

Homeworking Policy

Compass Disability Services

Unit 11-12 Belvedere Trading Estate
Taunton TA1 1BH

May 2010

Date for Review: April 2015

Introduction

Compass Disability Services is committed to achieving the highest standards for our members, service users and commissioners, and with providing a safe and productive working environment for our staff. Therefore it is recognised that the provision of flexible forms of working, including homeworking, plays an important part in attracting and retaining the best possible staff.

In line with our Equal Opportunities Policy, Compass Disability Services is committed to identifying and eliminating all forms of discrimination, providing equal opportunities to all, promoting diversity throughout our organisation and encouraging all persons to treat each other with respect. This policy will apply equally to all homeworkers and those who wish to be considered for homeworking.

Definitions and Scope

Homeworkers are employees who, for all or some of their contractual hours, are based at home for the purpose of carrying out their work with the agreement of Compass Disability Services. For the purpose of clarification within this policy the different types of homeworking can be further broken down:

Remote homeworking is work undertaken away from the main office on a permanent basis. Due to the diverse nature of Compass Disability Services' projects and the work carried out by different project staff, some employees will be employed on a permanent homeworking basis from the outset. These workers will be referred to as remote homeworkers.

Regular homeworking refers to an arrangement whereby staff that are usually office-based regularly work from home as part of their working week. Where the frequency of homeworking reaches a significant proportion of the employees' working week (50%) the employee may not also be provided with an office workstation and when working in the office a shared desk or team space will be provided.

Occasional homeworking refers to staff that are almost entirely office-based and occasionally work from home on an ad hoc basis, for example to do a particular piece of work. The employee would retain a dedicated office workstation/desk at their normal place of work.

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Throughout this policy the term 'homeworker' will apply to all types of homeworker unless otherwise specified.

General Principles

- All employees will be treated equally whether they are homeworkers or office based staff.
- In accordance with our Induction Policy all new employees will be given a full and structured induction to the organisation, this is especially important for homeworkers due to the remote style of their work.
- All office-based employees may request homeworking arrangements through their appropriate line manager at supervision and/or using a Homeworking Request form.
- Managers will seriously consider all requests for homeworking. The decision to accept or reject an application for homeworking will be based on an objective assessment to determine the extent to which the post and individual is suitable for homeworking and will be determined by the line manager in consultation with the CEO.
- The applicant will be informed in person and in writing of the decision and the reasons for rejection where applicable.
- An agreement regarding the conditions of homeworking will be reached in discussion between the homeworker and line manager, and then noted on the employees personnel file.
- Where an employee wishes to work from home on an ad hoc, occasional and informal basis, this may be agreed between the employee and line manager without reference to the formal process.
- Compass Disability Services reserves the right to access a homeworkers work environment for reasonable work purposes; such purposes include to carry out our health and safety obligations, to provide support that is deemed necessary for example in terms of IT set up or repair, etc.
- All employees will be expected to conduct themselves in accordance with Compass Disability Services' policies.

Particular Considerations

Health and Safety Risk Assessment

All homeworkers must agree to a health and safety risk assessment being carried out to identify any adjustments or equipment that may be necessary to carry out the work in a safe environment in accordance with our Health and Safety Policy.

Equipment

Compass Disability Services will carefully assess requirements of the work and other relevant factors with regards to providing equipment to enable work from home for remote and regular homeworkers. Provision of equipment may include IT equipment, an additional telephone line, a desk, chair or cabinet, etc. Alternatively a contribution towards an employees own phone line or broadband may be offered. Any equipment will remain the property of Compass Disability Services and

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requirements will be agreed through the homeworkers' line manager. Any electrical equipment will be subject to annual tests in line with statutory requirements and employees will be expected to comply with any such requests. All equipment issued to homeworkers must be logged on an Equipment Issue Confirmation form and this will then be stored on the employee's personnel file. This form must be updated as equipment is replaced or returned for any reason.

Insurance

Employees working at home, with the agreement of their manager, are covered by Compass Disability Services' insurance policy for employer's liability and personal accident in the same way as office-based employees. Equipment supplied to the homeworker is also covered by the organisations insurance arrangements providing it is used for work purposes only. We recommend that homeworkers contact their own insurance company to advise that they will be working at home; it is not expected that this will result in an increase in premium, however Compass Disability Services will not reimburse any increase in premium should this occur.

Timescales for New Homeworking Arrangements

It may take a number of months to establish a new homeworking arrangement. This period of time will allow for an agreement to be reached and for any equipment and furniture to be ordered and delivered. Compass Disability Services will aim to process any request for a new homeworking arrangement within 6 weeks and if approved arrange set up within 12 weeks.

Hours of Work

The homeworker must agree the precise number of hours to be worked from home with their line manager before any homeworking arrangements commence. The times when the work will be undertaken may not necessarily be fixed provided all work is completed in accordance with any prescribed timescales, however in some instances it will be necessary for the employee to work at specified times. This will be agreed between the line manager and employee. The employee should be available by telephone should there be the need to check or clarify issues relating to their work. Homeworkers should be available to attend the workplace if required and remote workers will be expected to attend on certain dates during the year for meetings which will be held at the main office or other venue.

For regular homeworkers specifically it is not anticipated that the number of hours worked from home would exceed half the employee's total contracted hours of work. In exceptional circumstances where a request exceeds this proportion, the line manager in consultation with the CEO will have the discretion to grant such a request.

Lone Working

Homeworkers will be made aware of the Lone Working Policy previous to any homeworking arrangements commencing. Homeworkers are advised to take the potential threats incurred with lone working seriously and practice safe methods of working as far as is possible.

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Confidentiality

In line with Compass Disability Services' Confidentiality, Security and Data Protection Policies, homeworkers must ensure the security and safekeeping of any confidential information they are required to work with in the home. Such information should not be accessible to family or visitors of the homeworker.

Terminating a 'Regular Homeworking' Agreement

Either Compass Disability Services or the homeworker may terminate a regular homeworking agreement at any time by giving three months notice in writing, unless both parties agree a shorter period of notice. Where regular homeworking arrangements are terminated, the line manager is responsible for making arrangements for the employee to resume their work activities within the main office, and the employee is responsible for returning any equipment.

Work and Domestic/Caring Commitments

Homeworkers must separate domestic and work activities and commitments as far as practicably possible. Where an employee has caring commitments Compass Disability Services does not expect these to be carried out during the agreed working hours and alternative arrangements should be put in place where necessary. Your line manager must be informed as soon as practicably possible of any changes to caring arrangements, which have implications on the work being undertaken from home.

Monitoring and Review

The number of homeworkers will be monitored and the provisions of this policy will be subject to regular review. All employees should pass suggestions or recommendations for the revision of this policy through the normal channels to the Chief Executive.

Policy Revision

This policy will be reviewed every five years and amended as necessary, or earlier in accordance with any forthcoming legislation. All employees should pass suggestions or recommendations for the revision of any aspect of this policy through normal channels to the Chief Executive.

Additional Information:

- Lone Worker Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Security Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Homeworking Request Form (Z:\SAIN FILES\Governance\Staffing and recruitment\Template Personnel forms and letters)
- Equipment Issue Form (Z:\SAIN FILES\Governance\Staffing and recruitment\Template Personnel forms and letters)

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