



Working from Home

Aims and Objectives

This policy is intended to provide guidance and good practice to enable employees to work from home effectively and safely.

It is intended to assist both managers and employees in implementing working from home by highlighting areas for consideration and providing practical advice and information.

Background

This policy provides a framework for working from home where this is both feasible and desirable. Any arrangement for working from home should be voluntary on the part of the employee and at the discretion of the manager. It is critical that any arrangement does not impact detrimentally on the quality and continuity of service provision in all of the functions and activities of York Childcare. The key to success is mutual understanding and trust, leading towards mutual benefit.

General Principles

The policy recognises that for the majority of employees, working from home will be on an occasional basis and with prior agreement from the manager.

Provided that it fits in with the needs of the service, the opportunity to work from home is intended to provide flexibility and support to employees.

It is acknowledged that not all jobs are suitable for working from home, and for those which are suitable, employees may not want to work at home. If suitable ICT equipment is not available or, where key health and safety requirements cannot be met, requests may not be approved.

Procedures

The prospect of working from home may be raised by managers or employees. Employees who consider that working from home is an option should discuss this with their line manager.

YC will:

- consider which roles and tasks can be done from home – this might involve doing things differently and not assuming a role cannot be based at home
- support employees to adjust to remote working
- consider individual employees' needs, for example anyone with childcare responsibilities, a long-term health condition or a disability
- talk to employees about how they might improve working from home arrangements
- write down the arrangements that have been agreed

Health and safety

By law, YC is responsible for the health and safety of all employees, including those working from home.

Employees and managers need to understand and comply with YC's policy regarding health and safety requirements for working from home and complete a 'Self Assessment Checklist' prior to commencing any working from home arrangements. The checklist should be completed initially on the set up of working from home and thereafter if there is a change in circumstances. The line manager and employee should review this form at least once a year in supervision



meetings. Any accident or ill health directly related to the working from home arrangements, should also be reported and reviewed.

Confidentiality

It is the responsibility of the employee and manager to ensure the confidentiality of information whilst the employee is working from home. Consideration should be given to the availability of lockable storage cabinets, or other suitable equipment due to the risk of other members of the household/visitors gaining unauthorised access to confidential information. Reference should be made to the IT Policy and Data Protection Policy.

In order to maintain confidentiality and data security, equipment (laptops etc) and documents must be stored securely at home and not be left in employees' vehicles when unattended.

Financial Considerations

It is considered that working from home is mutually beneficial and that the costs and benefits of working from home will cancel each other out. Consequently, a working from home allowance will not be paid. (Employees can claim tax relief where they have no office base and that 'home' is specified on their contract of employment as their work base).

Insurance Implications

In general, working from home should not give rise to any special difficulties from a risk management or insurance point of view. The guiding principle is that good practice should reduce or eliminate the possibility of injury or loss to employees, to YC or others. Insurance by itself does not prevent injury or loss, and good risk management techniques are required.

Employees and managers must adhere to this working from home policy and associated guidelines in order to maintain the validity of insurance provision.

- Liability insurance protects the organisation and its employees jointly for accidental death, injury and loss of property where YC has been negligent. This insurance will operate in respect of employees who are working at home with the knowledge and consent of their manager, subject to the appropriate risk, health and safety assessments and training and support being in place.
- Personal accident insurance will apply to employees working at home including whilst travelling on YC business. (This does not include commuting to work from home unless the home has been formally designated as the permanent work base, in which case all journeys will be made whilst on duty.)
- Property insurance cover is provided by the YC. This will only apply to all items provided for use by the employee working at home with the knowledge and consent of their manager. The employee has a duty and responsibility to look after YC's property. There is no insurance cover for theft if there is no forcible entry to the property and only laptops or computers are covered in this instance. Losses arising from unattended vehicles are not covered
- Employees' own insurance policies are unlikely to be affected by working from home. However, employees are advised to consider whether they need to inform their insurers or inform others such as their landlord, mortgage company or loan company of the working from home arrangements, within the terms of any agreements. If in doubt the employee should let the insurance company know, as nondisclosure may sometimes invalidate any policy



YC responsibilities

YC aims to carry out usual health and safety risk assessments at an employee's home, where practical to ensure that:

- each employee feels the work they are being asked to do at home can be done safely
- employees have the right equipment to work safely
- managers keep in regular contact with their employees, including making sure they do not feel isolated
- reasonable adjustments are made for an employee who has a disability
- If changes are needed, YC is responsible for making sure they happen

Employee responsibilities

Employees also have a responsibility to take reasonable care of their own health and safety. Anyone working from home should keep in regular contact with their manager. They should also tell their manager about:

- any health and safety risks
- any homeworking arrangements that need to change

Looking after mental and physical health

It is important to take regular breaks, for example to avoid sitting at a computer for too long. YC expects employees working from home to try to do other things to stay mentally and physically active outside of their working hours. This might include things like cooking, exercise, watching favourite TV programmes or other hobbies.

Equipment and technology

YC is responsible for the equipment and technology supplied to employees to enable them to work from home.

YC will:

- discuss equipment and technology with the employee
- agree what is needed
- support the employee to set up any new equipment or technology

If an employee also has some work tasks that can be done safely away from their home, YC will ensure they have access to the right equipment for those duties, eg taking your work laptop with you to an appointment.

Checking how systems are working

YC will regularly assess how its systems and temporary working from home arrangements are working and make any improvements deemed necessary. This can help to smooth any difficulties experienced by employees, managers or colleagues.

This might include looking at:

- if IT systems can handle the number of staff working from home
- the level of IT support for homeworkers
- extra equipment that could be posted or collected, for example headsets or stationery



Setting clear expectations

YC, Head Office and Nursery managers will ensure that any employee required to work from home understands what is expected of them. This will include agreeing:

- when employees will be available to work
- how they will keep in touch
- how work-life balance will be managed, for example taking regular breaks and switching off from work at the end of the day
- rules around storing information and data protection
- how performance will be managed and measured, taking into account people's circumstances where necessary
- who employees should contact if they have any problems or their circumstances change

YC recognises that some employees may find it hard to motivate and organise themselves when working from home and will ensure full support is given. In the event of this arising, the manager and employee should talk about practical steps that might help.

Keeping in touch

YC will ensure that it keeps in touch with all employees regularly. This will include regular communication between:

- individual employees and their managers
- employees who need to work together
- team members

This may involve new ways of working, for example using video or conference calling technology. YC expects all employees to embrace in any new ways of working that are deemed appropriate or essential.

Pay and terms and conditions of employment

Employees usual terms and conditions apply, apart from having to work from home on a temporary basis.

YC will ensure that staff working from home follow the law on working hours.

Working from home and childcare

Employees who are looking after children should talk to YC regarding their situation. YC will endeavour to agree a more flexible homeworking arrangement.

Examples of this could include:

- working different hours
- agreeing that the employee may not be able to work a full day or a full week
- reducing work targets
- being flexible about deadlines where possible

The same approach may be needed if an employee is caring for someone else, for example an older relative or someone who is ill.