CITY OF GLASGOW COLLEGE

Homeworking Guide for Staff

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Introduction

City of Glasgow College recognises that home working is a positive and modern approach to work which will support the physical and mental wellbeing of staff. It may be a viable option for both the college and the individual member of staff in specific job roles.

The College also acknowledges that some staff will have to work at least partially from home, potentially for many months, due to the COVID-19 pandemic even if that would not be their preferred location for carrying out their role.

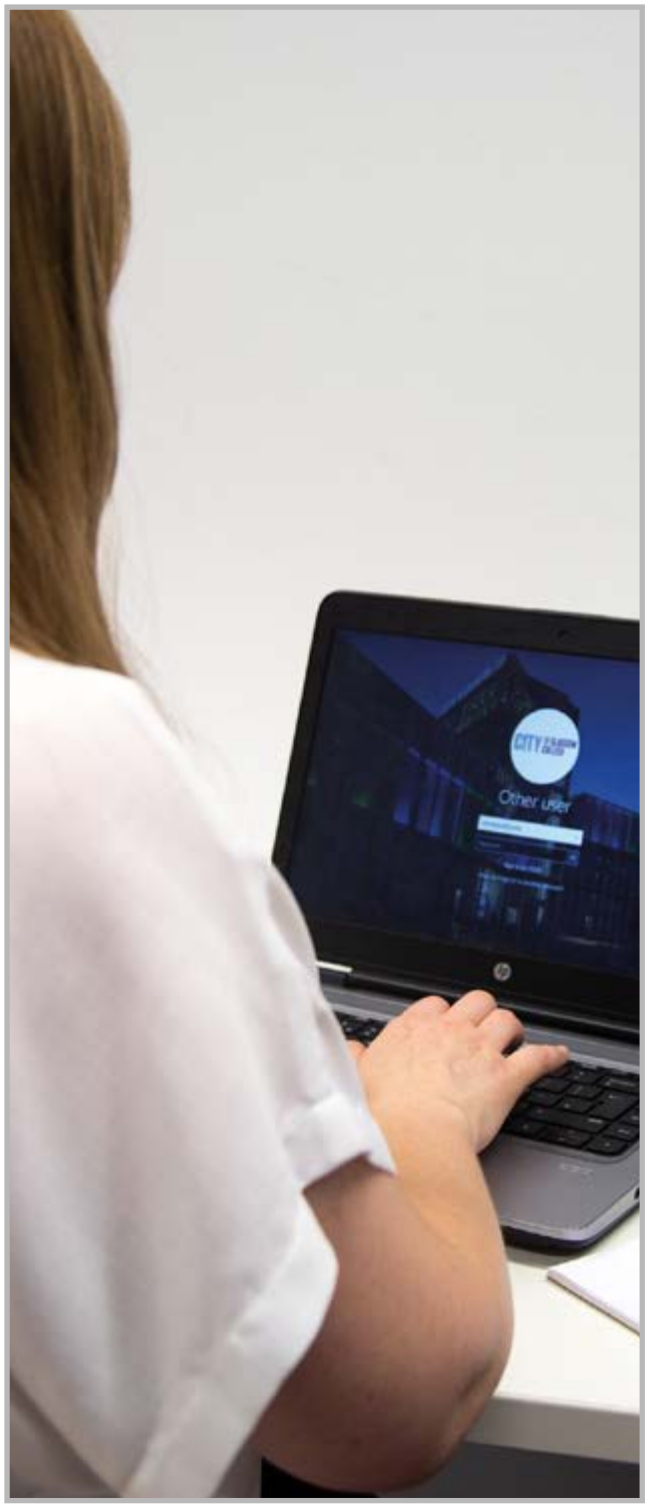
Home working may not be suitable for all job roles or all staff and will be considered on a case by case basis. All requests for home working will be given fair and reasonable consideration in line with the current flexible working request process.

Home working may be a regular and substantial proportion of the working week for some staff or it may be that the staff member uses home working on an ad-hoc basis to complete a specific task or on a regular basis for part of their working week. City of Glasgow College recognises home working for staff under four categories:

- Temporary working from home (Covid 19)
- Permanently working from home
- Predominantly working from home
- Periodically working from home

Any type of home working would be part of a flexible approach to undertaking an identified role and consideration will be given to individual circumstances.

Homeworking arrangements will be reviewed on a regular basis and both the staff member and the College will be adaptable and flexible to changing circumstances. If it is the College view that a homeworking arrangement is not satisfactory, the College may require the member of staff to work from College premises for more or all of their working week. The staff member may also request that a homeworking arrangement is reviewed if their circumstances have changed.



Purpose and Aims

The purpose of this guide is to set out the criteria and arrangements for home working and to provide a framework for a consistent approach.

This guide is designed to support staff through increased flexibility and a recognition of the importance of work-life balance and their physical and mental wellbeing.

This guide also sets out our approach to homeworking during the coronavirus outbreak whilst the Government has instructed everyone to work from home, wherever possible.

Scope

This guide applies to all City of Glasgow College employees. It is important to note however that home working will not be suitable for all either due to the requirements of their role or their own personal circumstances.

Home working may be appropriate (not an exhaustive list):

- to catch up on work that requires quiet time, free from distractions
- to reduce unnecessary travel if the employee lives a long distance from their normal place of work
- to avoid travelling in bad weather conditions if getting to the employee's normal work place would be unsafe or not practical
- to avoid travelling into work if the employee is ill/injured but still able to work
- during circumstances where the college advises on a restricted capacity in the building eg such as advised by the Government during phases of Covid-19
- as part of reasonable adjustments

Home working may not be appropriate if (not an exhaustive list):

- service levels will be substantially negatively affected including impact on students/support
- the nature of the work cannot be carried out remotely e.g. technology doesn't allow for this, a front facing role, resources only available on campus etc.
- the alternative work location is not deemed appropriate for the nature of the work being carried out
- the staff member wants to work from home as an alternative to permanent carer responsibilities
- leadership or supervision is required that cannot be carried out from home

Definitions

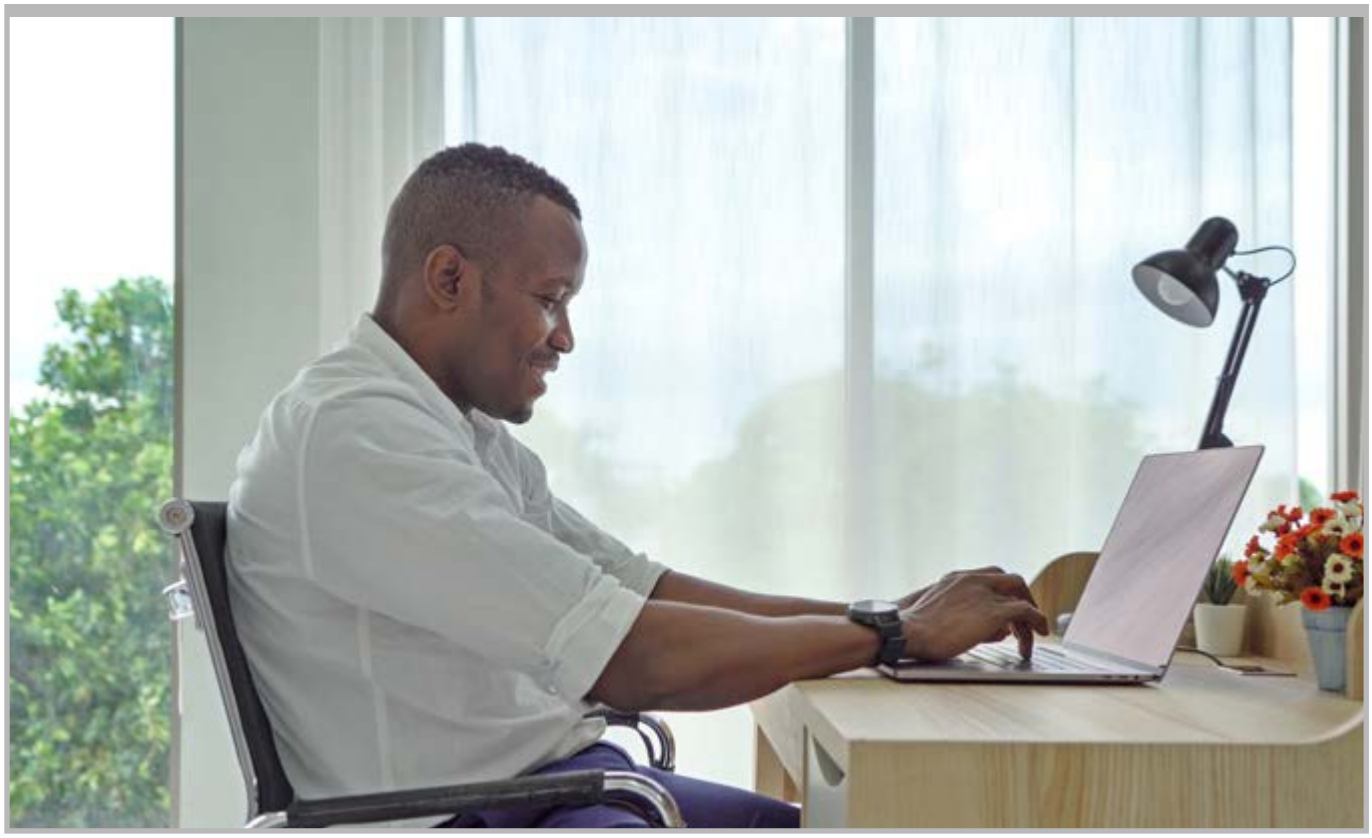
Temporary Home Working (Covid 19): When staff members are advised to work from home by the College for a period of time e.g. following Government advice during the phases of Covid-19. The contract of employment states that staffs' *normal place of work will be either the City or Riverside Campus. However, you may be required to work at any College Campus, or at other locations/venues, as the College may from time to time reasonably require or subject to operational requirements.*

In this situation the employee uses part of their home as a workstation on a temporary basis. Arrangements will be made for equipment to be accessed from home where required. (Please see Section 5.6 & 5.7 for the responsibilities for staff and line managers during periods of Temporary Home Working).

Permanent home working: When a staff member undertakes all of their working week working from home. The employee uses part of their home as a workstation with no need for the College to provide a dedicated workstation in campus.

Predominant home working: When a staff member spends a regular and substantial proportion of their working week working from home. The employee uses part of their home as a workstation. The College may provide a dedicated workstation in campus but this would be considered on an individual case basis.

Periodic home working: This is when an employee uses part of their home as a workstation on an ad-hoc basis to complete a specific task or on a regular basis but for a minor part of their working time. This would include off-site working for Lecturing staff. It is likely that the College would need to provide access to a workstation within campus.



Responsibilities

The HR Department will provide consistent advice and support about home working.

Employees will:

- Advise their own insurer of the revised working arrangements and obtain confirmation from their home insurance company that appropriate insurance cover is in place.
- Complete homeworking risk assessments and complete home-working safety checklists as required by line management.
- Carry out basic user checks for electrical safety on college equipment in line with training and instruction provided.
- Report any damage, defects or significant “wear and tear” to equipment provided by the College at the earliest opportunity.
- Take reasonable steps to prevent damage to equipment to facilitate working from home.
- Deliver any equipment requested by the IT department for repair, modification or PAT testing.
- Ensure security of work-related personal information in line with GDPR.
- Be responsible for making appropriate home working related HMRC claims.
- Have the same expectations placed on them in terms of conduct and output as if they were working in a college campus.
- Be subject to the same rules, procedures and expected standard of conduct and performance as when they were working on college campus. Continue to adhere to all college policies including IT policies, the Staff Code of Conduct and the Professional Standards for Lecturers if applicable.
- Be open to regular communication from the college, particularly their line manager, on a professional work basis, regarding their physical and mental wellbeing and/or their workload.
- Inform their line manager if they require any support around their physical and mental wellbeing.

Line managers will:

- Regularly check in with staff regarding their physical and mental wellbeing and take appropriate supportive steps.
- Ensure that sufficient management arrangements are in place to support staff working from home. This will include ensuring staff are not isolated, that any risks to health and safety can be adequately controlled, and that regular supervision and team meeting arrangements are in place.
- Give reasonable consideration to all requests for home working.
- Ensure that home working arrangements are in line with this guide and regular conversations take place to review the home working arrangements.
- Ensure that all the health and safety implications of home- working are subject to a suitable and sufficient risk assessment and that all significant risks can be adequately controlled prior to the authorisation of home working.
- Ensure that their staff are aware of the need to secure work-related personal information in line with GDPR.

Responsibilities (cont.)

If a role has been identified as suitable for permanent or predominant home working the college will:

- Provide and maintain appropriate equipment to allow or home working to take place safely.
- Identify a minimum standard of work equipment subject to individual requirements.
- Provide third party public and private liability and cover for equipment provided by the college.
- Make home visits for risk assessments where appropriate.

The college may provide and maintain some equipment to allow periodic home working to take place safely. Each case will be viewed on an individual basis and the staff member may be responsible for providing some equipment.

If staff members are working from home on a temporary basis for reasons as described earlier in this guide they should:

- Be open to regular communication from the college, particularly their line manager, on a professional work basis, regarding their physical and mental wellbeing and/or their workload.
- Complete homeworking risk assessments, DSE assessments and home-working safety checklists as required by line management.
- Inform their line manager if they require any equipment and materials.
- Make their line manager aware if they are using their own equipment and materials.
- Be subject to the same rules, procedures and expected standard of conduct and performance as when they were working on college campus. Continue to adhere to all college policies including IT policies, the Staff Code of Conduct and the Professional Standards for Lecturers if applicable.
- Inform their line manager if they require any support around their physical and mental wellbeing

Line Managers will:

- Regularly check in with staff regarding their physical and mental wellbeing and take appropriate supportive steps.
- Ensure that sufficient management arrangements are in place to support staff working from home. This will include ensuring staff are not isolated, that any risks to health and safety can be adequately controlled, and that regular supervision and team meeting arrangements are in place.
- Ensure that all the health and safety implications of home- working are subject to a suitable and sufficient risk assessment and that all significant risks can be adequately controlled.
- Ensure that their staff are aware of the need to secure work-related personal information in line with GDPR.

The College will provide, where possible, equipment and materials staff need to enable them to work effectively at home for the duration of the temporary working home working arrangement.

Home Working Parameters

Considering a home working request

When reviewing a request for home, managers should consider the following questions:

- Will the staff member be able to give the same level of productivity?
- Is the request for home working permanent, predominant or periodic?
- Is home working appropriate to the role and role level?
- Will other employees be able to contact the staff member?
- Will there be any negative impacts on the staff member's ability to perform and deliver at the required standard? What are these impacts and how they may be addressed?
- Does the staff member require specific equipment/systems to deliver their role? Would these items be available elsewhere?
- Does the employee manage a team? If so, can an appropriate presence be maintained at team meetings, supervisory responsibilities be undertaken etc. and what support might the team need in their manager's absence?
- Will there be additional costs to the business? E.g. if the staff member is requesting a laptop, mobile phone etc.

The wellbeing of the staff member should be considered when agreeing conditions for home-working and encouragement should be given to complete the "Working from home – Your wellbeing Action Plan"

Home environment and facilities

- The home environment must be suitable for the purposes of home- working, meet minimum health and safety standards and not pose significant risks to the health and safety of employees and others.
- When staff are working from home the focus of their attention should be on working matters however, staff have autonomy to flexibly manage their diary to suit their role.
- Line managers are responsible for ensuring that staff workload is reasonable.
- Normally, staff should not have the role of principal carer while working from home. The college recognises that the situation with COVID-19 is not normal and this point will become more applicable post COVID-19 restrictions.
- Staff are required to ensure that they use all work equipment safely and that they take reasonable care for their own safety. They must also be aware of the risks that working from home may pose to others such as family members (including children).
- Staff will be required to complete such health and safety training in relation to home working that the college deems necessary.
- Staff using computer equipment will complete the online Display Screen Equipment (DSE) training course to enable them to understand the risks to health and safety involved in DSE work and the steps that they need to take to control these risks. The Health and Safety team will provide access and support if required.
- Staff must complete a self-assessment of their home workstation to ensure that it is correctly set up and to identify any additional equipment required for safe working.
- The DSE training and workstation assessment will normally be refreshed every 2 years as a minimum, however the self- assessment may be required to be reviewed by the employee sooner if circumstances change.
- Specific advice and support on working from home and reasonable adjustments will be given for disabled workers.
- Staff are required to report all work- related incidents, involving themselves or others, to their line manager without delay using the College online accident incident management system. Serious incidents should be reported without delay by phone if possible.

Home Working Parameters (cont.)

Meetings at home

- Face to face meetings should never take place at home
- Students should never meet with staff at their homes.

Agreements for homeworking

- The line manager, with support from HR, must confirm details of the permanent or periodic homeworking arrangements to the employee in writing.
- Home working arrangements should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure the arrangement is still appropriate for both the staff member and the college.

Provisions for periodic home working

Employees should agree periodic home working arrangements with their line manager and for lecturing staff this should be in line with the parameters of off-site working.

Provisions concerning permanent or predominant home working

- A member of SMT (Dean/Director) must sign off before any post can be designated as eligible for permanent or predominant home working.
- An account of what materials will be provided, and costs funded by the College should be signed off by the member of SMT. Associated costs must be considered when making decisions about home working.
- Line Managers must reflect on the importance of team working before proposing that a post is suitable for permanent or predominant home working.
- Line Managers will ensure that a risk assessment is carried out prior to the approval of home-working. For most office-based work this is considered to be lower hazard activity and will generally be achieved by completing the home working safety checklist. However, where home- working may be considered for medium to higher hazard work then a more substantial risk assessment may be required. The Health and Safety Team will provide advice and support for such risk assessments
- A permanent or predominant home working arrangement may be ended at the employees request following agreement from a member of SMT

The College may end a home working agreement where the reason for change relates, for example, to:

- Organisational change.
- Conduct of the employee.
- Capability of the employee.
- The home environment is no longer suitable for securing the health and safety of the employee or others.
- The ill health of the employee.
- The health and safety of the employee.
- This is not an exhaustive list.

Wellbeing and Safety

Staff wellbeing is of the utmost importance to the College and there is an understanding that it may take time for the employee to find an approach that allows them to balance the demands of work and family life. Further information on both Physical Health and Mental Wellbeing and the resources available to all staff can be found at-
Staff Resource Hub Health and Wellbeing

Working Patterns

While staff are working from home, they may not be subject to fixed hours and may be free to perform contractual hours at times that suit them. However, there are core hours during which they will need to be available dependent on their role and the need to provide services. These core hours will be discussed and agreed with the line manager.

Staff should be mindful that they are not overworking due to the constant access to technology. “Downtime” from work is essential.

To help maintain wellbeing, staff should ensure that they take adequate rest breaks as they would while physically at the college.

Communication

Good lines of communication are essential when staff are working from home, to support communication and to prevent potential feeling of isolation when not on Campus:

- Staff should consider all lines of communication, including email, telephone and video calls to ensure relationships are maintained and work continues.
- Be as clear as possible with their line manager and colleagues about their hours of work. (Making use of tools such as shared calendars and out-of-office messaging)
- Continue with collaborative working practices and interact regularly with colleagues

Health & Safety

- Staff should make their line manager aware of any wellbeing or Health & Safety concerns they have and discuss their workstation and if they are able to work in a safe manner.
- There is a Home Worker Health & Safety Checklist available through the Staff Resource Hub that should be completed. Guidance is also available on DSE workstation setup and achieving comfortable posture, this can be found at -
  Staff Resource Hub Health and Wellbeing
- If having completed the Health & Safety Checklist and carried out the actions as described in the guidance available on the Staff Resource Hub, staff are in discomfort or are concerned about Health & Safety Hazards due to working from home they must notify their line manager, line manager may need to seek advice from People Services to look into what action can be taken.
- Employees should follow the usual reporting procedures for any work-related accidents that occur in their home.

Sickness Absence

If staff are sick and unable to work, the college’s sickness absence policy and procedure will apply in these circumstances.

Associated Policies

- IT Acceptable Use Policy
- Using your own device (UYOD) Policy
- EDI Policy

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