

PiPA remote working policy

NB this is a sample policy for the remote element of a mixed model of working

Headings	Guidance	Suggested wording
1 Our remote working policy		
Purpose	This policy applies when an organisation wishes to establish an overarching policy that employees may decide (within reason – usually after prior consultation with their manager or their team) where they work, without the need for a permanent change to their contract (for which your flexible working policy will apply).	<p>The purpose of this document is to state [the Company’s] policy on remote working, which we intend should enable our employees (in consultation with their manager and their team) to have greater control over where they work; and to be able to choose the most appropriate place to work in order to deliver their best work.</p> <p>These arrangements will be monitored and evaluated taking into account the practical issues, costs involved and the effect on productivity and quality of service.</p>
Definition	<p>Set out what remote working means to your organisation (include other sites/locations). Does this policy refer to permanent home working as well as ad-hoc/occasional home working?</p> <p>Set out types of homeworking that the policy will cover and whether home or the employer’s business premises will be the main place of work. For example, the types might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home as the main place of work. • Flexible homeworking with time split between home and the office. • Mobile working with a base at home to travel to the employer’s different premises and customers. 	<p>Remote working is a way of working ‘at a distance’, using information technology (IT) to allow you to undertake work away from [the organisation’s] premises.</p> <p>As a remote worker, [you may be based permanently at home, or] you may work occasionally or more regularly from home, or you may be mobile and connected to our premises from other locations.</p> <p>Unless your contract of employment states that your home is your main place of work, our premises remain your main place of work.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The office as the main place of work with working from home or from another location occasionally. 	
Scope	<p>Explain that this policy covers ad hoc and regular remote working, that does not require a change to the employee's contract of employment. Explain that anyone who wishes to make such a permanent change should refer to your organisation's flexible working policy.</p>	<p>This policy covers both ad hoc and regular remote working that does not require a change to your contract of employment.</p> <p>Working remotely may be on an occasional, a temporary or a permanent basis and all contractual obligations, including your core working hours, continue to apply.</p> <p>If you wish to make a contractual change to your employment, so that you work permanently from home, please refer to our flexible working policy for details of how to make a formal request and of our process for considering such a request.</p>
Organisational commitment to flexible working	<p>This is where you should set out your commitment to flexibility.</p> <p>Include a reminder here that although remote working is a type of flexible working, it refers only to WHERE work is carried out. Your people should not assume that other aspects of flexible working (WHEN, and HOW LONG) are automatically also variable under this policy (unless of course, they are in your organisation).</p>	<p>The provision of remote working is part of our commitment to flexibility, and plays an important part in making it possible for [our organisation] to attract and retain the best people regardless of personal circumstances; and supports our commitment to making our organisation inclusive of all our people.</p> <p>We are also committed to accommodating an employee's wish or need to work remotely on a temporary or permanent basis; or as an adjustment for an employee with a disability, should this be reasonable and required.</p> <p>This policy explains how to agree remote working with your manager, and the things they and you should take into account when considering your arrangement. It also covers the safeguards that need to be put in place and the practical arrangements that make remote working a success.</p>

		<p>Remote working is one type of flexible working (enabling you to vary where you work), but you should not assume that other aspects of flexible working (such as changes when you work or for how long) are automatically part of a remote working arrangement. You should discuss your wish for such changes with your manager.</p> <p>This policy does not form part of your contract of employment and may be amended at any time.</p>
2 Setting up remote working		
Who is eligible	<p>You should set out who will be eligible.</p> <p>Is it open to anyone who has a role where at least some activities lend themselves to being carried out from home?</p> <p>If you wish to restrict eligibility in any way, you should make it clear that anyone may nevertheless request it as a reasonable adjustment. Thereafter, you need to decide, for example, whether it will be a day one right for all new starters, or whether you will require people to have worked for you for a certain length of time. You might also want to restrict it to those with a satisfactory performance record.</p>	<p>All our employees are eligible to use remote working, as long as you have a role in which at least some activities are suitable for being carried out away from our premises.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>You are eligible to use remote working if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have a role in which at least some activities are suitable for being carried out away from our premises, AND • You are requesting it as a reasonable adjustment AND/OR • You have completed [a certain length of service] AND/OR • You have satisfactorily completed your training/ probationary period AND/OR • You have achieved [a satisfactory grading] in your most recent performance review <p>If you are eligible to make a formal flexible working request, you will still be able to apply using our flexible working policy.</p>

		<p>Every employee is eligible to request flexible working (a contractual variation to, for example, where they are required to work) under the relevant legislation, once they have completed 26 weeks of continuous employment. This remote working policy is in addition to your legal rights, providing a flexible and more informal way to manage where our staff work. If your situation is such that you wish to propose a permanent, contractual change to your terms of employment with us, you should make your request under our flexible working policy.</p>
<p>Criteria for remote working</p>	<p>Your employee and their manager will need to answer these questions satisfactorily</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the role suitable for remote working? • Is the home or other remote site suitable? • Is the role-holder suitable? • Will remote working meet your organisation's needs as well as your employee's? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Remember that your employee does not need to show a positive benefit to you. But you do want to be confident that there will not be negative impact on their performance or on their wider team. 	<p>To be able to work remotely, you will need to identify which elements of your role suit working away from our premises, and be able to show us that where you intend to work is suitable. You will need to be sure that you have the personal qualities that suit remote working. And you and your manager should be confident that remote working will not be negative for [our organisation] or for you personally.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is your role suitable for remote working? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Please identify which activities suit working remotely and which are better suited to our workplace. b. Think about how you will plan your time and activities, if you propose to work remotely some of the time, and on our premises some of the time. c. [Set out the factors that the organisation will use for assessing whether the role can be done just as well away from your premises by someone working remotely]. 2. Is your home (or other remote site) suitable for remote working? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Homeworkers need a safe and reasonable space, security and privacy in which to work, and for office-

		<p>type tasks a reliable internet connection that is able to support our work systems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. IT systems will be monitored on an ongoing basis and if the system proves unreliable, [the organisation] will be entitled to suspend and/or terminate the arrangement c. If you intend to work remotely from home, your work space has to be adequate both for practical working and in terms of health and safety legislation. Ideally, you should have a separate room or area set aside for remote working. <p>3. Will remote working suit your personal qualities? We expect you to show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Self-motivation and discipline. b. The ability to work without direct supervision. c. The ability to complete work to deadline <p>4. Will remote working meet our business needs as well as your personal needs or preferences?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. We do not expect you to be able to show that working remotely will enable to you to do more or work better than your current arrangements, but we do want to be confident that there will not be negative impact on you, your team or your colleagues/customers/clients more widely.
<p>Approval process</p>	<p>Note that we talk about a “proposal” for remote working, to distinguish this from the formal “request” that an employee may make for contractual flexible working, the process for which should be set out in your flexible working policy.</p> <p>We recommend that managing proposals for remote</p>	<p>[The organisation] will properly consider all proposals for remote working.</p> <p>There is no automatic right for you to work remotely, and not all roles or jobs will be suitable for remote working.</p>

	<p>working should be as light touch as possible. Your aim is to enable your employees to think for themselves and take responsibility for how they deliver their best work. You also want to avoid burdening your managers with additional micro-level decision-making.</p> <p>You might put in place an expectation that each manager or team leader takes the opportunity of this new remote working policy to meet with their team to discuss what it means in their particular situation. PiPA's guidance on establishing a flexible working protocol is a useful resource, enabling teams and their managers to agree the parameters within which they will operate remote working; and to agree protocols around availability and contactability etc.</p> <p>Thereafter/instead/or in addition, you should think about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who the employee should discuss their proposal with. Line manager, line manager plus HR etc? Encourage the employee and line manager have an open conversation about the arrangement at an early stage • How long the process will take. Aim to ensure that managers deal with requests promptly. A formal request for flexible working has to be dealt with within 12 weeks. You should aim for a much quicker turnaround for remote working proposals. You might want to encourage your managers to set "yes" as their default position, with an agreed trial period as their safety net. 	<p>The process we will follow is: set out your process here, drawing on the guidance notes</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The grounds on which the employee can appeal if their proposal is refused (refer back to your criteria for assessing a proposal: suitability of role, home or remote premises, role-holder and impact on the organisation). 	
Trial periods and review	<p>It makes good sense to agree a trial period for any new arrangement, not least to give your managers confidence that if things are not working out, they will have the ability to take corrective action.</p> <p>It is also wise to build in regular reviews, to ensure the arrangement is still working or consider whether it needs to be changed.</p>	<p>Your manager will agree a trial period for any new remote working arrangement, so that you can both be sure that it meets the needs of your team and our organisation, as well as you. If the arrangement negatively affects your performance or that of your team, your manager may extend the trial period, or require you to return to working from our premises.</p> <p>Your manager will build in regular reviews with you [and/or your team], to ensure that the arrangement continues to work well or to consider whether it needs to be changed in any way.</p>
3 Working remotely		
Keeping in touch	<p>You should provide guidance on what is expected in terms of contactability, reporting, communications, attendance at key meetings in the workplace.</p> <p>You could put this into a set of homeworking protocols for teams to tailor to their specific situation. See PiPA's <i>Remote Working Resource: Making Remote Working Work</i></p>	<p>Successful remote working depends on everyone being as available and contactable to their colleagues as they would be on our premises. Your manager will set out what our expectations are in terms of your contactability, reporting, communications and attendance at key meetings.</p> <p>Optional additional wording, which you may not need if your managers implement team protocols around keeping in touch:</p> <p>When you are working away from our premises, you must be available by telephone or video conferencing should there be the need to check or clarify issues relating to your work, and be available should external stakeholders or partners wish to make contact with you directly.</p> <p>Exceptions to this will be:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • during authorised periods of annual leave, maternity/adoption/paternity/parental leave and compassionate leave, or at other times agreed in writing by your manager; • sickness which has been notified to the Company in accordance with established procedures. <p>Your manager will be responsible for ensuring that adequate arrangements are put in place for the co-ordination of work, eg, deliverables, collection and organisation. Additionally, there must be regular communication with work colleagues and periodic attendance to the office location (unless this latter aspect is impracticable due to the nature of a disability/illness).</p>
Attendance at the main office/base	<p>You should ensure that your employee understands and accepts that your premises remain their main place of work, and that you will require their presence there – how frequently will depend on their role and their team’s responsibilities.</p> <p>For an employee whose use of remote working is ad hoc, it will be sufficient that they understand that they may be asked to change their plans and how much notice their manager will give them of this.</p> <p>For someone whose arrangement is based on a regular pattern of remote days, you should consider setting out in more detail your minimum expectations around attendance at your premises</p>	<p>When you are remote working, our premises remain your main place of work. On request, you may be required to attend the workplace for purposes such as [management/team meetings/briefings, training, performance assessment, disciplinary, grievance hearings and/or operational reasons etc].</p> <p>You must be flexible in attending our premises when requested.</p> <p>The dates and times of such attendance will normally be agreed in advance, and where possible with no less than xx days notice.</p> <p>If your remote working arrangement is based on a pattern of regular or semi-regular days away from our premises, your manager will set out for you our minimum requirements around when and how often you will be expected to work on our premises.</p>

	<p>Team protocols will help here too, to agree notice periods and to create a sense of team ownership of time for collaboration, whole team meetings and so on.</p>	
Boundaries and wellbeing/hours of work	<p>It is clear from the experiences of many during lockdown that remote workers may find it difficult to establish boundaries between their home and working lives. This can bring risks to wellbeing and to their performance.</p> <p>The employer should ensure that employees who work from home are clear about their hours and the core hours when they should be at work.</p> <p>You can address this via the suggested wording in this section. Alternatively (or in addition) you could cover this in the team's flexible working protocols.</p>	<p>Your hours of work on days when you are working remotely will be the same as though you were in the office. We take your wellbeing very seriously, and will provide you will support and guidance to help you set clear boundaries around your remote working day and avoid being "always on".</p> <p>If you find that your working hours are exceeding your normal pattern, you should discuss this immediately with your manager.</p> <p>In particular, remember that Regulation 4(1) of the Working Time Regulations 1998 provides that a worker's average working time, including overtime, shall not exceed 48 hours for each seven-day period (to be averaged over a period of 17 weeks). If your working hours are likely to exceed this amount when working remotely/from home, you must discuss this immediately with your manager.</p>
Sickness absence reporting	<p>Employees working from home often try to "work through" sickness that might otherwise have made them think twice about coming into your premises. This can be to your advantage – during the pandemic, employers reported that recorded levels of staff sickness reduced among those working from home. However, you should encourage your employees to report in sick when they are sick, wherever they are expecting to work that day. It is better for their longer term performance and engagement to take a proper break when they are unwell, in order to recover more quickly, and to avoid blurring the home/work boundary.</p>	<p>If you are unwell on a day when you are working remotely, you should not try to work. Please report and record your sickness absence as usual.</p>

Caring responsibilities	<p>Working from home is not a substitute for childcare or eldercare, unless in exceptional circumstances (for example, as during lockdown). In such exceptional circumstances, the employee should discuss their situation with their manager and agree a short-term and, if necessary, long-term plan of action.</p> <p>If long-term support is needed, please refer to PiPA's Best Practice Charter Programme for more resources and bespoke support on using flexible working and parental leave.</p>	<p>When you are remote working, you must separate domestic and work activities and commitments as far as is practicably possible. Unless in exceptional circumstances, working remotely from home is not a substitute for childcare or eldercare. If you have caring responsibilities, you will be required to demonstrate that the care arrangements for your child or adult dependant do not conflict with work activities.</p> <p>Your manager must be informed as soon as practicably possible of any changes to caring arrangements that have implications for the work being undertaken remotely. Where it is possible, arrangements will be made with you, short and/or long term, to accommodate any care responsibilities that you have whilst ensuring that you are still able to carry out your work for us.</p>
Employee performance	<p>Your people will need to be confident that employees who work from home will be managed consistently with office staff, and given the same opportunities for training, development and promotion.</p>	<p>Employees who work from home are subject to the same rules, procedures and expected standard of conduct and performance as all other employees. Contractual obligations, duties and responsibilities remain in place, as do our workplace policies.</p> <p>Equally, we are committed to ensuring that any employees who work remotely will be managed consistently with office staff, and given the same opportunities for training, development and promotion.</p> <p>We want you to remain as involved as possible in our organisation and our activities while you are working remotely. This includes having access to company news, events and benefits, as well as opportunities for professional development, training and promotion.</p> <p>We will keep in regular contact with you when you are remote working. This may be via phone, email, video conferencing or face-to-face meetings.</p>

		If you at any point feel isolated, left out, or lacking guidance or support you should discuss this with your manager.
Practical stuff		
Health and safety	<p>As an employer, you have a duty of care to your employees and should carry out a risk assessment before homeworking can be approved.</p> <p>You should draw up a homeworking health and safety policy, which should set out what will happen if the risk assessment identifies concerns, including who will make and pay for changes to bring the employee's home up to standard, and what timescale will be allowed. It should also set out what will happen if concerns are not addressed and reserve the right to refuse a homeworking application.</p> <p>Of course, there is a fine line between taking reasonable precautions and invading personal privacy. But you do need to assess the risks of issues such as available space and lighting. As a minimum, there should be enough room for work to be carried out, including space for the workstation, other equipment (e.g. printers) and storage of materials.</p> <p>General health and safety hazards need to be considered by both the employer and the employee, because you as the employer have little direct control over the home workplace. There should be suitable access to the work room and the employee needs to</p>	<p>We have a duty of care to our employees and so we may require you to agree to a Health and Safety Risk Assessment being carried out at your home to identify any adjustments or equipment that may be necessary for you to carry out the work in a safe environment.</p> <p>We may ask you to take responsibility for carrying out this Risk Assessment, in which case we will provide advice and guidance to assist you.</p> <p>If required to, you must attend the usual office health and safety courses, read all relevant material and undertake to use equipment safely. We reserve the right to check home working areas for health and safety purposes.</p> <p>If the Risk Assessment identifies concerns, we reserve the right to require you to return to working on our premises. Alternatively, we will agree with you a schedule of changes that must be carried out, and a timetable for doing so. Before costs are incurred, we will agree with you who will be responsible for paying for necessary improvements. If we require you to meet any of these costs, you will have the option instead to return to working at our premises.</p> <p>When you are remote working, you must make sure that you use equipment correctly and that you take reasonable care of your own health and safety. You must also be aware of the risks your work poses to other people, such as family members (including children).</p>

	<p>ensure good standards of housekeeping, including adequate lighting, removing trailing leads and not using the floor or high shelves for storage.</p> <p>If you specifically recruit someone for a remote working job, it's relatively easy to set minimum requirements for their workspace. But post-pandemic, it is likely that more of your employees ask to work from home. If someone is working from home only part of the time, the your assessment of whether the home provides a suitable workplace should take this into account.</p>	
Security	<p>You will need to set out clear requirements around data protection and confidentiality. How should staff working remotely store and transmit documents and information?</p>	<p><i>It is our policy that computer users are not permitted to load non-standard applications and other software on to our PCs or laptops. You should not download any application or software without specific advance permission.</i></p> <p><i>In all instances, repairs and servicing to Company-owned equipment will only take place by persons authorised by us to do so.</i></p> <p><i>You must ensure the security and safekeeping of any confidential information provided by us for use in the remote working environment. Such information should not be accessible to your family or visitors. You must ensure that all reasonable precautions are being taken to maintain confidentiality of material in accordance with our requirements.</i></p> <p><i>If you discover or suspect that there has been an incident involving the security of information relating to the Company, clients, customers or anyone working with or for us, you must report it immediately to your manager.</i></p>
Equipment and IT	<p>You should set out:</p>	<p><i>Suggested wording relating to IT equipment</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What you will provide. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For example, furniture, phone, phone line, Broadband, printer, fire extinguisher, paper. • What the employee is expected to provide. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For example, heating and lighting. • Who will pay for any installation and other necessary costs, and, if required and agreed, how costs can be claimed back. • Who the equipment belongs to, who is responsible for maintaining/moving it and how this will be done, and whether it can, or cannot, be used for personal matters by the homeworker or their family. • Running costs and expenses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ You should state whether you will contribute towards costs of working from home – for example, heating and lighting - and expenses. If so, you should state how much, what can be claimed and how, and what is taxable. <p>It is important to have a clear policy worked out in advance of your people beginning to work remotely, for the avoidance of future misunderstandings, disputes and costs.</p>	<p><i>For remote working, you may only use IT equipment provided by us or that we have approved. You agree to comply with our instructions relating to software security and to implement all updates to equipment as soon as you are requested to do so.</i></p> <p><i>You will ensure that there is sufficient and appropriate equipment in place to facilitate remote working.</i></p> <p><i>If you intend using any personal equipment such as a computer for remote working you must check with us first. We will need to make sure that it's suitable. Any personal equipment that we agree to you using remains your responsibility, so you would need to cover the cost of things like repairs. [The organisation] shall not be responsible for the provision, maintenance, replacement or repair of any personal equipment used by you when working remotely for us.</i></p> <p><i>Any equipment supplied by us should be used for our work only and you should ensure you take reasonable care of it. This is particularly important with respect to computer equipment due to the risk of introducing computer viruses. Company PCs set up in remote workers' homes are fully interactive with our office systems.</i></p> <p><i>It is your responsibility to take reasonable care to ensure the safety and security of any equipment and to maintain the remote working environment to the agreed health and safety standards.</i></p> <p><i>While you are working remotely/from home you will be covered by the terms of our policies and procedures as set out in our employee handbook, including the Disciplinary Procedure and IT Policy.</i></p> <p><i>Add additional wording here re</i></p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What (else) you will provide</i> • <i>What the employee is expected to provide</i> • <i>Who will pay for kit and/or installation; if the employee, how they should claim it back</i> • <i>Who equipment that the company has paid for belongs to, who is responsible for maintaining it</i> • <i>Whether you will contribute towards your employee's running costs and expenses</i>
Insurance tax and mortgage implications	<p>Be clear about the remote worker's responsibilities for these.</p>	<p><i>Equipment supplied by us to those working from home is covered under our insurance scheme against theft, fire and damage. All equipment must be kept in a secure place when not in use. At all times, your home must be locked when left unoccupied. Failure to do so may render the insurance invalid. If your actions render any insurance invalid, we may seek to recover any losses associated with your breach from you personally.</i></p> <p><i>You will be required to inform your Home and Contents Insurer that additional IT equipment has been provided (if it has) and that you are working from home.</i></p> <p><i>We will not be responsible, in any circumstances, for any additional premiums requested by your Insurer as a result of any equipment provided to you to enable your remote working.</i></p> <p><i>There will be no change to Council Tax or Domestic Rates. The Domestic Rate is only affected if you are carrying out a business from your home.</i></p> <p><i>You are responsible for ensuring home/remote working does not breach any of the terms of your mortgage, rental agreement or any other agreement governing your residence.</i></p>

		<i>There may be tax implications to homeworking. You should get specific advice on this.</i>
The employer's access to the employee's home	<p>You should say how frequently and in what circumstances you will require access to your employee's home. For example, you may need to for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial set-up. • Maintenance of equipment. • Health and safety assessment • Electrical equipment testing • One-to-one meetings with managers/ colleagues/ clients 	<p><i>We reserve the right to visit, or instruct a relevant third party to visit, you at home, or wherever you are working remotely, at agreed times for work-related purposes, including health and safety matters. It is a condition of this policy that you agree to accept any such visit from Management or any designated third party. Such visits will be for the purposes of:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>providing a channel for reporting</i> • <i>performance monitoring and feedback</i> • <i>general discussions about work-related matters</i> • <i>ensuring health, safety and security</i> • <i>delivering and collecting work</i> • <i>any other work-related purposes that the Company considers appropriate.</i> • <i>to reclaim equipment upon termination of the homeworking arrangements.</i>

Requirement to work from home

You should provide guidance for employees and managers for situations where **you** require your employees to work from home. Line managers should have open and honest conversations with their team members and be prepared to find alternative arrangements, on a case by case basis, for employees who do not have a suitable home environment to work in, or those who in working from home would suffer detriment to their physical and mental health, safety, or wellbeing. Alternatives could be another workplace, an out of town 'hub' location or priority for a workstation in the workplace.