Policy

Date: Feb 2022

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Homeworking Policy & Procedure

**Distribution**

Not confidential but intended for internal use only

# Purpose

Homeworking can be beneficial for colleagues and the Charity and where possible homeworking will be accommodated. This policy explains how homeworking might arise and the factors that need to be taken into account when considering requests. It also covers the important health and safety measures that need to be put in place and the practical considerations required.

Barnardo’s Homeworking policy & procedures do not form part of employees’ terms and conditions of employment, and may be subject to change, in consultation with UNISON where appropriate, should circumstances necessitate this.

**Scope**
This policy and procedure applies to all employees who are Designated Homeworkers or Flexible Homeworkers, their managers and support functions. *(See definitions section towards the end of this policy for explanations of Homeworker categories)*.

Throughout the procedure, the term “Homeworker” refers to both Designated and Flexible Homeworkers).

This policy applies to homeworking arrangements where home is the primary contractual ‘place of work’ and this is limited to homeworking within the UK (with the exception of colleagues providing Barnardo’s services in Jersey and those who live in the Republic of Ireland providing services in Northern Ireland. Working outside of the UK therefore will only be considered in exceptional circumstances, and only as a short-term, interim working arrangement. Requests by colleagues to work from a location outside of the UK will be subject to HMRC guidelines and must be discussed with their line manager in the first instance prior to such requests being considered and approved at Director/Corporate Leadership Level, as appropriate, before any work from a location outside of the UK is undertaken.

Barnardo’s is aware that homeworking might constitute a reasonable adjustment for some colleagues with a disability. Colleagues and line managers may wish to use an Accessibility Passport to support their discussion around reasonable adjustments. See <https://inside.barnardos.org.uk/employee-and-volunteer-support/wellbeing/accessibility-passport>

This policy does not apply to occasional or informal homeworking arrangements, which may be dealt with under hybrid working, ‘Work from Anywhere’ framework. <https://inside.barnardos.org.uk/employee-and-volunteer-support/work-anywhere>

# Roles and responsibilities

**Managers** are responsible for ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of their staff. For Homeworkers this includes complying with the procedures below. Before Homeworking commences, managers must satisfy themselves that the required arrangements are in place and that safety standards can be met. Managers must also ensure that all the information, support, training and supervision required to carry out the role is provided.

**Employees** who work from home are responsible for ensuring that they work safely, including taking care of the health and safety of themselves and others who may be affected by what they do. They must comply with all health and safety requirements and all other policies and procedures.

**People Teams,** the **Corporate Safety Team** and **Information Services** are responsible for supporting employees and their line managers to implement policies and procedures and endeavouring to ensure compliance with statutory obligations.

**Recruitment Centre**, **People Teams** and **Managers** are responsible for ensuring that the Oracle records for Designated and Flexible Homeworkers are set up and maintained as required under this policy.

# Procedure

## Suitability for homeworking

1. When considering suitability for homeworking the manager and colleague should take into account the following and any other relevant factors:
* Whether the request is being considered as a reasonable adjustment relating to a disability, impairment, or mental or physical health condition.
* Cost benefit analysis, including availability of office space in the location required, reduction in overheads, recruiting difficulties etc.;
* Suitability of the role for remote working/management e.g. information retrieval and telephone/electronic communication required, ability to manage performance remotely;
* Suitability of the home environment e.g. a dedicated working area, and a reasonably strong, reliable internet connection;
* Risk to colleague’s wellbeing, work life balance and if this can be managed effectively, and if any steps or additional support could mitigate;
Risk of reduced effectiveness due to isolation (from subordinates/team/colleagues/management) and how this could be mitigated;
* Impact on other members of the team, including manager’s own capacity to manage remotely and requirements for regular contact.

**Recruitment into a Barnardo’s Designated Homeworker Role**

1. Recruitment Centre, People Team, or line manager (as appropriate) ensures that the Oracle record assignment category for the role is Designated Homeworker; and ensures that the employee receives the appropriate Office at Home Allowance and that this is recorded on Oracle.
2. Manager asks the applicant about their home facilities to accommodate the working arrangement to ensure that these are adequate and explains that, if the applicant is successful, they will be required to complete a Homeworking Risk Assessment and a sign a Homeworking Agreement.
3. Induction arrangements for Homeworkers should include visits to relevant Barnardo’s offices, collaboration hubs and meetings with colleagues.

## Employee Change to Designated Homeworker at Barnardo’s request

1. Manager uses Redundancy and Significant Change Policy & Procedure and Significant Change (Contract Variation) FAQs, to set out the business case for a proposed change of work location, seeking advice from their People Team in the first instance.
2. Manager ensures that, as appropriate, all the aspects covered in this procedure are included, including discussions as described in point 3 above, during individual consultation.
3. Where a change goes ahead, the People Team will draft and issue a contract variation, along with the Homeworking Agreement. The People Team updates the employee’s Oracle record assignment category to Designated Homeworker, ensures that the employee receives the appropriate Office at Home Allowance and that this is recorded on Oracle.

## Employee request for change to Flexible Homeworker

1. Except for where the arrangement is being requested as a reasonable adjustment, employees should use the Flexible Working Policy & Procedure to request a change to Homeworking*.* <https://inside.barnardos.org.uk/employee-and-volunteer-support/taking-time/flexible-working-policy>
2. As part of the decision-making process manager considers suitability as set out in point 1 above and holds a discussion with the employee as per point 3.
3. Where a request is agreed, People Team issues Homeworking agreement, updates the employee’s Oracle record assignment category to Flexible Homeworker and records the date the employee’s request was agreed.
4. Due to HMRC restrictions the tax-free office at home allowance cannot be paid to colleagues who work from home at their request.

# BEFORE Homeworking commences:

## Equipment and consumables

1. Manager discusses and agrees with the employee/applicant the non-IT equipment (including lockable storage) and services (e.g. telephone, internet) required to enable them to carry out their role effectively and comply with Barnardo’s policies. A list of non-IT equipment and suggested costs is saved on [content server](https://livelink.barnardos.org.uk/otcs/llisapi.dll/open/302192848).
2. Manager arranges for IT equipment and mobile phone to be supplied to the Homeworker and agrees with employee what other items will be supplied by Barnardo’s/ provided by the employee and the responsibilities/timescales for organising this. Details to be recorded in the Homeworking Agreement.
3. Homeworkers must only use their own equipment for work if they are satisfied that this is in safe working order.
4. If Barnardo’s is reimbursing any costs to the employee, these must be discussed and agreed in advance. Any equipment must meet the required DSE standards (as covered by the Homeworking Risk Assessment). Any agreed costs should be claimed in accordance with the expenses policy.

## Health & Safety and general risk assessment

1. Prior to commencement of homeworking the employee must complete the [Homeworking Risk Assessment](https://livelink.barnardos.org.uk/livelink91/livelink.exe?func=ll&objId=188777437&objAction=viewheader) (which includes a link to the DSE Workstation Assessment) and if relevant an [Individual Risk Assessment for Workers with Disability, Health Condition or Other Special Circumstances](https://livelink.barnardos.org.uk/livelink91/livelink.exe?func=ll&objId=205653754&objAction=viewheader) (IRA).
2. Manager reviews the completed HRAF (and IRA if applicable) with the employee and where required takes appropriate action or refers to the Safety Adviser. All actions must be recorded on the HRAF.
3. Once manager and employee are satisfied that the proposed work area is suitable, they each sign off the HRAF (and IRA if applicable). Copies of the form/s must be saved on the employee’s electronic staff file and reviewed annually, or if the employee’s circumstances or health condition changes.
4. People Team updates the employee record on Oracle with the HRAF completion date.
5. Employee assesses their personal circumstances for homeworking in respect of home insurance, mortgage provision, tenancy agreements, tax or other legal restriction such as a restrictive covenant and ensures that there are no implications.[[1]](#footnote-1) Any additional premiums will be paid by the employee.
6. Homeworkers must report defects in equipment supplied by Barnardo’s, and any aches, pains or ill health which may be associated with their work, immediately to their manager.
7. It will not usually be appropriate to hold work-related meetings in the home, or to give out personal details like home address.

# For the DURATION of Homeworking:

## Meetings, training and support

1. Homeworker and manager must agree and maintain a regular frequency of contact. Where feasible it is recommended that regular face-to-face supervision meetings are conducted.
2. Homeworkers may be required to attend the workplace or accept a pre-arranged visit to their home upon request from their manager.
3. Homeworkers should notify their manager about any problems they are experiencing due to Homeworking e.g. difficulties accessing systems/information, equipment defects, feeling isolated, lack of support etc. to enable manager to take corrective action wherever possible.
4. Resources are available within B-Learning to support managers and colleagues working and managing remotely. See <https://inside.barnardos.org.uk/bu/learning-all/b-learning>
5. Homeworkers must adhere to the same policies and procedures as office-based employees, particularly adhering to Barnardo’s IT Code of Conduct, Data Protection Policy (including reporting data breaches), Employee Handbook and all other applicable policies.

## Access to the home

1. Access to the home may be required to set up the homeworking arrangement and/or to carry out risk assessments, checks, and repairs to equipment.
2. Access may also be required to retrieve property, whether during the homeworking, at the end of the homeworking arrangement, or at the end of employment.
3. The homeworker will be given as much notice as possible that access to the home is needed and they must cooperate with reasonable requests for access.

## Changing or ending the homeworking arrangement

1. If the homeworker moves house, the suitability of the homeworking arrangement should be reassessed.
2. If the line manager considers that the house move would make, or has made, homeworking unsuitable, this will be discussed with the employee and the homeworking arrangement may be ended. If that happens a suitable alternative contractual place of work will need to be identified.
3. If the homeworker wants to bring the homeworking arrangement to an end, they should speak with their manager.
4. Barnardo’s may decide to end a homeworking arrangement, giving reasonable notice, if it is considered that it is not working as it should, or that it has become or will soon become unsuitable.
5. If the homeworking arrangement has become unsuitable because of the conduct or performance of the homeworker, the arrangement may be terminated, and the homeworker will be required to return to a suitable work location.

# Definitions

**Designated Homeworker** - employee who is primarily home-based and/or has their base location as their home (as per their contract of employment) at Barnardo’s request and they are not allocated personal desk space/IT equipment in office premises, other than hot-desking facilities. However, they may be required to work in the office on certain days or within the field of an agreed geographical area.

**Flexible Homeworker** – employee who works mostly or entirely from home, usually at their request, on a temporary or permanent basis, as per their contract of employment.

**Homeworking Agreement** – agreement between Homeworkers and Barnardo’s setting out the specific terms and conditions and arrangements applicable for Homeworking.

**Office at Home Allowance** – annual tax-free allowance paid to Designated Homeworkers for household expenses.

**HRAF** - Homeworking Risk Assessment Form

**IRA** – Individual Risk Assessment for Worker with Disability, Health Condition or Other Special Circumstances.

# References

Health & Safety at Work Etc. Act 1974

Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999

Working Time Regulations 1998

Data Protection Act 2018& UK GDPR 2020

# Review

This policy will be reviewed ordinarily in three yearly intervals. Proposed changes will be subject to consultation with UNISON.

Statutory changes will be incorporated automatically and any legal or organisational developments may prompt more frequent reviews.

# Compliance measures

Local People Teams monitoring completion of HRAF, general adherence to policy and numbers of disputes arising with Homeworkers.

Corporate Safety Team monitoring concerns/problems emanating from Homeworking arrangements.

Audits.

# Document history

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|  **Version**  | **Date**  | **Author**  | **Status**  | **Comment**  |  |
| 1  | 01.11.2013  | Policy & Advice Team  | New Policy  | Agreed CMT  |
| 2  | 20.06.2019  | Policy & Advice Team  | Updated to reflect DPA and intranet changes  |   |
|  3 | Feb 2022 | People Strategy & Projects Team  | Simplified and Updated to reflect WfA changes |   |
|   |   |   |   |   |

# Owner

People Strategy & Projects

1. *This is to avoid the possibility of the employee invalidating their own insurance due to working at home without the knowledge of their insurer. Barnardo’s Employee Liability Insurance and insurance policies for equipment belonging to the organisation continue to apply.* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)