

BOSTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OBJECTIVES2
INTRODUCTION2
FLEXIBLE WORKING – GUIDELINES ON THE RIGHT TO APPLY4
FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS8
HOME/TELE OR REMOTE WORKING 16

OBJECTIVES

This policy has been developed to increase the flexibility of the workforce to meet the changing needs of the organisation and to provide enhanced work life balance for employees.

Research has shown that flexible working opportunities which allow employees to balance their work and home lives effectively can have a positive impact on productivity as they are able to plan working time to fit with their own responsibilities.

Flexible working can also generate broader environmental benefits by reducing vehicle usage which is in line with the Council's Travel Plan and Environmental Policy commitments.

The Council understands that in order to maximise potential in the working environment and to ensure excellence in service delivery it must look to challenge the conventional methods of service delivery and employment practice to ensure that employees needs are linked successfully with the demands of service provision.

This policy does not provide for an automatic right to work flexibly as there may always be circumstances when managers are unable to accommodate the employees desired work pattern. However a framework is provided by which employees and managers can request different patterns of work to meet their own needs and those of the organisation.

Flexible working includes but is not limited to:

- Flexi time
- Job Sharing
- Part time working
- Annualised hours
- Compressed hours
- Term time working
- Home-working
- Tele-working
- Remote working
- Career/Employment Breaks

INTRODUCTION

Flexible working should be voluntary for both employees and the organisation unless particular flexible working arrangements are specified at the time of a post

being advertised i.e. annualised hours, to fit in with service delivery aims or the needs of a post change specifically over a period of time. Managers will consider flexible working requests and will endeavour to balance employees needs with those of the Council.

FLEXIBLE WORKING – GUIDELINES ON THE RIGHT TO APPLY

Employees who are parents of children aged under 16 or of children with a disability¹ aged under 18 have the right to apply to work flexibly. Applications must be made at least 14 days before the child's 6th or 18th birthday. From 6th April 2007 a Carer also has the statutory right to request flexible working. Employees must be caring for or expect to be caring for an adult i.e. a person aged 18 years or over.

Boston Borough Council has a statutory duty to consider any applications seriously. Applications from other employees will be considered.

The right to request flexible working is not an automatic right to work flexibly as there will be circumstances when the Council is unable to accommodate the employees desired pattern of work. The regulations provide examples of specific business reasons when a request may be refused. An example of this would be the burden of additional costs to the Council.

The guidelines are designed to facilitate discussion between the Council and employees to consider flexible working and where practicable to find a solution which suits both parties.

Where the guidelines refer to employees making requests and the employer notifying of decisions "in writing" the forms attached as appendices should always be used.

ELIGIBILITY

In order to make a request you must:

- be an employee
- have 26 weeks continuous service with Boston Borough Council at the date the application is made
- not have made another application to work flexibly under the right during the last 12 months
- Be able to prove that they meet all the below criteria in particular with regard to their relationship with the child or adult.

For children

- have a child under 16, or under 18 in the case of a child with a disability
- Be the mother, father, adopter, guardian, special guardian² or foster parent of the child or are married to, or the partner (including same sex partner) of a child as described above.

¹ A child with a disability is a child who is entitled to Disability Living Allowance

² A Special Guardian has responsibility for all aspects of caring for a child and they are likely to be relatives or foster parents who have an existing relationship with the child. This category of parental responsibility provides permanence for a child without the need for legally separating the child from their birth family as with adoption.

- Other relatives of the above are not entitled to make a request.
- make the application no later than 2 weeks before the child's 16th birthday or 18th birthday in the case of a child with a disability
- have or expect to have responsibility for the child's upbringing
- be making the application to enable them to care for the child

For carers

- Be married to (or the partner of civil partner of) the adult, a relative³ of the adult or live at the same address as the adult
- Be caring or expect to be caring for the adult when the flexible working request is made in relation to caring for that adult.

This does not preclude any other employees from making a request under the Flexible Working Policy and such requests will be considered using the same method.

SCOPE OF THE REQUEST

Eligible employees will be able to request:

- a change to the hours they work
- a change to the times when they are required to work
- to work from home or another location

This covers different methods of working as outlined in Page 1.

CONSIDERATIONS (FOR EMPLOYEES PRIOR TO SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION FOR FLEXIBLE WORKING)

Employees should consider:

Their own domestic needs

The impact of their proposed changed working pattern on colleagues, office cover and service provision

If the Council cannot agree to the request it will be on one or more of the following grounds:

- The burden of additional costs
- The detrimental impact on meeting customer/service demands
- An inability to re-organise or re-distribute work among other existing staff
- An inability to recruit additional staff (this may be particularly the case where the request leaves "odd" hours to be filled)
- A detrimental impact on quality or performance

³ A relative is the parent (inc in-law & step), adopted, guardian, special guardian, siblings (inc. step and in-law), uncle, aunt or grandparent and includes adoptive relationships and relationships of the full blood or half blood, or in the case of an adoptive person such of those relationships would exist but for the adoption.

- There is insufficient work available during the hours the employee is requesting to work
- Other structural changes are planned

Where requests are agreed this will normally constitute a permanent change to the terms and conditions of the employee concerned.

PROCEDURE

Employees should make an initial request in writing to their Line Manager. If the request cannot be agreed immediately, within 28 days of the date of receiving the request their Line Manager should arrange to meet with the employee in question to discuss the request and also to consider alternative work patterns should it be felt that the initial request would not be suitable. The employee is entitled to bring with them a colleague or Trade Union representative to the meeting. A representative from People Services may also attend.

Unless the change in arrangements is minor i.e. a minor reduction in the number of hours worked or change to days of work, People Services should always be consulted about any requests for flexible working. Notification of **any** changes should be given to People Services so that the necessary documentation can be prepared.

Where changes may be fundamental the service manager should discuss possibilities with their Head of Service prior to agreeing any changes.

Within 14 days after this meeting, the line manager will write to the employee either to agree to a new work pattern and a start date OR to provide clear business ground(s) as to why the application cannot be accepted and the reasons why the ground(s) apply in the circumstances. Where an application is granted, it may be in the best interest of both parties to agree to a trial period.

APPEALS PROCEDURE

The employee may appeal in writing to their Head of Service within 14 days of the decision being notified to them.

Within 14 days of receiving the appeal the Head of Service will meet with them to discuss the appeal. Again the employee is entitled to bring with them a colleague or Trade Union representative to the meeting. A representative from People Services may also attend.

Within 14 days of this meeting the employee will be notified of the outcome in writing with an explanation as to how the decision has been arrived at.

Should the employee still not be satisfied with the outcome, they may write to their Director. The same procedure will apply as above. Should the employee still not be satisfied they may write to the Chief Executive. Again, the same procedures will apply as above.

In specific circumstances as a last resort third party involvement may be considered.

TIMESCALES

The timescales specified above may be varied with the joint agreement of the employee and employer using Form F.

Only 1 request is permitted within a 12 month period.

WITHDRAWING THE REQUEST

If at any time an employee wished to withdraw a request during the process they may do so in writing. Employees should be aware that should they do this they will not have the right to make another application in the following 12 months. However the Council will not act unreasonably with regards to this if a change to working arrangements can be facilitated to the mutual benefit of both parties. A request may also be considered as being withdrawn if any employee should fail to attend a meeting without reasonable cause more than once or unreasonably refuses to provide the employer with information it requires to assess the request.

Any request made and accepted under this policy will constitute a permanent change to the employees contractual terms and conditions (unless otherwise agreed by both parties). There will be no automatic right to revert back to the previous working patterns. If any agreed arrangements are not working either party can request to revert back to prior arrangements and this will be given due consideration.

These guidelines are not designed to prevent employees from informally discussing potentially different working arrangements with their Line Manager.

This procedure should be followed for all requests to work flexibly, outside of the flexi time system.

The [flexi time system](#) is detailed below and will accommodate a range of needs due to its accommodating format.

FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS

INTRODUCTION

The Flexible Working scheme will enable employees to organise their working hours so that they may have some measure of freedom as to when they work.

The scheme, however, is designed and operated in such a way as to maintain the efficiency of the Borough Council and the services it provides.

The success of the scheme depends on the co-operation and goodwill of all employees.

Employees will therefore be required to agree their working times with their Line Manager having regard to both their current workload and to the overall pattern of work in their section which may vary over time.

Employees will be required to obtain the express agreement of their Line Manager to their proposed 'pattern of work' within the flexi-time scheme. This is to ensure that proper cover is provided for all the offices at all times and to enable a degree of certainty as to when employees are working. Any variation of the agreed pattern of work will be by express agreement with the Line Manager.

AGREED PATTERN OF WORK

Employees will agree expressly with their Line Manager what their pattern of work will be. For example, employees may wish to start work at 7.30am every day or finish work at 6.30pm every day.

This arrangement must fit in with the Section's work pattern and that of colleagues to ensure offices are satisfactorily covered at all times.

FLEXIBLE LUNCH BREAK

A minimum of 30 minutes must be taken whether or not employees leave their workplace.

Employees should ensure that they take a suitable rest break from their work over the lunchtime period. (See Working Time Regulations below)

Such breaks should not be left to the end of the working day!

STANDARD WORKING TIMES

For the purpose of crediting authorised absences the following STANDARD WORKING TIMES will apply for full-time workers (part time workers should be

calculated pro rata):-

Week	37 hours
Day	7 hours 24 minutes
Half day	3 hours 42 minutes

ACCOUNTING PERIOD

The accounting period will be four weeks. This will continue to operate although there is now no limit on flexi debit/credit balances.

DEBIT HOURS

DEBIT HOURS are the number of insufficient hours worked against the employees contracted hours. Employees should not consistently maintain a debit balance and are expected to work sufficient hours for the proper performance of their duties.

Managers and staff are responsible for ensuring that contracted hours are worked.

CREDIT HOURS

Credit hours are the number of hours worked in excess of the total hours against the employees contracted hours

FLEXI-LEAVE

Flexi-leave may be taken with the prior authorisation of the line manager either as one day or two half days (i.e. 1 x 7 hours 24 minutes or 2 x 3 hours 42 minutes, or the equivalent of 1 day or 2 half days for part-time employees) during an accounting period.

NORMAL WORKING DAY

Services to members of the public must be available throughout the **NORMAL WORKING DAY**.

The normal working day for office based staff is-

Monday to Thursday	8.45am – 5.15pm
Friday	8.45am - 4.45pm

Arrangements will therefore have to be made, where appropriate, to ensure that

sufficient employees are available during the above times.

TIME RECORDING & SYSTEMS

Employees participating in the flexible working hours scheme are required to record their working times on a daily basis using an Excel spreadsheet. The spreadsheet is displayed in a week to view format. For assistance with this spreadsheet please contact a member of People Services. Employees should ensure that their line managers have unrestricted access to their flexi records. Employees should also ensure that they maintain adequate records over a period of time. No flexi credit will be allowed if records do not exist to support this.

On arrival at the workplace at the start of each day employees are required to record their arrival by entering their arrival time onto the spreadsheet

At lunchtime employees should record the start and finish of their lunch break. Remember a minimum lunch break of 30 minutes must be taken regardless of whether they leave the office.

On final departure from your workplace for the day, you are required to record your departure.

OVERTIME

All overtime must be authorised in advance by the appropriate manager and in accordance with the terms and conditions of service.

Authorised overtime will be paid under the normal payment for overtime provisions. Overtime is not paid for less than 30 minutes work. Flexitime will be taken instead of overtime payments if work is within the flexi band time for those eligible for the flexi time scheme.

This will be agreed by the Director in consultation with the employees concerned

Hours worked as overtime will not count as credit for flexi time purposes.

LEAVE

ANNUAL LEAVE

If you are on annual leave you will normally be credited 7 hours 24 minutes for one day and 3 hours 42 minutes for a half day, or the equivalent for part-time employees.

SPECIAL LEAVE

When special leave is granted you will normally be credited 7 hours 24 minutes for one day and 3 hours 42 minutes for a half day, or the equivalent for part-time employees.

FLEXI-LEAVE

Flexi-leave may be taken with prior authorisation and with reasonable notice either as full days or half days..

One day flexi-leave will be a 7 hours 24 minutes debit (Monday-Friday) or the equivalent for part-time employees.

A half-day flexi-leave will be a 3 hours 42 minutes debit (Monday-Friday) or the equivalent for part-time employees.

Applications should be made for flexi-leave on the annual leave card.

The necessary credit hours need not be acquired in advance of applying for flexi-leave however flexi balances must be monitored by employees and managers to ensure contracted hours are worked.

AUTHORISED ABSENCES

DUTIES OUTSIDE THE WORKPLACE AFTER ARRIVAL

You will normally be required to report to your workplace prior to undertaking any official duties away from the workplace. You therefore record your arrival in the normal way.

At the end of your day you record your departure in the normal way.

If you return to your workplace during the lunch period and have not had a lunch break while away from the office you should record yourself out and in on your records in the normal way and take your lunch break. It is not permissible for you to forgo your lunch break in favour of accruing flexi time.

DUTIES AWAY FROM THE WORKPLACE WITHOUT REPORTING AT THE WORKPLACE FIRST OR RETURNING TO THE WORKPLACE AFTERWARDS

Occasionally some mornings you will be required to proceed direct to a location other than your workplace. In this event the start of the working day will be agreed with your line manager and should be recorded as such on your flexi records as soon as you return to base.

It may also on occasions be more convenient to proceed home direct from a location other than your workplace. In this event the end of your working day will be agreed with your line manager, again this should be recorded as such on your flexi records as soon as you return to base.

TRAVELLING TIME

When you are on official duty out of the Borough Council area you will receive a credit of 7 hours 24 minutes or pro rata for part-time employees. Part time workers should not be unduly disadvantaged when on official business for more than their normal working day i.e. part time workers out of the office on official business for a full day would receive 7 hours 24 minutes credit for this.

ILLNESS

If you are off work through illness you are allowed a credit of 7 hours 24 minutes for each full day and 3 hours 42 minutes for each half a day or the equivalent for part-time employees.

EMERGENCY ILLNESS AND DENTAL TREATMENT

If you are taken ill or require emergency medical or dental treatment during the course of the day you will be allowed a credit for any period of absence within the normal working day up to a maximum of 7 hours 24 minutes.

HOSPITAL, DOCTOR, DENTAL AND OPTICIAN APPOINTMENTS

These types of appointments should normally be in your own time. With the flexi time provision there should be adequate opportunity for this to be accommodated. Hospital appointments for cancer screening i.e. cervical/testicular, may be taken during work time where this is unavoidable and time will be credited. Where you have a hospital appointment or where appointments are unavoidable in work time you will be required to show proof of the appointment and discuss the circumstances with your Line Manager. You may be required to work back any time taken.

Attendance at Blood Donor sessions will also be credited, provided prior approval has been given by the line manager.

TRAINING

If you attend a training course, anywhere other than the Municipal Buildings and are absent for a full day you will be allowed a credit of 7 hours 24 minutes. Part timers will be treated the same as for travelling time.

DAY RELEASE, EXAMINATIONS AND PRE-EXAMINATION STUDIES

Authorised absences for day release, examinations and pre-examinations studies in accordance with the Conditions of Service will be allowed a credit which shall not extend beyond the normal working day. Please check with People Services for specific occurrences.

FAMILY AND OTHER BEREAVEMENTS

A family bereavement is an authorised absence in accordance with the Family Leave Policy therefore you will be allowed a credit of 7 hours 24 minutes. Any absence for family leave should be authorised by your line manager in accordance with the Family Leave policy and recorded as such on your leave card.

TRADE UNION DUTIES

The carrying out of appropriate trade union duties will be an authorised absence in accordance with the Conditions of Service Agreement. Representatives must liaise with their line manager before absenting themselves from the workplace.

WORKING OUTSIDE THE BANDWIDTH

Where, due to the needs of the service and with the authority of your Director, you are required to work outside of normal flexi times, the time worked may be credited as working time with the agreement of your Head of Service on your flexitime records.

ADVERSE WEATHER AND TRAVEL DIFFICULTIES

It is recognised that employees may in exceptional circumstances experience undue difficulty in getting to and from work because of adverse weather making driving impracticable or due to breakdowns in the public transport system.

any employee who has time off work in these circumstances will either be:-

- unpaid or
- paid (taken as annual leave, flexi-leave or expected to make up the time at a later date).

This should be agreed with the relevant line manager.

A Director may agree that employees may leave work early and receive credit for the time of their departure until the finish of the normal working day.

MONITORING OF THE FLEXI TIME SYSTEM

It is the responsibility of individuals to ensure that the recording of their hours of work is accurate. Line managers should be satisfied that their employees are maintaining accurate records and may carry out random audits of flexi time records to ensure the proper maintenance of the system. You may be asked to provide information relating to your records to either your line manager or People Services.

Any abuse of the flexi time system will be dealt with under the Authority's Disciplinary Procedure.

EMPLOYEES LEAVING THE SERVICE

If you are leave the Council whilst working within the flexi scheme you must

ensure that any balance of credit or debit time is cancelled out before leaving the Council's service i.e. your flexi balance should be left at zero.

Any debit time will be deducted from payment of final salary in the same way that annual leave is deducted. Any credit time owed will be lost if not taken.

NEEDS OF THE SERVICE

It may be necessary from time to time for managers to restrict flexible working hours due to needs of the service.

ALTERATIONS TO THE FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS SCHEME

It may be necessary in light of experience to alter or amend the scheme but you will be informed in advance if there are any changes. The scheme will be altered or reviewed as found to be necessary.

HOME/TELE OR REMOTE WORKING

Tele-working is the term used for remote working (i.e. away from the main offices) in a location other than the employees home. Home-working is the term used for employees working in their own home.

For either home, tele or remote working, it is expected that the role will be performed to the same standard that would have been achieved in the traditional work environment. However it is anticipated that flexible working practices will provide more effective and efficient arrangements and reap a number of benefits for both employees and the organisation.

SCOPE

The opportunity for home, tele or remote working has to be open and fair for all. Although some employees will be constrained by their home/work demands, it is the intention that each request to home-work, tele-work or work remotely will be considered on its own merits and in line with the guidelines on the right to apply for flexible working.

Where this consideration is led by the Council, employees will not be unduly forced to change their way of working but should appreciate the business needs of such proposed changes and how this may lead to longer term benefits for the organisation and their work.

BENEFITS

Home, tele or remote working can bring a number of benefits to both the employee and the organisation e.g.:

- Savings on travelling time & costs for employees
- Environmental benefits of reduced travel
- Increased productivity
- Increased flexibility for employees over working times
- Reduction in costs of office accommodation and car parking
- Improved recruitment and retention of employees

APPLICABLE HOME WORKING OPTIONS:

1. Regular, long term arrangement e.g. permanently working from home or working from home on a permanent basis for 2 days per week.

These arrangements will include a change of contract for employees and are not intended to be a substitute for appropriate child or other caring responsibilities.

2. Ad hoc or emergency arrangements

This will cover occasions when urgent work needs to be completed away from interruptions within the office. Consideration will also be given to supporting employees in this way for short term emergency dependent care, however employees should not unduly put themselves under pressure to work when other responsibilities make this impossible. The Council's Family Leave policy provides options for family emergencies.

These two situations are different and should be treated as such.

CONSIDERING HOME WORKING

If employees want to consider home working they might wish to ask themselves the following questions:

- Do you have a high degree of self-discipline?
- Do you have good communication skills?
- Are you able to manage your workload without supervision?
- Would working with minimal social contact bother you?
- Do you have good time management skills?
- Could you manage to separate your work and domestic responsibilities?
- Do you have somewhere suitable at home to do work without interruptions?
- Do you have adequate IT skills in order to maximise the use of technology?
- Do you think your job is suitable for home working?

CONTRACTUAL VARIATIONS

Where agreements are made to work from home on a full or part time basis, a variation in contracts will be required to ensure that the following aspects are clear:

- place of work
- procedures for reporting to the office
- Expenses and allowances
- Provision of equipment & support arrangements
- Insurance
- Holiday, sick and other leave arrangements
- Procedure if the home worker or manager wishes to return to office working

However, either party (the Council or the employee) may terminate the agreement with 6 months notice. This flexibility will allow individuals and the Council to remain flexible in the event of personal or organisational changes.

COMMUNICATIONS

Employees working at home or remotely must be contactable by telephone during their normal designated working hours. They should notify their manager if for any reason apart from tele working they are unavailable for a short period.

All home workers should attend monthly team meetings which will be at one of the Council buildings in Boston. It is also anticipated that those employees working from home on a regular basis will attend the office for at least part of one day per week in order to update on important issues, to respond to post and to attend meetings as required. No travel allowance will be paid for attending such meetings. It is anticipated that this requirement may be reduced in the future with advancements in technology such as document image processing.

Managers with employees working from home should ensure that they are sent appropriate information electronically e.g. Chief Executive's Bulletin.

WORKING HOURS

If employees wish they may continue to operate the normal flexi time system, however agreements on recording time and hours to be worked should be agreed at the outset with line managers. It is important to be able to maximise the flexibility afforded to employees but also to ensure that service delivery does not suffer.

It is also important to focus on the outputs of employees working from home rather than the inputs therefore if work targets are achieved, the pattern of work (within reason) should not be a problem. However, employees should ensure that they do not abuse the trust of the Council within these arrangements and any abuse of the arrangements will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure.

Where employees have specific obligations outside of normal hours e.g. those who need to be contactable in the out of hours procedure should be contactable on their mobile phones as normal. A copy of the Out of Hours procedure is given to every relevant member of staff.

Recording working time is a condition of this scheme.

Employees should also be aware of the Working Time Regulations (1998) and have a responsibility to abide by its stipulations.

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Those employees working from home will have the same access to training and development opportunities as other employees and are subject to the Council's appraisal process – Employee Development Review.

New employees should receive an effective induction into the organisation which may include spending some time initially, office based, in order to familiarise themselves with the organisation and colleagues.

Employees will be obliged to attend the workplace for training and development activities.

COSTS/EXPENSES

Employees will be required to meet any additional expenditure in the performance of their duties at home such as additional heating and electricity costs. The Council will not reimburse any such costs. Travelling expenses from the work base to the main offices will not be reimbursed. However travelling costs incurred in attending external locations will be paid in accordance with the rules for claiming travel expenses for work purposes. Consumables such as paper will be purchased by the Council.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING/EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

Those employees working from home have the same rights as other employees and access should be available, via telephone or email to communicate with union representatives. Trade union representatives will continue to be afforded reasonable time off for union activities but should be mindful of the need to conduct most business with members who work from home by email or telephone unless the employee chooses to visit the representative at the place of work.

WORK PERFORMANCE

Clear and achievable targets for work should be agreed at the outset and updated regularly. Line managers are responsible for monitoring and reviewing these targets and general performance with their employees.

DATA PROTECTION

BBC is responsible for taking the appropriate measures to ensure the protection of data used and processed by home workers for work purposes.

All home workers should be advised of rules concerning data protection and it is the home workers responsibility to comply with the Council's policy on data protection and ensure that other household members do not have access to personal data and must ensure that appropriate security measures are in place.

Simple and clear IT policies should be in place to ensure that systems and data transfer remains secure.

PRIVACY

Employees who are using their homes for working have a right to privacy out of hours and to be able to separate their working and home lives. Times when they can and when they cannot be contacted on work issues should be agreed subject to emergency planning responsibilities and out of hours arrangements.

EQUIPMENT – PROVISION AND SECURITY

Boston Borough Council are responsible for providing, installing and maintaining the equipment necessary for regular home working and covering the costs directly caused by the work such as hardware, software and communications. The employee is expected to take good care of any equipment and not to use it for personal use unless expressly authorised nor to collect or distribute illegal material via the Internet and the employee must abide by the IT, Email and Internet security policies in force at the time.

Normal provisions are likely to be:

Mobile phone for work

Standard PC or laptop (capable of being linked to the Council's network (email and Internet as a minimum)

Printer

Suitable chair

Optional provision:

Separate phone line for work

Fax machine/facility

Suitable desk

Broadband Internet access

Additional/special equipment will be provided where employees have special requirements e.g. arising from disability.

Employees will be consulted about the timing of installation work and the positioning of equipment.

All equipment must be used in accordance with the Council's policies including IT policies.

Employees who have a personal computer at home should not use this for work at present, although this option will be explored in the future.

Employees should not use or download personal software onto equipment provided by the Council.

All equipment provided by the Council for use by home workers remains the property of the Council and will be security marked. Arrangements will be made to recover the equipment if the employee leaves the Council, moves to a job that doesn't involve home working or if the home working agreement is terminated.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

This policy is supplemented by guidance notes to assist employees and managers in managing the health and safety of those people working from home.

Employees should take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by what they do. The home worker is responsible for reporting all employment related hazards to their own and other's health and ensuring that proper fire precautions, clear emergency exit routes exist.

In the case of home/remote workers, employees should carry out a self assessment of risks from work activities carried out at home or remotely, provided they have been trained to do so. This should be done prior to an agreement being made to give managers sufficient information to allow them to make a decision on whether home working is suitable. This should be done in conjunction with the form at Appendix 1.

Boston Borough Council will ensure that all the equipment provided is appropriate to the job and, where necessary, training on its use is provided. All electrical goods will comply with existing safety regulations and the employer is responsible for checking compliance. Domestic electrical systems are the home workers own responsibility.

Particular care should be taken to ensure that Display Screen Equipment Regulations are complied with.

Employees should not invite clients or members of the public to visit at their homes and must not give out private addresses or telephone number to clients or members of the public. Meetings with colleagues should not be held in employees' homes.

It is important that employees operating home/tele or remote working continue to be aware of stress at work and discuss issues with their managers as they arise. Risk assessments should include assessing the risks of stress associated with the job and the working conditions.

TAX

Equipment can be provided at home to home-workers without a taxable benefit arising providing there is a genuine business need for the equipment.

Home-workers are not usually subject to business rates for Capital Gains Tax (i.e. when a house is sold) but it is better to avoid having a room that is used exclusively as a workspace unless this is used already for home use e.g. Study.

INSURANCE

The Council provides limited insurance for Council owned equipment located in a workers home. Theft or damage must be reported immediately.

Home-workers and the Council will be insured against any legal liability which may arise as a result of an employee engaged in working from or at home on Council business. Cover will be

provided under the Council's Employers Liability arrangements, as long as the following conditions have been met.

- Equipment provided by the Council is checked at appropriate intervals
- Appropriate risk assessments have been carried out of the workplace
- Guidance is provided to employees on health & safety
- Insurance certificate displayed in the work area

Home-workers should tell their insurers (contents and buildings) that they will be working at home.

Home-workers should tell their mortgage company or landlord that they will be working at home.

Employees may be asked to provide documentary evidence to confirm that all of the necessary arrangements are in place.

MOVING HOUSE

If an employee is planning to move house whilst employed as a home/tele or remote worker, the Council will need to assess that the new property and working environment are suitable to continue with the current arrangements. Should the location of the property prevent the employee and the Council from continuing with the arrangement i.e. moving house some distance which makes regular visits to and from the employees home impractical or impossible, consideration will be given to terminating the arrangement.

Appendix 1

Home/Tele working Assessment Sheet

This form is to help determine the potential for employees to home and/or Tele-work. The form should be completed by the employee and the manager separately and a meeting should then be arrange to review whether an assessment can be agreed. The results are not binding and the final decision as to whether or not you can be home based rests with your Head of Service.

Employee's name:	Manager's name:	1  5
Assessing the suitability of you and your job for home/tele-working		Score from 1 – 5 depending on the answer to each statement
1. There are systems in place to measure your contribution by what you produce.		
2. Arrangements can be made to assign work to you on a systematic basis.		
3. You can manage your work without continual supervision.		
4. You can plan and structure your working day.		
5. You can motivate yourself to meet the demands of your role when working away from the office.		
6. You and your manager can ensure (so far as is reasonably practical) your health, safety and welfare when working away from the office.		
7. You are reasonably competent in using technology to manage information and communication and you can access the systems you need to be able to do your job properly.		
8. Your role allows you to be out of the office for some of the working week.*		
9. The cost of home/tele-working is favourable to the cost of traditional work methods.		
10. The impact on colleagues and service delivery of your absence from the office can be managed successfully (i.e. is it necessary for you to be at work within pre-determined hours to maintain service delivery)		
Total:		/50
Percentage (multiply total by 2):		%

* It is important to consider at this stage what percentage of time must the post holder be physically present at the workplace (other than for weekly visits and team meetings).

This policy has been agreed by Boston Borough Council and the Trade Union representatives for the workforce at Joint Consultative Committee.

Signed:

Date:

Chief Executive

Signed:

Date:

UNISON Branch Secretary

Signed:

Date:

GMB Representative