

Alternative Working Arrangements Guidance for Managers

Introduction:

The purpose of this document is to set out some guidance for line managers to work with individuals and teams to identify and agree the feasibility of alternative working arrangements including redeployment into an alternative role and working from home.

This is a changing picture and any arrangements put in place may be subject to change.

Redeployment

Where an individual advises their line manager that they have a concern relating to their personal health or home circumstances (as detailed later in this document) the line manager will need to assess whether:

- a) they should be redeployed into a lower risk area or role,
- or
- b) they should be supported to work from home.

Home Working

We will do what we can to support staff to work from home where possible balanced against our need to ensure that essential services can run effectively.

Staff working in clinical services:

Clinical Staff are expected to attend work if they are well, however, consideration will need to be given to risk e.g. underlying health conditions and personal circumstances e.g. childcare responsibilities. In these circumstances managers should consider flexible working options.

All other services:

Staff working in other areas may have more scope to work flexibly. However, all of us contribute to maintaining our vital patient services and therefore attendance at the workplace needs to be maintained while having regard to social distancing.

Options may include teams working on a rota basis to ensure that some, but not all, team members are attending their usual workplace at any time. This will minimise wider contact and help maintain office presence. Managers need to discuss with their teams how they can best continue to run their service in light of the Trust's position. Before agreeing to home working, managers should ensure their staff have all the necessary equipment, and that their home environment is suitable to carry out their work effectively referring to these guidelines

Home working is work that is carried out at an individual's own home with access to appropriate equipment and staff will need to agree with their manager how this works for them. Contractual obligations, including number of core working hours continue to apply.

We remain committed to supporting staff to stay well and at work wherever possible to continue to deliver high quality patient care through unusual times, whilst taking account of national guidance.

Home Working Criteria:

When considering and discussing home working line managers should:

- Look at the role the person performs in the Trust and what options apply.
- Remind staff working from home that they have a responsibility to ensure safe and confidential working.
- Keep in touch with their team whether at work or at home, being clear about the work that is expected to be undertaken and any 'core hours' during which colleagues should be available individually or as part of a team;
- Where individuals work as part of a team consider how working from home arrangements could be shared or undertaken on a rota basis to ensure on-site presence where necessary, i.e. do not agree to any arrangements in isolation of the wider team roles and responsibilities.
- Ensure staff understand they may be required to attend back on site at any time in their own role or redeployed into another role and be available to be contacted by telephone during normal working hours;
- Consider what IT equipment will be necessary for home working and ensure that the individual will actually be able to work from home PRIOR to agreeing any arrangements. This includes confirming that the work station layout ensures that sensitive and/or confidential data or documentation cannot be viewed by unauthorised persons and is free from interruptions and distractions;
- Line managers can consider the deployment of fixed PCs to home as well as mobile devices and should engage with the IT department to take through these options.
- Advise the member of staff that they must have adequate home buildings and content insurance in place as the trust will not accept liability for damage caused to the individual's home or its contents.

The following sets out the priority (in order) for which individuals should be considered for home working. This takes into account the guidance from Public Health England.

- Staff self-isolating in line with national guidance and criteria.
- Staff considered at higher risk due to pre-existing health conditions;
- Pregnant Workers; as at 18th March 2020. There is currently no new evidence to suggest that pregnant women are at greater risk from coronavirus (Covid-19) than other healthy individuals, or that they can pass the infection to their baby, while pregnant. We await more detailed guidance from the Government about what modifications should be made for pregnant women.
- Staff over 70:
- Staff with school age children.
- Those who share a household with higher risk groups (as set out above).

Additional Information to be given once home working is approved.

Trust Internet connection (over which remote access takes place)

For historical reasons RBCH has a smaller internet connection than PHFT and consequently it may be necessary to prioritise staff who are able to work from home.

We are engaging with our telecommunications provider to see if we can increase the bandwidth of this connection and more information will be provided in due course.

Costs and Reimbursement for Home Working

The Trust will reimburse reasonable business expenses incurred where prior approval has been obtained from your line manager. However, the organisation will not reimburse staff for household expenses occurred during home working, for example: utility costs, landline or personal mobile costs etc. If an internet connection is required for home working, it is the responsibility of the member of staff to organise and pay for this.

Purchasing and maintenance of personal office furniture or equipment (for example: desks, filing cabinets, etc) is the responsibility of the member of staff. The organisation will not reimburse staff for the use of any privately owned equipment

Security of Information

When confidential data and/or paperwork is to be used at home this must be secure at all times during transport, use within your home environment and storage. Trust documents, papers, and/or person identifiable documents should not be stored at home or off-site/remotely unless the member of staff is specifically authorised to do so, and an appropriately robust lockable container is used.

All members of staff must ensure they meet the requirements of the law (especially data protection legislation), all related Trust policies, protocols and guidance, and any confidentiality agreements.

The most effective way of cutting down on information risks is to anonymise person identifiable data. You should only work on person-identifiable information at home if it is absolutely necessary to do so, with the minimum number of identifiers.

No personal, sensitive or confidential information is to be downloaded onto personally owned PCs or printed on printers located at a staff member's home.

Confidential data should **never**:

- leave the Trust on portable IT equipment unless it is encrypted;
- be processed or stored on devices not approved by the Trust;
- be emailed to or from staff home/personal email addresses;
- be emailed via poole.nhs.uk or NHS.Net without appropriate encryption (automatic or manual, as applicable);
- be accessible to unauthorised individuals.

This guidance will be reviewed in light of any changes to national guidance.

