

Home Working Policy

Muckle LLP encourages flexible and agile working where appropriate to enable team members to work to their full potential in order to contribute to the success of the firm. As part of this, home working is supported in appropriate circumstances either occasionally (to respond to specific circumstances or to complete particular tasks) and in some cases on a more regular basis. In addition, occasional or permanent home working can, in certain circumstances, be a means of accommodating a disability.

Permanent arrangements, or those for a fixed term period, should be requested under the firm's Flexible Working Policy and in line with the Home Working Policy.

This policy covers all employees, equity partners, workers, consultants and agency workers. It does not form part of an employee's contract of employment and we may amend it at any time.

Home Working Arrangements

On a temporary or occasional basis - There are a number of circumstances in which the ability to work from home on an occasional or temporary basis may be of benefit, such as:

- when public transport has been disrupted (for example by the weather or by a strike, that affects travel arrangements); or
- when a quiet, uninterrupted work environment will assist in dealing with a backlog of work or for a complex project or piece of work, particularly if working towards a deadline.

In these circumstances your team head may authorise this where, in their opinion:

- you have work that can be undertaken at home;
- working at home is cost-effective and any increase in work that may be passed to other team members as a result is kept to a minimum; and
- appropriate supervision of work can be given in line with the firm's supervision policies.

A formal request does not need to be made for home working on a temporary or occasional basis.

On a permanent arrangement or for a fixed period - You may want to vary your working arrangements so that, either permanently or for a fixed period, you work from home for part of your working week. Any request to work from home must meet the needs of the firm as well as your own needs and must be applied for more formally.

Working as "One Team" is part of our culture and way of working at Muckle LLP. To maintain this, it is important that our team members have regular face to face contact with colleagues in the firm. It is also important that everyone keeps up to date with what's going on in the firm and avoids working in isolation. For those reasons, only in exceptional circumstances, would a request to work more than two days a week (for a full-time team member) be agreed. However, each request is considered on its merits.

Apply for Home Working

After the successful completion of a probationary period, you can make an application for home working on a permanent basis or for a fixed period. However, there are some roles in which home working is unlikely to be possible, for example, in a role that requires daily face to face interaction with clients and/or team members.

A request for home working is unlikely to be approved if:

- you need to be present in the office to perform your job (for example, because you have client meetings or your role involves equipment that is only available in the office);
- your most recent performance appraisal is rated red or amber for either the two lengths and five keys or competencies;
- there are any concerns about your current standard of work or performance that could affect the firm from a risk and/or supervision point of view;
- you have an unexpired warning, whether relating to conduct or performance; or
- you need supervision to deliver an acceptable quality and/or quantity of work. Home working is not, therefore, suitable for trainees or apprentices in the firm.

If you wish to apply to work from home you will need to be able to show that you can:

- work independently, motivate yourself and use your own initiative;
- be happy to spend long periods on your own;
- manage your workload effectively and complete work to set deadlines;
- be confident and experienced enough to work without, or with limited, supervision;
- competently use the IT systems available, such as DMS, Aderant, Clearview;
- identify and resolve any new pressures created by working at home; and
- adapt to new working practices, including maintaining contact with your team head and colleagues at work.

To be considered for home working you need to submit a written application to your team head by using the flexible working request form. The home working checklist and risk assessment must also be completed and included with your application. Your flexible working form must also include:

- why you consider your job to be suitable for home working and how you meet the criteria for home working set out above;
- whether you wish to work from home for up to two days a week on a permanent basis or for a fixed period. In either case you should state the date from which you wish the arrangements to start and, if you wish to work from home for a fixed period, the date on which you want the arrangements to end;
- how you would organise your work from home including how you would ensure the security of documents and information, where appropriate;
- the extent to which you could be available to come to work on days you are proposing to work from home if needed, for example to cover if a team member is off sick, to cope with high or unexpected levels of work or to attend meetings or training days;
- if different to your current hours of work, the hours of work that you propose apply when you are working at home. During the agreed hours you must be available to respond to telephone calls and/or emails; and
- how you envisage maintaining contact, and supervision, with your team head and how your work will be set and progress monitored.

It would be advisable to discuss your request in the first instance with your team head. This may identify potential issues with your application, such as a need to be in the office on occasions you had not considered, which your application can then address.

In considering your application, your team head may invite you to a meeting to discuss your application. They will review your day to day duties and make a decision as to the feasibility of you working from home. Home working must appropriately meet the needs of the business and best suit the requirements of the role being undertaken. There must be an environment within your home which is suitable for home working and which satisfactorily complies with health and safety standards, for example, someone working from home should have the same childcare arrangements for their working hours in exactly the same way as if they were attending the office.

We will try to respond to your request within two weeks of your request. If your request is refused we will give you reasons for the refusal. If you are not happy with the decision you may appeal in line with the Flexible Working Policy.

If your application is accepted the agreed arrangements will be confirmed in writing. Any arrangement may be subject to a trial period. Any terms on which it is agreed that you may work from home will include the following:

- we reserve the right to terminate the home working arrangements, subject to reasonable notice;
- you will be subject to the same performance management process and two lengths and five keys that would apply if you worked in the office;
- if you receive a red or amber rating in your PDR or are subject to a written warning for any reason your home working arrangements may be terminated immediately and you will be expected to return to work at Time Central;
- your team head or a partner will remain responsible for supervising you, will regularly review your home working arrangements and take steps to address any perceived problems. They will also inform you of meetings or training sessions that you must attend and ensure that you are kept up to date with information relevant to your work. It is your responsibility to keep up to date with emails and firm communication, such as 'It's All Going On!'; and
- home working may affect your home and contents insurance policy. You must make any necessary arrangements with your insurers.

Equipment

Unless otherwise agreed, when working from home you will use your own equipment and will be given access to the firm's systems (including DMS) remotely using VMware View with RSA authentication.

There may be occasions when it is necessary for the firm to provide equipment. Where equipment is provided it will remain the firm's property and you must:

- use it only for the purposes for which we have provided it;
- take reasonable care of it and use it only in accordance with any operating instructions and other firm policies and procedures; and
- make it available for collection when requested to do so.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have sufficient and appropriate equipment for working from home. We are not responsible for the provision, maintenance, replacement, or repair in the event of loss or damage to any personal equipment used by you when working for the firm.

All equipment and information must be kept securely. In particular, private and confidential material must be kept secure at all times. Your team head and COLP must be satisfied that all reasonable precautions are being taken to maintain confidentiality of material in accordance with the firm's requirements.

Health and Safety

When working at home you have the same health and safety duties as other team members. You must take reasonable care of your own health and safety and that of anyone else who might be affected by your actions and omissions. You must attend the usual office health and safety courses, read policies and instructions and undertake to use equipment safely.

You must complete the firm's home working checklist, DSE self-assessment/workstation questionnaire and review the home worker's risk assessment. Where appropriate, the firm reserves the right to arrange a visit to your home by an occupational health professional to undertake a personal DSE assessment.

Loss of contact with team members and isolation, especially if working purely at home, may be experienced by home working. You should keep in regular contact with your team head and work colleagues if working at home for extended periods. Any team member with a concern regarding lone working issues should ensure that it is discussed with their team head.

You must not have meetings in your home with clients and must not give clients your home address or telephone number.

You must ensure that your working patterns and levels of work are not detrimental to your health and wellbeing. You are encouraged to vary the work that you do and break up long spells of computer work to prevent fatigue, eye strain, upper limb problems and backache.

You must use your knowledge, experience and training to identify and report any health and safety concerns to the Director of Operations.

When you are working at, or from, home you are covered by our accident insurance policy. Any accidents must be reported immediately in accordance with our Health and Safety Policy.

Communication

Please bear in mind the following:

- you must be contactable during normal working hours when working from home;
- if you have a firm mobile/smart phone, your Time Central telephone number should be diverted to your mobile/smart phone (please remember to cancel this when you return to the office);
- arrangements must be communicated to members of your team so that they know when you will not be in the office;
- your diary must reflect that you are working from home so that colleagues in the firm know that they can contact you; and
- your Outlook 'out of office' message must not be set when working from home.

Costs and Expenses

The firm is not responsible for any associated costs of you working from home, including the costs of heating, lighting, electricity or telephone calls, nor shall the firm reimburse travel expenses from your home to our office at Time Central should you be required to attend the office for whatever reason on any of your home working days.

Sickness and Holiday Reporting

Normal sickness and holiday reporting procedures apply.

New and Expectant Mothers

You should inform your team head and/or HR immediately if your circumstances change and this affects the arrangements in place for home working.