

## WITHAM AND HUMBER DRAINAGE BOARDS

*Four independent statutory Land Drainage and Flood Risk Management Authorities working in partnership.*



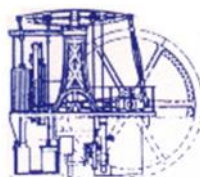
Witham First District IDB

[www.witham-1st-idb.gov.uk](http://www.witham-1st-idb.gov.uk)



Upper Witham IDB

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Witham Third District

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North East Lindsey

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### Homeworking policy

<b>Background</b>	The 4 Boards will provide support and assistance to employees who are required to work from home.
<b>Statement</b>	Employees may undertake some of their work duties away from one of the Board's workplaces or away from their normal place of work, for a number of reasons and with varying degrees of frequency. However, all staff will have a designated place of work [base] which is not their home.
<b>Responsibilities</b>	<p>Chief Executive for Implementing the scheme and ensuring that employees have necessary information.</p> <p>Senior Management Team, Line Managers to ensure that employees have the necessary information and equipment.</p> <p>HR Lead and Senior management team to review application of and revision of the policy</p>
<b>Training</b>	HR Lead to offer support, guidance and training in the most appropriate approach
<b>Equality and Diversity</b>	This policy aims to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and ensure that no employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, transgender, civil partnership/marital status, appearance, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, religion/belief or no religion/belief, disability, age, carer, pregnancy or maternity, social status or trade union membership.
<b>Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA)</b>	Local Policy in Line with ADA Lincolnshire Branch White Book, Wages and Salaries and Conditions of Service, 2020
<b>Dissemination</b>	Boards Websites
<b>Version</b>	V2
<b>Approval Date</b>	Joint Services Committee – 20.07.20
<b>Review Date</b>	Within 3 years of approval, or as and when policy guidance changes

The Prime Minister announced a lockdown restriction in England due to the COVID-19 Pandemic on 23rd March 2020 informing everyone to work from home where possible. Currently the Prime Minister has announced plans to gradually restart the economy and ease lockdown restrictions in England from 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020. Continued social distancing will remain at the core the plan to get the UK back to work, as well as making workplaces 'Covid-19 secure.' People in England who cannot work from home, for example manufacturing and construction workers, should 'be encouraged to return to work'. But the Government has requested that those 'who can work from home should

continue to do so for the foreseeable future'. It is important to prepare our 4 Boards' business and teams for a longer period of working predominantly from home for those who are usually based in Witham House and for different ways of working for our Operatives [e.g. single cab usage]. We have put together a home working pack with some practical for guidance for employers, for where we are now, bearing in mind that continued homeworking wherever possible is part of the Government's current plan.

## **1. Introduction**

There are two main categories of homeworking:

- occasional/ad hoc homeworking: this arises in relation to specific pieces of work or for specific periods. It does not follow a regular pattern, is combined with working from the employee's normal Board's workplace and is subject to the prior approval of a line manager. It may be granted as part of a phased return to work after maternity or sickness absence, or be a temporary arrangement due to adverse weather, travel issues, family commitments or domestic circumstances
- regular homeworking: this is an agreement between the Board and the employee to work the working week from home, or a combination of homeworking and attendance at a Board workplace, on a regular and on-going basis.

Whatever the circumstances leading to a situation where Boards' employees have been granted permission or recruited to work from home, this policy applies and all employees must comply with the requirements set out below.

## **2. Eligibility**

Employees are eligible to apply for homeworking in the following circumstances:

- where the employee has successfully completed the probationary period attached to their job role
- where the employee's role does not involve supervisory duties that require undertaking in person alongside the team members involved
- no aspect of the employee's recent appraisal was marked as unsatisfactory
- the employee's disciplinary record is clean.

Applications for homeworking will only be considered where the employee's line manager is satisfied that the needs of the business can continue to be met while the employee works from home. Homeworking must be cost-effective and ensure that there is no significant increase in workload on colleagues. The work done by the employee must be capable of being done from home. The line manager may liaise with the HR Lead in relation to applications for homeworking, to confirm the arrangements.

## **3. Making homeworking applications**

Employees that wish to apply for homeworking, either permanently or on a temporary basis, should submit a request in writing to their line manager.

Homeworking may invalidate an employee's home contents insurance policy. Employees are required to check the policy prior to applying and, if successful, provide a copy of the policy wording and schedule to their line manager if their application is granted.

## **4. Occasional/ad hoc homeworking applications**

The application should set out the reasons for requesting homeworking. Examples may include a project or set of tasks that requires peace and quiet and a lack of interruptions. A backlog of tasks or a major project may also give rise to an employee wishing to request homeworking. There may be family commitments such as the long-term illness of a relative or dependant. There could be issues relating to the recovery from mental or physical illnesses which may make a request for homeworking conducive to the smooth recovery of the employee. Various transport considerations may give rise to a request for homeworking.

## **5. Regular homeworking applications**

Prior to making an application, employees must discuss their proposed application with their line manager. In such a discussion, the employee should consider the following aspects of the formal application and discuss any issues arising from the points below with their line manager informally. Once a discussion has been held by the employee's line manager, the employee should submit a formal application, which should address the following points:

- confirmation that the employee can fulfil their role responsibilities for homeworking
- the date from which the arrangements are intended to start
- the proposed number of days to work from home - the whole working week, or only certain days
- proposed hours of work
- the proposed organisation of the home working environment - available separate room, security arrangements for Boards' equipment and the Boards' materials/documentation
- extent of availability to attend the workplace, for meetings, cover for colleague absences etc
- how the employee proposes that contact will be maintained with their line manager.

As part of the application, employees will be required to demonstrate how they will achieve the following:

- managing workload independently
- self-motivation and working to own initiative
- adapting to the different working practices involved
- problem-solving and different pressures associated with working alone
- adapting to different methods of being line managed and liaising with colleagues.

## **6. Application decisions**

Line managers should aim to respond to a formal request for homeworking within a week of the application being received.

Line managers will meet with the employee to discuss the issues arising from the request. It may be necessary to arrange a home visit to carry out a risk assessment.

## **7. Accepted applications**

If the line manager accepts the employee's request, written confirmation will be provided, and a Homeworking Agreement will be issued for the employee to sign and return.

## **8. Rejected applications**

If the line manager is unable to accept the employee's request, the reasons for the rejection will be issued in writing to the employee. The employee may appeal the decision within 5 working days of the decision being issued. The reasons for the appeal should be set out in writing.

## **9. Homeworking agreements and trial period**

Accepted requests will be subject to the signing of a Homeworking Agreement and the successful completion of a trial period.

The aim of the trial period is for both the employee and the Board to evaluate whether the new working arrangements set out in the Homeworking Agreement work as expected.

At the end of the trial period, the line manager will meet with the employee to evaluate the success of the trial. The line manager will determine whether the trial has been successful and confirm that the Homeworking Agreement may continue. During the trial period, or at the evaluation meeting, either side may propose reasonable amendments to the terms of the Homeworking Agreement to facilitate a smoother working arrangement. The Boards reserve the right to terminate the Homeworking Agreement by declaring the trial has not been successful if proposed amendments are unreasonable, unworkable, no amendments can be implemented or the employee's work output, quality, oversight etc has suffered to the detriment of the Board.

#### **10. Homeworking agreement**

The homeworking agreement drawn up during the application process, and bespoke to the employee's circumstances, sets out the terms of the arrangement for the employee to work from home. It will reflect the following points, subject to any modification agreed during the trial, as well as the practical considerations to enable the homeworking to operate smoothly:

- the Boards reserve the right to terminate the homeworking arrangement at any time for any reason on reasonable notice
- employees are required to be available during the core hours specified in their homeworking agreement
- if any issue arises that causes an employee to no longer meet the eligibility criteria at the outset of this policy, the Boards will review the homeworking arrangement and may terminate it on reasonable notice
- the homeworking arrangements will be subject to regular review
- employees working from home will be expected to attend meetings and other office-based events as and when required by their line manager
- employees working from home are required to comply with Board policies, including holiday, performance targets, sickness, absence etc.

#### **11. Homeworking practical arrangements**

11.1 The Board supplies homeworkers with the necessary equipment relevant to their job role. The equipment remains the Board's property and will be installed and removed at the Board's cost. The 4 Boards' staff may need to attend the employee's home to update, maintain or repair/replace the equipment and will give the employee reasonable notice of the need for this.

11.2 Employees should take reasonable care of the Boards' equipment and only use it for Boards' business. IT and telephony equipment may only be used in accordance with the Board's general data protection policies.

11.3 Personal equipment that an employee uses for work purposes remains their responsibility and the Board is not liable for any loss, damage, repair or replacement of any personal equipment. If an item of equipment is deemed necessary for work, the employee should contact their line manager.

11.4 Employees should maintain regular contact with their line manager so that the Board can work towards early resolution of any problems. This applies to problems with Board equipment and also in relation to the ongoing suitability of the homeworking arrangement; pressures and stress occur equally to homeworkers as they do to those

working at the Board's offices and the Board encourages the early reporting of these issues so that practical steps can be considered and implemented to the mutual agreement of both the homeworker and the line manager.

11.5 The costs of electricity, water, heating, telephone, broadband and other utilities will not be covered by the Board. These costs will remain the employee's responsibility. (Please note HMRC COVID-19 pandemic arrangements).

11.6 Employees must always keep Board data and Board materials safe and secure, ensuring reasonable precautions are being taken to maintain confidentiality in accordance with the GDPR policy.

11.7 Employees should refrain from revealing to customers/clients that they work from home. Employees must not provide their personal address or personal contact details customers/clients, or third parties associated with the Board. Meetings between customers/clients and employees at home are prohibited. All communications should be routed through the 4 Boards' workplaces.

## 12. **Schedule**

### **12.1 Health and safety for homeworkers**

The Board's health and safety policies applies to homeworkers. Employees should refer to the separate health and safety policies for more details. Homeworkers are required to comply with several health and safety considerations in respect of the space utilised as their workplace in their home environment.

### **12.2 Risk assessment**

A risk assessment will be undertaken to determine any relevant risks and to prevent harm to the homeworker or anyone else who may be affected by their work, in respect of the workplace itself and the working arrangements. Workplaces may need to be re-assessed from time to time as the homeworking arrangement proceeds. The Boards may require self-assessment of some aspects of the workplace and training may be provided as necessary. Any steps necessary from these various risk assessments will be undertaken to ensure the homeworker has a safe workplace.

A specific risk assessment will be undertaken for employees who inform the Board that they are pregnant. For this to take place, homeworking employees who become pregnant should notify their line manager of their pregnancy immediately. More details about what to do are available in the 4 Boards' policies on Pregnancy and Maternity.

### **12.3 Electrical equipment**

Homeworkers are required to use all equipment supplied by the Boards safely and in accordance with best practice and manufacturer's guidelines. The Boards will check all Boards' electrical equipment for safety. Homeworkers will be responsible for any other electrical equipment used by them in their work activities and will continue to be responsible for the safety of electrical sockets and wiring in their home.

### **12.4 Working hours**

Employees are responsible for ensuring they complete their working hours as defined in their contracts of employment. Each employee shall agree with their line manager how they complete hours of work each day and between what agreed core hours.

### **12.5 Working time**

Employees are responsible for ensuring they take their rest breaks as defined in their contracts of employment. Working time should be monitored and rest breaks of at least 20 minutes for every six hours of working should be taken.

#### **12.6 First aid**

Employees are covered under the 4 Boards' accident insurance policies in their home. Accidents must be reported immediately to the nominated person set out in the Board Health and Safety Policy. Employees are referred to this policy which contains details on the health and safety obligations including RIDDOR, HACCP and COSHH.

#### **12.7 Hazardous substances**

The safety of any substances provided by the Boards to the homeworker will be suitably labelled with the appropriate information supplied in relation to any substances which are hazardous to health, so that employees can identify these.

#### **12.8 Positioning of equipment**

Training on the ergonomic positioning of IT equipment will be provided during the implementation of the homeworking arrangement, together with best practice guidance on breaks. The Boards will provide checklists for this for the benefit of employees.