Deafblind Scotland are **not** responsible for all or part of an employees home if they are using this for work purposes.

However, the following do apply:-

- Health & Safety(Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment 1998, and,
- Electricity at Work Regulations 1989

In addition, the organisation recognises that it has a duty of care to its employees and considers that it is necessary to ensure that the home working environment is safe and acceptable.

All employees who are permitted to work from home will be required to :-

- Undergo a training session with the H&S Officer to enable them to properly assess their own work environment.
- Ensure that all IT and other electrical equipment supplied by the organisation is made available for annual inspection and each employee has the right equipment to work safely.
- Complete and submit an annual (or more frequently if required) assessment of common hazards.
- Regular communication with line managers to ensure all employees do not feel isolated, demotivated and any health and safety concerns are raised in a prompt manner.
- Reasonable adjustments are made if necessary for each individual employees needs as and when required.
- Deafblind Scotland will endeavour to make employees aware of the required standard of work, by setting clear, realistic and fair objectives.
- It is important for employee to take regular breaks during the working day for positive health and wellbeing in line with the Working Time Regulations 1998.

Working Requirements

In order to satisfy the organisation that the working from home dispensation is acceptable:-

- You must have the use of an office/study/identified room which will be used as your office/workstation when you are working from home.
- You must provide an environment which satisfies the H&S requirements specifically with regard to layout of desks, chairs, computer monitors and keyboards.
- You must be contactable by telephone and e-mail during your normal working hours.
- You must have broadband (or equivalent) telephone access available to facilitate accessing organisation e-mail and other systems.
- Due to the nature of the business needs, all employees would be expected to attend Deafblind Scotland's premises to carry out any additional work necessary if unable to carry out within the home environment. Agreement on attending the Centre should be approved by Line Manager, or Senior Management Team

When working from home, you must focus solely on organisation business. It is not acceptable to the organisation that you conduct any other activity that would distract you from your paid work. Specifically, child minding while working is not allowed. ***If you intend to supervise your children or act in a responsible carer capacity for another adult while working from home then the dispensation will not be given.*** To re-emphasise the earlier general principle – *this is a dispensation only with regard to where you work not as to the hours you work or the requirement for full time application to your job during working hours.*

Employees requiring a more flexible homeworking arrangement should discuss immediately with their Line Manager or a member of the Senior Management Team and apply in writing under the Flexible working procedure downloadable from the relevant website, outlining their requirements and factors to be considered in assessing their application with regard to changing their contractual obligations.

- Working different hours
- Reducing work targets, reducing hours.
- Time off for dependencies.

Equipment and Technology

Deafblind Scotland will ensure all employees have access to the right equipment deemed necessary to to undertake their individual roles.

- Remote access to be provided to all employees.
- Support employees to set up any new equipment required.
- Regular assessments with regard to temporary arrangements and systems in place.
- All documents/files should be stored within the Shared Drive of Deafblind Scotland Server to ensure compliance with data protection and security requirements.

- All IT equipment provided by Deafblind Scotland should solely be used for business needs. It is the employees duty to ensure proper care of equipment and materials provided by the Organisation.
- If for any reason employees leave employment then it is the employees responsibility to return any equipment, materials or documentation belonging to the organisation to their line manager.
- Stationery will be provided if required.

IT Support

Whilst working from home any IT issues should be raised through the normal procedure by sending an email to IT help desk – support@helpdesk4.uk
Telephone Number:- 0131 461 3021.

Expenses

Expenses/reimbursement of heating, lighting, phone etc in relation to working from home will be at the discretion of Deafblind Scotland.

Reimbursement of expenses may be made through HMRC under (taxable expenses).

Declaration

Employees working from home on regular basis must complete and sign the Working from Home Declaration form. (see Attached) Appendix One.

Summary

Homeworking is about using the employee's home as a base for work instead of employee coming into a workplace. Therefore the expectations of the business are that employees are self-motivated; self-disciplined; flexible; organised; able to work without supervision; maintain regular contract through Teams and other forms of communication.

Appendix 1

Due to the current COVID-19 health crisis, Deafblind Scotland are encouraging staff to work from home if possible albeit retaining office based status. For many of us, this will be the first time we've had to do this, therefore this is an amendment to the above Policy in relation to the pandemic:-

Health & Safety

The Workplace (Health, Safety & Welfare) Regulations 1992 do not apply to domestic premises therefore Deafblind Scotland are **not** responsible for all or part of an employees home if they are using this for work purposes.

However, the following do apply:-

- Health & Safety(Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment 1998, and,
- Electricity at Work Regulations 1989

In addition, the Organisation recognises that it has a duty of care to its employees and considers that it is necessary to ensure that the home working environment is safe and acceptable during this unprecedented time we are experiencing at this moment.

All employees currently working from home during Covid 19 should follow the guidance below :-

- Regular communication with line managers and colleagues to ensure all employees do not feel isolated, demotivated and any health and safety concerns are raised in a prompt manner..
- Reasonable adjustments are made if necessary for each individual employees needs as and when required.
- Deafblind Scotland will endeavour to make employees aware of the required standard of work, by setting clear, realistic and fair objectives.
- It is important for employee to take regular breaks during the working day for positive health and wellbeing in line with the Working Time Regulations 1998.
- Employees finding it difficult to cope with working from home due to specific circumstances should contact their Line Manager directly to discuss additional support if required.
- Employees should be contactable when working from home during normal working hours.
- Employees should discuss with their Line Managers if they require additional equipment etc supplied to enable them to undertake their duties working from home temporarily.
- Any employee requiring to attend Deafblind Scotland to undertake additional necessary work should, contact their Line Manager, or Senior Management Team.

Employment rights

All employment rights outlined in employee Contract of Employment with Deafblind Scotland will remain the same:-

Pay

Employees who work from home will be paid their applicable salary or hourly rate for a defined number of hours of work as per contracts of employment. Provision of overtime only by agreement of line managers.

Sickness Absence.

If an employee is unable to work at home due to sickness, this must be reported using the Organisation's sickness absence policy and procedure.