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POLICY UNDER REVIEW – INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON THE WAYS OF WORKING WEBPAGE <https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/ways-of-working/>

Homeworking Policy and Guidance in Response to Covid-19

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Homeworking Policy and Guidance in Response to Covid-19

1. About this Policy and Guidance

1.1 Leeds Beckett University is committed to protecting the health, safety and wellbeing of colleagues. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government has advised that people who can work from home, should work from home for the foreseeable future. The University will continue to monitor and consider relevant Government guidance on working from home. While not all roles can be carried out from home, where directed, colleagues will be required to work from home until informed otherwise. This will allow the University to ensure appropriate health and safety measures are in place on campus, including social distancing.

1.2 This Policy and guidance set out the requirements on both the University and colleagues who are working from home as required due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It includes provisions on wellbeing, the provision of equipment and applicable risk assessments.

1.3 This Policy has been developed with Trade Union colleagues.

1.4 This Policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and the University may amend it at any time, subject to consultation with Trade Union colleagues.

2. A requirement to work from home

2.1 During the Covid-19 pandemic, colleagues may be required to work from home, potentially for a prolonged period.

2.2 Whilst the University campus is closed you must only attend campus as directed by your manager, or for a specific reason agreed with your manager. As a minimum, the University will follow relevant Government requirements related to health, safety and welfare on the campus and has developed a Covid-19 Health and Safety Risk Assessment

2.3 If you are required to work from home, your manager will discuss:

(a) the duties and responsibilities that you should undertake, which may differ from your normal duties, but will be appropriate for your grade. The University requires that managers and colleagues be flexible in their approach to work that is undertaken to ensure that colleagues remain actively working and that required work and tasks are completed;

(b) whether you will be required to work from home for all your contracted hours or whether you may need to spend some time working from home and some time working on campus;

(c) whether the University may require you to attend the campus at short notice or on a rota basis. You should inform your manager if you have any commitments, such as childcare/ caring commitments, or health related needs, which your manager will discuss with you. Your manager will make reasonable attempts to accommodate your commitments;

(d) suggestions for organising your work from home, including how you would ensure the security of documents and information and equipment requirements (see below);

(e) any changes to your work pattern or hours of work that you propose when you are working from home; which may be working your normal contractual hours at different times or days to accommodate caring responsibilities or an adjustment for other reasons;

- (f) how you, your manager and your team will keep in touch; and
- (g) work priorities.

2.4 The University accepts that not all roles are suitable for homeworking and if this is the case for your role, your manager will discuss this with you.

2.5 While working from home colleagues will need to work independently, using your own initiative to manage your workload effectively and using the creative approaches available for online collaboration and communication to enhance team effectiveness. Working practices should be adapted, including keeping in regular contact with your manager and colleagues. Use of online communication tools and video meetings can reduce potential isolation and silo working issues when not on campus. Creative approaches to virtual team activities may help to replace social interaction on campus. Colleagues are encouraged to make use of help and resources available from the University to support your physical and mental wellbeing, and will be supported to resolve any new pressures created by working at home.

2.6 While required to work from home the following will apply:

- (a) the University may stop homeworking arrangements for you at any time (reasonable notice will be given), for example if your role changes such that homeworking is no longer suitable;
- (b) performance measures, processes and objectives; however, the University acknowledges that responsibilities and objectives may need to be adjusted when you are working from home, particularly if you have been asked to undertake different duties or reprioritise your workload;
- (c) you should report any absence such as sickness in the same way as if you were on campus;
- (d) annual leave must be booked and approved by your manager in accordance with current University procedures;
- (e) working from home may affect your home and contents insurance policy, mortgage, lease or rental agreement. It is your responsibility to make any necessary arrangements with your insurers, bank, mortgage provider or landlord. You are not required to take out insurance to cover any University equipment, as this is covered under the University's insurance policies. The University will not cover any additional costs related to your own insurance premium.

2.7 While required to work from home, your terms and conditions of employment will remain the same except you may agree to change your working pattern with your manager.

Working at home: equipment

3.1 The University will provide any equipment that we consider you reasonably require to work from home and all such equipment will remain the University's property.

3.2 Should you require further or specialist equipment for health reasons, you should discuss this with your manager, who may refer you to Occupational Health so that advice can be sought on potential suitable adjustments. Any decision to purchase equipment so you can work from home must be agreed with your manager (and signed off by your Dean or Director) prior to purchase and must both follow University approval processes and be sourced via the University.

3.3 If you consider that you require additional equipment (but not for health reasons), you should discuss this with your manager. In most instances, any additional equipment (including consumables such as stationary) which you may require should be sourced from equipment already within the University or your manager may discuss alternative ways of working without the equipment which you have requested.

3.4 Where University equipment is provided you must:

- (a) use it only for the purposes for which we have provided it;
- (b) not allow family and friends to use University equipment;
- (c) take reasonable care of it and use it only in accordance with any operating instructions and our policies and procedures (see the Data Security and Health and Safety sections below); and
- (d) return equipment to a University campus or make it available for collection by us or on our behalf if requested to do so by your manager (e.g. for Portable Appliance Testing).

3.5 Should any University equipment be damaged or stolen you should inform your manager so that appropriate repairs or replacements can be arranged. In the case of theft or damage, you should also contact the University Insurance Office so that they can consider whether they can make a claim under the University's insurance arrangements.

3.6 The University appreciates that the use of technology and IT equipment is crucial to working from home but that it can also develop faults, which may lead to delays in undertaking work. In the event of equipment failing or developing a fault, you should inform your manager and utilise the IT Helpdesk (as appropriate) to get equipment fixed or replaced as quickly as possible.

3.7 The University is 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 University.

3.8 The University is not responsible for any associated costs of you working from home including, but not limited to, the costs of heating, lighting, electricity, WIFI/broadband or telephone calls (where possible all calls should be through Skype for Business). Depending on your personal circumstances, you may be able to claim tax relief, (<https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees>). If you have significant hardship or costs directly related to working from home, please discuss these with your manager. Any agreement to cover additional costs would be subject to approval by the relevant Dean or Director.

4. Working at home: data security and confidentiality

4.1 All University equipment and University information must be kept securely. You should take all necessary steps to ensure that private and confidential University material is always kept secure. Please see the [Working From Home During the Coronavirus guidance](#) on the University's [Data Protection webpages](#) and the [University IT Security webpage](#) for information on protecting yourself and the University.

4.2 All mandatory Data Protection and Information Security Awareness training required by the University should be completed. Online courses are available via the Training Library of [People Development Online](#) (new colleagues are automatically enrolled on these when joining the University).

4.3 You should, where possible, use equipment which has been provided by or authorised by the University. You agree to comply with our instructions and policies relating to software security and to implement all new updates to equipment as soon as you are requested to do so.

4.4 You should read our guidance relating to computer use, electronic communications and data security and regularly keep yourself informed of the most current version of this guidance, which is available on the [IT Security webpage](#).

4.5 If you discover or suspect that there has been an incident involving the security of information relating to the University or our students, staff, officers or suppliers you must take steps in accordance with the University [data breach reporting](#). It is essential that you report it immediately so that we can assess the situation and take prompt action to limit or prevent any potential harm or damage. You should also inform your manager.

Working at home: health and safety

5.1 While you are working, the University will take reasonable steps to look after your health, safety and welfare. This includes ensuring there are measures to reduce any hazards while you are working from home and maintaining our obligations under the Working Time Regulations.

5.2 When working at home you have the same health and safety duties as when you are based on campus. 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 (for example, consider the working times of colleagues, and try to avoid unnecessary sending of email correspondence). Any health and safety concerns should be discussed with your manager.

5.3 Guidance on home working is available via <https://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/covid-19/staff/working-remotely/>, which includes a link to NHS guidance on setting up your workspace to avoid physical strain. Further information on work station assessments (DSE assessments) can be found on the [Health and Safety A-Z](#).

5.5 In accordance with Health and Safety Executive requirements, there may be circumstances such as the nature of the work undertaken or concerns about your health and safety, where the University considers it necessary to check home working areas for health and safety purposes. Reasonable notice of such inspections will be given.

5.6 To ensure your privacy and security, where possible telephone calls should be via a system such as Teams, Skype, or similar platforms approved by the University. It should also not be necessary to have face to face meetings in your home (unless agreed with your manager).

5.7 It is important to have clear boundaries between work and home. Increased home working should not mean an increase in the time worked or inability to switch off from work. You should take adequate rest breaks (we would encourage, as is applicable to your working hours, a lunch break and regular short breaks from your workstation) and you should be mindful of the number of hours you are working. If you have concerns about your hours or arrangements, discuss these with your manager.

5.8 Whilst working from home your manager will maintain regular contact, scheduling virtual one to ones and team meetings. If you begin to feel that your mental health and wellbeing is being adversely affected or if you have other concerns such as a musculoskeletal problem, discuss this with your manager.

Reviewed December 2020