



Home Working Policy

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POL082 – Home Working Policy

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Dissemination requirements	All Trust employees by intranet
Part of Trust's publication scheme	Yes

POL082 – Home Working Policy

The East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EEAST) has made every effort to ensure this policy does not have the effect of unlawful discrimination on the grounds of the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion/belief, gender, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity. The Trust will not tolerate unfair discrimination on the basis of spent criminal convictions, Trade Union membership or non-membership. In addition, the Trust will have due regard to advancing equality of opportunity between people from different groups and foster good relations between people from different groups.

EEAST recognises its obligations of supporting the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and any future legislations. A prime objective of EEAST is to eradicate modern slavery and human trafficking and recognises the significant part it must play in both combatting it and supporting victims. EEAST is committed to ensuring that its supply chains and business activities are free from any ethical and labour standards abuse.

All Trust policies can be provided in alternative formats.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 In order to provide the best service to our patients, at EEAST we aim to ensure that all our employees work in the most effective and efficient way possible and in an appropriate work environment for their role.
- 1.2 As a regional organisation we recognise that the traditional 'office-based working' approach does not necessarily support this in all cases and that providing working arrangements which are adaptable and flexible both to our employees and to the organisation will ensure that we continue to have the workforce we need to deliver excellent patient care now and in the future.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 This policy aims to demonstrate our commitment to ensuring that:
 - any requests for home working are considered on a fair and equitable basis,
 - home working arrangements are facilitated and managed accordingly to ensure they support effective service delivery,
 - home workers do not suffer any disadvantage or less favourable treatment.
- 2.2 The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for the management of home working and to ensure a consistent and safe approach is followed.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all EEAST employees. It does not apply to casual or agency workers.
- 3.2 This policy only applies to home working; you should refer to the Agile Working Policy for agile working arrangements.
- 3.3 In accordance with the NHS Terms and Conditions Handbook (AFC) this policy is not intended to apply to any home working arrangements outside the United Kingdom.

4. Duties

4.1 **Line managers** are responsible for:

- familiarising themselves with and working in accordance with this policy,
- managing home working requests/arrangements in accordance with this policy (and in conjunction with the Flexible Working Policy),
- ensuring the completion and review of relevant risk assessment(s) prior to any home working arrangements commencing and, where approved, on an ongoing annual basis,
- reviewing home working arrangements on an ongoing basis to ensure that they still meet the needs of the employee, and of EEAST during any period of organisational change.

4.2 **Employees** are responsible for:

- familiarising themselves with and working in accordance with this policy,
- making any requests for home working in accordance with this policy and the Flexible Working Policy,
- completing relevant risk assessment(s) prior to any home working arrangement commencing and, where approved, on an ongoing annual basis,
- reporting any changes to their home working environment that may affect their work or ability to perform their daily tasks,
- keeping in regular contact with their line manager and/or colleagues,
- ensuring that they comply with any approved home working arrangements and participate in any review.

4.3 **HR and Trade Union Representatives** are responsible for providing advice and guidance to employees on the application of this policy.

5. Home working arrangements

5.1 NHS Terms and Conditions define a home worker as “an individual who performs the majority of duties from their home. They may travel to a work base or attend events on an ad-hoc basis. Their home is designated as their contractual work base.”

5.2 It is important to appreciate that not all EEAST roles will be suitable for home working and that there is therefore no automatic right to work from home. We also recognise that not all employees will either want or be able to work from home.

5.3 If the duties of a post can be completed at home, a home working arrangement may be considered and/or arranged as part of (this list is not exhaustive):

- an employee request under our Flexible Working Policy,
- a reasonable adjustment for an employee with a disability, agreed as part of a wider consideration under our Reasonable Adjustments Policy of how to reduce barriers experienced in the workplace,
- an organisational requirement.

5.3.1 Prior to a home working arrangement being agreed the employee must ensure that:

- they have a suitable environment in which they can focus on work,
- they can work free from non-work-related disruption,
- they have reliable broadband/internet access.

5.4 Work base

5.4.1 All employees, regardless of work pattern or number of work locations, will have a designated work base. If a manager has approved your home working arrangement you will be designated as a contractual home worker, and this will be clearly reflected in your Principal Statement of Terms and Conditions of Employment (contract).

5.4.2 Your manager will liaise with an HR representative before approving any home working requests, to discuss and agree potential contractual changes and to ensure consistency and fairness in decisions across the Trust.

- 5.4.3 If you are a contractual home worker and you intend to move home address, you must let your line manager know as soon as possible so that a review of your home working arrangements can take place (see **Section 8** for the process to follow).

5.5 **High-Cost Area Supplements (HCAS)**

- 5.5.1 As a contractual home worker your home address and post code will determine eligibility for HCAS in line with AFC.

5.6 **Reimbursement of travel costs**

- 5.6.1 AFC sets out that mileage will be reimbursed for miles “in excess of the home to agreed work base return journey”. If you are a contractual home worker your home and work base are one and the same, which means any required business mileage to a Trust location will be reimbursed in accordance with our Business Travel Policy.

5.7 **Equal opportunities**

- 5.7.1 If you are a home worker, you should be treated fairly and equitably and be supported to work safely and effectively in your team.
- 5.7.2 If you work in a post which is deemed not suitable for home working you should be treated fairly and equitably and be encouraged to discuss and consider other forms of flexible working that may meet your needs in accordance with our Flexible Working Policy.
- 5.7.3 Opportunities for development and progression will be available in the same manner for all employees regardless of their work base.

5.8 **Benefits / challenges**

- 5.8.1 Potential benefits of home working include (this list is not exhaustive):
- improved work/life balance,
 - improved health and wellbeing,
 - increased productivity,
 - reduced travel (with both cost and environmental benefits),
 - improving opportunities to increase inclusivity.

5.8.2 Potential challenges of home working include (this list is not exhaustive):

- mental health and isolation impacts,
- impact to physical health,
- work intensification,
- loss of team networking and peer support,
- access to training and development,
- health and safety risks,
- impact on career implications due to lack 'visibility'
- implications and/or actions of any ongoing Performance and Capability Support Plan.

5.8.3 Requests for home working can be made and considered in accordance with the Flexible Working Policy. You and your line manager must also discuss the potential benefits and challenges and consider whether any areas of concern can be mutually addressed.

5.8.4 You should refer to **Section 7** for further details on making a request.

6. Risk assessment

6.1 We have the same health and safety responsibilities for home workers as for any other worker. A risk assessment is a process which identifies any potential hazards in your working environment so that we are able to implement any reasonable control measures to remove or reduce them.

6.2 Prior to a home working arrangement being agreed it is important that you have completed and provided your line manager with a Home Working Risk Assessment (**POL082-01**) for your agreed home workstation.

This is to ensure that your home working environment is appropriate and that you are working in a safe manner.

6.3 Home working is unable to commence prior to a risk assessment being carried out and any reasonable control measures required being implemented. If you and your line manager are unable to remove or

reduce any potential hazards in your working environment, you would be unable to work from home.

- 6.4 Where home working has been approved on a long-term/permanent basis, you and your line manager must ensure that a Home Working Risk Assessment is completed on at least an annual basis. If you and your line manager are unable to remove or reduce any potential hazards in your working environment, you would be unable to continue to work from home.

You must complete this earlier if there has been any change in your working conditions, for example, you have moved home.

- 6.5 You must let your line manager know if you identify any additional potential risks to your working environment at any stage.

7. Requesting home working arrangements

7.1 Informal arrangements

- 7.1.1 There could be times when you and your line manager can agree informal short-term home working arrangements (for example, to support you during religious holidays and festivals).
- 7.1.2 You and your line manager should refer to the Informal Arrangements Section of the Flexible Working Policy for further information and the process to follow.

7.2 Temporary / Permanent arrangements

- 7.2.1 If you wish to request to work from home on a temporary/permanent basis, you should follow the process in the Flexible Working Policy. In line with **Section 5**, your line manager must seek HR advice prior to agreement.

7.3 Risk Assessment

- 7.3.1 Prior to a home working arrangement being agreed, it is important that you have completed and provided your line manager with a Home Working Risk Assessment.
- 7.3.2 You and your line manager should refer to **Section 6** for the process to follow.

8. Change to home address

- 8.1 If your home address is your contractual work base and you intend to move to a different home address, as this is a change to your contract you must let your line manager know as soon as possible by completing a new Flexible Working Request.
- 8.2 Your line manager will seek HR advice and review your request in line with the Flexible Working Policy and in conjunction with this policy by including a review of (this list is not exhaustive):
- risk assessment(s),
 - any allowances,
 - reimbursement of travel costs,
 - appropriateness of new location, for example, whether it is outside the United Kingdom, east of England region.
- 8.3 Following the review, your line manager will ensure that all records are updated with any changes, including your contract where appropriate.

If you move home address you should also update your personal information page on “MyESR.”

9. Working hours

- 9.1 Regardless of your work base you should always:
- be available and working during your agreed hours of work,
 - take a daily rest/meal break away from your workstation. (This should not be at the beginning or end of the working day),
 - let your line manager and colleagues know your availability, for example, by updating your calendar, using the out-of-office message on your work email, setting the correct status in MS Teams,
 - discuss with your line manager if you need to temporarily change hours for any reason (see **Section 16**).

10. Working as a team and keeping in touch

- 10.1 We appreciate that home working may result in some individuals feeling isolated. It is therefore important that you have regular contact and opportunities for check ins and collaboration with your colleagues / other team members.
- 10.2 Your line manager will keep in regular contact with you, for example, via email, telephone, and/or virtual meetings, to ensure that:
- they are setting and/or discussing your work responsibilities,
 - reviewing progress,
 - offering support.
- 10.3 You should also keep in contact with your line manager:
- letting them know what you are working on,
 - if you need further information on your work requirements,
 - if you are experiencing any difficulties.

We encourage you to be proactive in reaching out and connecting with your manager and colleagues.

11. Technology and equipment

- 11.1 When you start a home working arrangement, you will be provided with any additional and necessary Trust equipment to fulfil your role. This will include:
- a laptop,
 - a docking station,
 - display screen(s),
 - a keyboard,
 - a computer mouse,
 - a headset.

This list is not exhaustive, and you should speak to your line manager if you think you need any other equipment.

11.2 You must take care of any Trust-issued equipment at all times, and in accordance with our Digital policies by, for example:

- storing it safely whilst working from home,
- not leaving it unattended in a vehicle,
- notifying any faults using the IT Self-Service Portal.

It will be necessary for you to visit a Trust location for essential maintenance and service of equipment, for example, PAT testing.

11.3 EEAST retains all liability for Trust issued equipment, providing due care has been taken with security measures and in accordance with our Digital policies.

11.4 You will be expected to use your own desk and chair when working at home, subject to a risk assessment and/or any reasonable adjustment (**see Section 6** for additional information). An application for home working will be refused if there is not sufficient space to accommodate all equipment necessary to effectively perform your duties at home.

12. Health and safety

12.1 Display Screen Equipment (DSE) including Visual Display Unit (VDU)

12.1.1 If you are a regular DSE user it is important that your workstation is set up correctly for you to achieve the best possible posture and to minimise strain on your body whilst working.

12.1.2 You should follow the procedure outlined in the DSE Users Policy including VDU and complete an OLM/ESR [Display screen equipment \(DSE\) self-assessment](#) on at least an annual basis.

12.2 Reporting health and safety concerns

12.2.1 Once a risk assessment and DSE assessment have been completed in accordance with **Section 6** and **Section 12.1** you should continue to take responsibility for your health and safety and that of anyone else who is affected by your work (for example, others in your household when you are working from home).

12.2.2 You must notify your line manager if:

- you feel any discomfort due to working (such as back pain),

- you believe that there are any work-related health and safety hazards,
- any work-related incidents/accidents occurring at home.

You should also report work-related incidents/accidents by submitting a Datix: [DCIQ: EEast Incident Reporting Form](#)

12.2.3 Your line manager will take the appropriate actions, for example asking you to complete a further DSE assessment, follow up on a Datix investigation.

13. Health and wellbeing

13.1 It is important that your wellbeing continues to be supported when you are working from home. This includes:

- being part of a team and ensuring regular communication and support,
- regular assessments and interaction with any lone-working issues,
- assessment of the risks to mental health from work related stress including isolation and workload.

13.2 You and your line manager should refer to the relevant EEast policy, for example, Health and Wellbeing Policy, Lone Worker Policy, Managing Stress at Work Policy for further information.

It is also important that you consider how to maintain your own health and wellbeing and speak to your line manager if you need any support.

13.3 Attendance and sickness absence

13.3.1 We understand that there may be occasions when working from home when you are:

- unwell and unable to work,
- going to be late for work.

13.3.2 If this happens, you must let your line manager know as soon as possible before you are due to start work by following the local reporting arrangements set out in our Attendance and Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure.

13.4 Caring responsibilities

- 13.4.1 We understand that working from home may help with caring responsibilities. However, you must not have any caring responsibilities during your working hours, and we expect you to make adequate arrangements for childcare or care for other dependants just as you would if you were attending a Trust location.
- 13.4.2 For further information and support for balancing your caring responsibilities you and your line manager should refer to the Carer's Leave Policy and/or the Special Leave Policy as applicable.

14. Domestic abuse

- 14.1 In addition to us recognising our duty to protect the health, safety, and welfare of our people we recognise that domestic abuse can have a devastating impact to those affected, including those working from home, and we commit to take all reasonable steps to support them.
- 14.2 Whether you are their line manager or their colleague, supporting someone experiencing domestic abuse can be sensitive, complex, and trickier if they are working from home. It is therefore important to pick up cues, such as:
- a change in behaviour,
 - a change in productivity,
 - not dialling into meetings when expected to do so,
 - not using the camera facility when in virtual meetings,
 - seeming withdrawn.

Victims of domestic abuse can sometimes have their communication monitored by the perpetrator, so speak to them normally whilst considering ways to support them so that you do not increase risk.

- 14.3 If you have any concerns, or an individual lets you know, that they are experiencing domestic abuse you should consider how to support them appropriately, such as:
- finding a way to communicate safely, for example by text message if calls are not possible, or a different email address if their email is being monitored by the perpetrator,

- suggesting they speak to their line manager,
- arranging an ad hoc meeting at a Trust location,
- seeking advice from HR and/or the Safeguarding Team,
- signposting the support available at **Section 14.5**.

Most importantly, let them know that you value them, that you care about their safety and are prepared to support them.

14.4 Line managers can have a crucial role to play in enabling individuals experiencing domestic abuse to seek help, including by providing support and advice on the options available. However, they will also recognise the limitations of their role and signpost you to experts and/or professional counsellors where necessary.

14.5 The following support and information is available to people experiencing and supporting domestic abuse:

- our Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy – available on East24,
- [Refuge](#) – a national domestic abuse charity,
- [Women's Aid](#) – provides domestic abuse support for women and children,
- [National Domestic Abuse Helpline](#) – 0808 2000 247 (a 24-hour helpline),
- [Government advice and guidance](#) – guidance on how to get help if you or someone you know is a victim of domestic abuse,
- The [Bright Sky app](#) is for anyone who is experiencing domestic abuse or is worried about someone else,
- [Hestia's domestic abuse support services](#) – support for victims of domestic abuse in London and the south east,
- [Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse](#) (EIDA) – line managers can find out more about an employer's duty of care.

15. Hot desking

15.1 In some areas of the Trust, we operate a hot-desking system where we provide a bank of workstations (hot desks), which usually includes

a docking station, display screen(s), a keyboard, and a computer mouse.

- 15.2 Our hot desks can be booked according to the specific Trust location. For example, hot desks in Melbourne can be booked via the EEAST Asset Booking System.
- 15.3 If you are required to attend a Trust location on an ad hoc basis and you have not been allocated a desk, it is your responsibility to ensure that a hot desk is available.
- 15.4 It is also your responsibility to ensure that:
- Trust issued equipment (for example, your laptop and headset), and any personal items are not left on the desk at the end of your working hours,
 - the hot desk is returned to its original layout,
 - the hot desk is left clean and tidy.

16. Change to working arrangements

- 16.1 There may be occasions where your usual home working arrangements may need to change on an ad hoc or temporary basis. For example, you may be required to attend the workplace on specific days (this list is not exhaustive) for:
- in-person training,
 - meetings at a Trust location,
 - recruitment and selection processes.

In such cases, you will be given as much notice as possible and will have the opportunity to raise and discuss any concerns or difficulties you may have around attending.

- 16.2 We recognise that you may experience personal circumstances where you would like to vary a day to work from a Trust location. You should discuss your requirements with your line manager on a case-by-case basis, giving as much notice as possible. Your line manager will consider your request and approve wherever possible.

If you experience internet issues / outage while working at home you must report this to your line manager as soon as possible for

alternative arrangements to be discussed, for example, working from your usual Trust location where practicable.

- 16.3 If you want to vary your working arrangements on a longer-term basis, you should make a request under our Flexible Working Policy. If we need to permanently change your designated work base due to operational / business requirements, we will follow the process in our Change Management Policy, where appropriate to the circumstances.

17. Governance, confidentiality, and data protection

- 17.1 You are responsible for complying with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) / Data Protection Act 2018 by keeping all work-related information secure and confidential at all times and in accordance with the following policies:

- Confidentiality Code of Conduct Policy,
- Digital Remote Access Policy,
- Information and Data Security Policy,
- Digital Electronic Communications Policy.

- 17.2 You must also ensure that you are able to store, use and dispose of confidential information appropriately while working from home.

18. Implications for tax and insurance

- 18.1 Working from home may affect your personal tax or insurance. You should speak to your financial advisor, HMRC or your insurance provider if you think this may apply to you. EEAST cannot accept any responsibility for invalid insurance or tax implications.

- 18.2 You may be able to apply for tax relief for additional household costs if you work from home regularly, either all or part of the week. You cannot claim if it is your choice to work from home. You can visit <http://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/working-at-home> to find out more.

19. Non-compliance with this policy

- 19.1 Non-compliance with this policy will be managed in accordance with the appropriate Trust policy, for example, Disciplinary Policy, Local Counter Fraud/HR liaison Policy, Performance and Capability Policy.

20. Policy review

- 20.1 This policy will be reviewed on a three yearly basis or will be amended in the light of new employment legislation and / or relevant case law.

Appendix A

Equality Impact Assessment

EIA Cover Sheet			
Name of process/policy	Home Working Policy		
Is the process new or existing? If existing, state policy reference number	Existing (POL082)		
Person responsible for process/policy	HR		
Directorate and department/section	People Services		
Name of assessment lead or EIA assessment team members	HR Policy Subgroup		
Has consultation taken place? Was consultation internal or external? (please state below):	Internal consultation through HR Policy Subgroup		
The assessment is being made on:	Guidelines		
	Written policy involving staff and patients	X	
	Strategy		
	Changes in practice		
	Department changes		
	Project plan	X	
	Action plan		
	Other (please state)		

Equality Analysis			
What is the aim of the policy/procedure/practice/event? This purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for the management of home working and to ensure a consistent and safe approach is followed.			
Who does the policy/procedure/practice/event impact on?			
Race	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/belief	<input type="checkbox"/> Marriage/Civil Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender re-assignment	<input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy/maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Who is responsible for monitoring the policy/procedure/practice/event? HR			
What information is currently available on the impact of this policy/procedure/practice/event? Having reviewed and updated the policy and completed a full consultation process, no negative impact was raised, and with the evidence available there is no negative impact.			
Do you need more guidance before you can make an assessment about this policy/procedure/ practice/event? No			
Do you have any examples that show that this policy/procedure/practice/event is having a positive impact on any of the following protected characteristics? Yes/No, if yes please provide evidence/examples:			
Race	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/belief	<input type="checkbox"/> Marriage/Civil Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Disability	<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Age	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender re-assignment	<input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy/maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please provide evidence: This policy is designed to be inclusive of all employees whose roles are suitable for home working. Alternative flexible working options can be discussed with employee's whose roles are not suitable.			
The home working risk assessment will highlight any areas of concern, for example, health, disability, pregnancy/maternity, age related, and control methods implemented before home working is formally approved.			

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Are there any concerns that this policy/procedure/practice/event could have a negative impact on any of the following characteristics? Yes/No, if so, please provide evidence/examples: **No**

Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religion/belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	Marriage/Civil Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gender re-assignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pregnancy/maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please provide evidence:

Having reviewed and updated the policy and completed a full consultation process, no negative impact was raised, and with the evidence available there is no negative impact.

Action Plan/Plans – SMART

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Relevant

Time Limited

Evaluation Monitoring Plan/how will this be monitored?

Who – see Monitoring Table

How

By

Reported to

Appendix B - Monitoring Table

What	Who	How	Frequency	Evidence	Reporting arrangements	Acting on recommendations	Change in practice and lessons to be shared
Audit of employee experience, and that the policy and procedure is being applied consistently, fairly, and accurately for all.	Head of Resourcing and Shared Services / HR People Partnering	Monitor Trac and any ER Tracker data	As required	Trac and ER Tracker data	Reported to and discussed at People Committee where required	Head of Resourcing and Shared Services / HR People Partnering will address any actions or changes required.	Any change in practice will be identified and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • process updated with Resourcing Team and HR People Partnering team, • line manager training implemented where applicable, • policy updated where required.