



HOME WORKING POLICY

Version: October 2021

This policy is aimed at staff of the Central Diocesan teams who are undertaking some of their work from home, or who are considering doing so. The Diocese recognises that home working is necessary at times for many office based workers, and wishes to support staff in embracing this option. Partial home working is linked to higher performance, job satisfaction and motivation as well as a reduction in stress. However, the Diocese recognises that home working is not suitable for all roles and individuals and that full home working can lead to isolation as communication with colleagues is reduced. The Diocese wants to support its employees to achieve balance between work and other priorities, such as caring responsibilities, leisure activities, further learning and other interests. The Diocese does not normally designate any staff as fully home working. Staff are usually allocated office space in Diocesan premises as their permanent workplace. The home working policy does not cover the practice of occasional working from home for the purposes of performing a specific or ad hoc task or project such as writing reports, analysing information etc.

This policy is also relevant to parish staff where it has been agreed that some of their hours can be worked from home.

1. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

1.1 To make clear the basis on which Diocesan colleagues may be based from home for the performance of part of their role. This may occur upon appointment or as a result of a request from an employee or the restructure of a Diocesan work area.

2. GENERAL

2.1 Criteria for incorporating home-based working:

- Do organisational needs support the employee working from home for part of their role: can tasks be performed outside the main office location?
- Does the employee have space within their home that can be dedicated to 'office use' during working hours?
- Does the employee's home have adequate wi-fi?
- Is the employee able to focus on work issues during agreed working hours, and not subject to distractions?

- If there is a request for a change in working pattern fair and reasonable and does it meet organisational needs?

2.2 Practical considerations, if home working is agreed

- A Health & Safety assessment will take place for all home based workers to ensure that workstations are accurately positioned.
- Reasonable adjustments will be made as necessary on a case by case basis.
- The Diocese will provide IT equipment to assist in the performance of the role and ensure channels of communication are open between the home worker and the main office site.
- It will be necessary for the employee to spend certain periods of time at the main office for team meetings, training, meetings with managers and updates for all colleagues etc.
- The home worker must be able to work without distraction and must not allow members of his/her family or third parties who are not employed by the Diocese to access or use the Diocese's equipment.
- Colleagues who work from home are responsible for keeping all documents and information associated with the Diocese's business secure at all times. Specifically, home workers are under a duty to store confidential documents securely, locking these in cabinets and drawers when they are not being used. Confidential waste should be stored securely until it can be brought into the office for onsite shredding.
- All equipment supplied by the Diocese for use at home should be used safely and in accordance with best practice and manufacturer's guidelines. Employees will be responsible for any other electrical equipment used by them in their work activities at home and will continue to be responsible for the safety of electrical sockets and wiring in their home.

2.3 Clear communication channels should be set up between the home worker and other colleagues. Regular contact between the manager and home worker should be scheduled and adhered to.

2.4 All colleagues who work from home have a duty to ensure that they work in a safe manner and that they follow all health and safety instructions issued by the Diocese from time to time. As a condition of Diocese's agreement to an employee working from home, all colleagues must ensure that they have an adequate dedicated workspace available which is free from interruptions.

3. CONFIDENTIALITY

3.1 When working at home the employee will be responsible for protecting the confidentiality of all confidential information and will:

- use his/her best endeavours to prevent the use or communication of any confidential information by any person, company or organisation (except in the proper course of his duties, as required by law or as authorised by the Diocese); and
- inform the Diocese immediately upon becoming aware, or suspecting, that any such person, company or organisation knows or has used any confidential information.

3.2 All confidential information and copies or records of confidential information will be the property of the Diocese and should be handed over to the line manager by the employee on the termination of the employment, upon the employee no longer home working but continuing working from the Diocese's premises or at the request of the Diocese at any time during the employment.

4. REGULAR REVIEWS

4.1 Any terms on which it is agreed that the employee may work from home will include the following:

- The Diocese reserve the right to review the home working arrangements, or the balance of time spent working in the office and from home. Subject to reasonable notice, the employee may be asked to return to work at the Diocese's premises for all their hours if this is considered necessary for the proper performance of the role.
- The employee will be subject to the same performance measures, processes and objectives that would apply if they worked only at the Diocese's premises.
- The employee's line manager will remain responsible for supervising the employee, and will regularly review arrangements and take steps to address any issues. They will also inform the employee of meetings or training sessions that they must attend at the Diocese's premises and ensure that they are kept up to date with information relevant to their work.

5. MOVING HOME

5.1 If employees move home, the home working arrangement will be reassessed. If the Diocese considers that the house move would make, or has made, home working unsuitable, this may result in the home working period coming to an end.

5.2 Working at or from home may affect the employee's home and contents insurance policy. They must make any necessary arrangements with their insurers.

6. WORKING HOURS

6.1 Employees are responsible for ensuring they complete their working hours as defined in their contracts of employment

- 6.2 Employees are responsible for ensuring they take their rest breaks as defined in their contracts of employment. Working time should be monitored and rest breaks of at least 20 minutes for every six hours of working should be taken.

7. REIMBURSEMENT OF COSTS AND EXPENSES

- 7.1 The Diocese will not routinely reimburse utility costs for employees working from home. Any employee who is financially disadvantaged because of being asked to work from home should discuss their circumstances with the Chief Operating Officer for individual consideration. The Diocese does not intend that any employee should be disadvantaged because of working from home, and will always provide accommodation in Diocesan offices for staff who prefer this.
- 7.2 The Travel and Expenses Policy applies as normal to employees who conduct some of their work from home. The cost of commuting to the office cannot be claimed.

8. WORKING FROM OTHER LOCATIONS

- 8.1 Some employees may have Diocesan premises other than their normal office that could be used as a base for work on an occasional or regular basis. Where this is considered to be an appropriate way of working, line managers will meet with individuals to discuss this. If there is a proposal to use parish premises as a work base for staff of the central Diocesan teams, arrangements will be discussed with the parish clergy and COO.

Approval

This policy was approved by the Diocesan Board of Trustees on: 20 October 2021
The next review is due by: 31 October 2022