Interim Guidance on Homeworking

1. Introduction
For a variety of reasons, and with varying degrees of frequency, some staff may undertake some of their duties away from their normal place of work at the University premises. Whilst there is an expectation that normally staff will be in the workplace, it is accepted that occasionally there will be circumstances where an individual and the relevant manager agree that it is mutually beneficial for that individual to work at home.

This document defines home-based work arrangements to perform University work, sets out entitlements, eligibility criteria and other conditions that apply and has been developed to provide a clear procedure for dealing with homeworking, that ensures fair treatment and consistency of approach and which is understood by all managers and employees. It provides a standard framework for reporting, monitoring and managing homeworking.

2. Policy statement
Home-based work means performance of University work for agreed hours from the home-based site (i.e. an agreed area in the employee’s private dwelling). The flexibility and productivity outcomes available from home-based work can be attractive to both the University and employees and the arrangements are based on a management philosophy of trust and mutual benefit. The University is mindful that working from home can save use of cars, fuel and commuting time and can ease car-parking requirements. Working from home can also assist with flexibility around reasonable caring and dependent responsibilities. Circumstances where working at home may be permissible and mutually beneficial usually arise where work needs to be done with minimum distraction or interruption. Working from home should not create additional workloads for other employees or otherwise affect operational efficiency and effectiveness.

This document outlines two different types of homeworking:

- Occasional and ad hoc homeworking, which will not follow a particular pattern of working from home on a regular basis and is subject to the prior approval of their manager, may be used by employees in suitable roles to complete a specific piece of work; or to be part of a phased return to work after maternity or sick leave; or to work temporarily from home due to family or domestic circumstances.

- Regular homeworking which is an agreement between the employer and the University to work a percentage of the normal working week from home on a regular and on-going basis.

Working from home
- is not a contractual right through either express or implied terms. It is granted at the University’s discretion and requires the prior approval of the appropriate line manager or Head of Department following consultation and discussion with the employee; it will not alter an employee’s terms and conditions of employment.
- is voluntary and is not intended to create a situation where staff feel obliged to work excessive hours
- does not attract subsidy since the benefits are seen as being mutual
- does not normally mean that equipment will be provided by the University for use at home

3. Equality and Diversity Statement
It is the aim of the University to provide guidance which ensures appropriate and equitable responses to employee requests for homeworking in an efficient and fair manner. This document takes into account current employment legislation and must be implemented in conjunction with the University’s Equalities Scheme, and the Equal Opportunities Policy and Procedure.
4. **Eligibility**
This procedure can (in principle) be applied to all University employees, regardless of contract type or duration, other than those employed on a casual basis, although it is recognised that because of the nature of some roles, homeworking would not be practical.

Some employees will have the legal right to request flexible work arrangements, i.e. if they have a child aged under 16 (or 18 where the child has a disability) and have or expect to have, responsibility for the child, or have responsibility for an adult in need of care. This is detailed in the University’s procedure for Flexible Working.

Positions with at least one of the following requirements will **not** be considered for home-based work:
- Direct customer face to face contact on a frequent basis
- Being a member of a team who needs to have face to face contact with other team members
- Servicing and serving other university facilities or assets (e.g. security office, swimming pool attendant, electrician)
- A high level of supervision

5. **Health and Safety Requirements**
Most of the work that staff would undertake at home is paper-based work or work on a computer and in general such work is not high risk. Nevertheless, the University has responsibilities under health and safety legislation when staff are working from home, including the requirement to undertake appropriate risk assessments of work activities, ensuring that any equipment provided by the University is safe, and ensuring that there is a suitable safe place for the employee to work.

The home-based site requires a designated area that is deemed to be an acceptable workspace and the employee must have a clear delineation of when they are working or not working.

All employees must be properly inducted and aware of the relevant health and safety policies. Home workers should use the University reporting forms and systems for any work-related incident or accident and send completed forms to their departmental safety officer. The home worker must ensure that adequate first aid supplies are available.

All staff who work from home whether on an occasional or regular basis are required to undertake a self-assessment of their homeworking provision by completing the checklist at Appendix 1. This should be sent to the appropriate line manager. This also entails completion of a self-assessment Display Screen Equipment inspection checklist and discussion of the outcome with the departmental DSE assessor. Should any concerns be raised, the line manager will consult with the Health, Safety and Environment Section.

Any particular medical requirements should also be considered. There is specific legislation relating to new and expectant mothers who work and this applies equally to those who work at home. Where an employee with a disability or health problem requires adjustments and where an employee with a disability requires reasonable adjustment and/or specialist equipment, then the line manager should liaise with the Health, Safety and Environment Section, as self-assessment of the work station in the home may not be sufficient in this case.

Failure to comply with health and safety requirements may result in the home-based work arrangement being terminated.

Guidance specifically related to working from home is provided in leaflet INDG226 published by the Health and safety Executive (HSE).
6. **Key information for Homeworking**

i  **Equipment and technology**

If the University campus remains a work base for the homeworker and a desk and equipment is retained on campus, the University will not normally provide the homeworker with additional IT equipment, phone, broadband connection or furniture to work from home. The homeworker is responsible for ensuring that they have suitable telephone and broadband services where required, and for contacting the service provider in the event of any technical issues. Homewokers who are using University supplied and supported equipment can receive telephone support from IT Services, but if the issue cannot be resolved by telephone, they will be required to bring the equipment on-site, as home visits are not possible. It is not possible for the University to provide IT support for equipment owned by members of staff.

All staff are required to use their own and supplied equipment correctly and to take reasonable steps to maintain any equipment provided, removing defective equipment from use and reporting defects on supplied equipment to their line manager. University equipment may not be used by others i.e. family and friends etc.

Appropriate security must be obtained for all University information stored on a computer (including back-up arrangements) and there must be secure storage for any confidential information. Employees are responsible for ensuring the security of University property and all University information, files, documents, data etc. within their possession, including both paper and electronic material. Staff should discuss the security implications of working from home with their local IT team. All homeworkers are required to adhere to the University’s [Acceptable Use Policy](#) and [Data Protection Policy](#). Further guidance on the use and access of University IT resources when working from home and the required security steps to be taken is available at [http://www.lboro.ac.uk/it/off-campus/index.html](http://www.lboro.ac.uk/it/off-campus/index.html)

ii  **Insurance**

It is the employee’s responsibility to assess the personal implications of home-based work with respect to taxation, insurance or leasing arrangements, though any University equipment would be covered by the University’s own insurance. The University holds liability insurances that provide cover for the legal liabilities of the University and its employees whenever they are engaged in University business. This cover applies irrespective of where the activity is taking place.

The University’s insurance will not cover the homeworker for personal liabilities arising from non-work activities. The homeworker must hold their own domestic insurances for household contents and, where applicable, household buildings. These insurances include cover for their personal liabilities as occupier/owner of the home. The employee must advise their insurers if they are working from home and using the premises and certain equipment, e.g. computers, for professional purposes on a regular basis. This would be considered a material fact by insurers and failure to notify this change could invalidate the insurances.

iii  **Costs/expenses**

No contribution will be made by the University towards normal household expenses attached to homeworking, such as heating, lighting, or council tax costs. When an employee is working at or from home, journeys made to the normal office base will not be reimbursed. Prior to the setting up of a regular homeworking arrangement, agreement should be reached between the employee and line manager on how telephone calls relating to work will be reimbursed.
Communication
Good communication is an essential part of any successful home-based work arrangement. Provision must be made to allow effective communication with work colleagues and external clients during the working day. Employees must be contactable at home throughout normal working hours by the line manager and other University employees. The arrangements for contact should be agreed prior to working from home. The employee’s home phone number and home address may not be divulged without their express permission.

Under no circumstances are arrangements to be made for clients or representatives to meet with the employee at their home. All such meetings should be carried out at the University campus or a similar professional setting in order to maintain the necessary level of professionalism and safety.

Visits from University staff to a homeworker’s home should only take place under exceptional circumstances, such as health and safety assessment, welfare reasons or for security purposes.

7. Refusal of requests for homeworking
A manager may refuse a request to work from home, but should aim to be as flexible as possible in accommodating such a request. If a request to work from home is refused and the employee is unhappy with the reasons given then the employee may invoke the grievance procedure at the appeal stage.

8. Responsibilities
i. Head of Department responsibilities
To grant permission for homeworking at their discretion.

To notify employees of relevant arrangements, and to provide the employee with a copy of this homeworking guidance.

To ensure that an employee who has a home-based work arrangement has the same career development and training opportunities as all other equivalent employees.

To notify their HR Adviser of any staff who will be working from home.

ii. Manager/supervisor responsibilities
To ensure that the employee is aware of expectations and the required standard of work.

To ensure that the appropriate health and safety risk assessments are carried out, the member of staff advised of the findings and necessary adjustments implemented, before any homeworking is undertaken.

To provide regular feedback and to discuss and evaluate the arrangement.

iii. Employee responsibilities
To abide by the requirements of this document.

To give details of a mobile and/or home telephone number and to facilitate communication with the Department.
iv  Human Resources responsibilities
To provide advice and guidance to managers and employees on how to effectively deal with homeworking at departmental or individual level.

To assist managers with the fair and consistent application of the procedures.

v  Health, Safety and Environment Office responsibilities
To receive, monitor and advise on any health and safety issues raised by managers or employees.

To conduct an assessment for home-based working if required.

9.  Types of home working: occasional or regular
i  Occasional homeworking
Occasional and ad hoc homeworking will not follow a particular pattern of working from home on a regular basis and may be used by employees in suitable roles to complete a specific piece of work; or to be part of a phased return to work after maternity or sick leave; or to work temporarily from home due to family or domestic circumstances. The employee would retain a dedicated office workstation (or desk-sharing arrangement) at their normal place of work. Occasional working at home, for the purpose of carrying out specific agreed tasks in addition to being contactable by telephone and responding to emails, should be authorised in advance by the employee’s line manager.

When individuals work from home on an ad hoc basis, then attention is drawn to sections 6 and 7 in particular to ensure health and safety, data security and confidentiality requirements are understood by the employee and are met. All employees will be required to carry out a Homeworking Self Assessment Checklist (Appendix 1).

ii  Regular homeworking
Regular homeworking is an agreement between the employer and the University to work a percentage of the normal working week from home on a regular and on-going basis.

a)  Process for considering regular homeworking applications

• Any requests to work from home must be made in writing and given full consideration by the manager and/or Head of Department in consultation with the relevant Human Resources Adviser and the employee to allow all options to be explored and discussed. The nature of the duties, responsibilities of the individual, cost-effectiveness of the arrangement; and suitability and needs of the employee are all important considerations.

• It is recognised that academic staff already work from home on a regular basis and Heads of Department do not need to enter into any formal arrangements with academic staff, provided that academic staff are reminded to comply with the health and safety aspects of this document, that they complete a Homeworking Self Assessment Checklist (Appendix 1) and that Heads remain assured that the homeworking provision is not being abused.

• The manager should ensure that, where appropriate, other team members who might be directly affected, have been consulted before any agreement to homeworking has been made. It must be demonstrated that the move to homeworking will not be detrimental to the speed or quality of services provided to the public and internal clients, or detrimental to the efficient working of the team.
• A written record of any application for regular homeworking should be kept and copies of all applications (both unsuccessful and successful) sent to HR to facilitate monitoring of the arrangement. All successful applicants will be required to carry out a Homeworking Self Assessment Checklist (Appendix 1).

• The hours to be worked at home must be agreed and comply with the employee’s contractual hours and the University’s policies on rest breaks and core working hours.

• Line managers will approve the arrangements put in place and will notify the employee and the HR Adviser.

• Once the arrangement is in place, both the manager and the employee must apply the same standards and follow the same procedures as they would if the employee were to be located at the University campus i.e. with regard to planning and monitoring workload, assessing performance, engagement in review and training, etc. Specific review of the home-based working arrangement will be undertaken through the appraisal process.

• The agreement may be altered or discontinued at the request of the employee or at the discretion of the University.

• If the homeworking arrangement is to be withdrawn, the line manager will provide the employee with given written reasons why it is to be discontinued.
Appendix 1.  

Homeworking Self-assessment Checklist

This form should be completed initially by the homeworker and returned to the line manager. Any matters of concern should be resolved before homeworking commences. The responses must be reviewed annually, and at any time if significant changes occur.

Name:  
Department:  
Address of homeworking site:  

Please tick the boxes to confirm you will or have carried out the necessary actions:-

- I wish to work from home and confirm that I have read and understood the University policy and procedure on homeworking.

- I will maintain the working environment to the agreed health and safety standards.

- I agree to complete a self-assessment Display Screen Equipment inspection checklist and return the outcome/summary to the departmental DSE assessor with a copy to my line manager. It is the line manager’s responsibility to ensure that all management actions arising from the health and safety inspection have been completed prior to commencement of homeworking.

- I will inform my manager of changes to my home or personal circumstances, which affect the health and safety inspection e.g. new and expectant mothers, housing extension, moving home etc.

- I have informed my landlord/mortgage provider of my intention to work at home.

- I have informed my insurance company in writing of my intention to work at home and informed them of any additional equipment which has been provided by the University.

- I agree to take reasonable steps to ensure the safety and security of University equipment and data, where appropriate, and to inform my manager of any material changes to security measures at my home.

- I am aware and understand my responsibility to notify my manager when I am absent from work due to sickness or any other reason.

- I am aware of and understand the requirement to report any work-related accidents working at home and the actions I am required to take in an emergency.

Employee signature………………………………………………………………………..Date ……………………..