Home Working Policy

Policy Created: August 2023

Last Reviewed: February 2026

Next Review: February 2027 (or sooner if significant changes in legislation, guidance, or organisational activities occur)

Reviewed by: Laurence Clark

Responsible Officer: CEO

Approved by: CEO

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1. Introduction and Commitment

Pathways Associates CIC is a disabled-led Community Interest Company dedicated to enabling people with learning disabilities, autistic people, and their families to live the lives they choose as equals in their local communities.

The organisation is committed to flexible, hybrid working arrangements that support work-life balance, wellbeing, and productivity while ensuring safe, inclusive home environments. This policy outlines eligibility, data security, set-up, expenses, access, performance, and health & safety for home working, recognising the benefits for staff, associates, and the organisation.

As of February 2026, this policy aligns with current HSE guidance on home and hybrid working (updated post-COVID to focus on mental health, DSE assessments, and risk management), ACAS flexible working codes, and best practice for small organisations. It emphasises accessibility for disabled staff and promotes positive mental health. This policy supports our Health and Safety Policy (risk assessments), Infection Control Policy (hygiene in home setups), Equality and Diversity Policy (reasonable adjustments), Mental Capacity Act Policy (decision-making support), Information Governance and Data Protection Policy (secure remote access), and Corporate Responsibility Policy (ethical management).

It reflects our values of led by lived experience (feedback from Experts by Experience on home setups), partnership (collaborating with staff on arrangements), inclusion and respect (accessible, non-discriminatory practices), innovation (flexible hybrid tools), and integrity (transparent monitoring and support).

We commit to enabling home working where suitable, providing necessary support, and regularly reviewing arrangements to promote wellbeing and equality.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all home or hybrid working arrangements, including full-time remote, part-time office attendance (e.g., three days in office), or flexible setups. It covers health & safety, equipment, data security, and performance. The policy applies to employees, associates, consultants, freelancers, and Experts by Experience in paid roles. It does not cover purely office-based roles or external venues (refer to Meeting Room Policy).

3. Key Objectives

The organisation aims to enable flexible home working that enhances productivity and wellbeing while minimising risks. It seeks to ensure safe, ergonomic home setups with regular assessments, provide equitable support including reasonable adjustments, maintain secure data handling and performance standards, comply with HSE, ACAS, and employment laws, and foster a supportive culture with open communication and mental health resources.

4. Core Principles

Home working is voluntary and role-dependent, with arrangements reviewed regularly to suit business needs and individual circumstances. Accessibility is prioritised through reasonable adjustments for disabled staff. Health & safety focuses on physical and mental wellbeing, with proactive risk management. Data security is non-negotiable, with remote access following best practice. Performance is managed fairly, without disadvantage for home workers. Work-life balance is promoted through core hours, breaks, and no out-of-hours expectations.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The CEO holds overall accountability for policy compliance and resources. Line managers assess suitability for home working, conduct risk assessments, provide support, and monitor performance/wellbeing. The IT/Communications lead (Liam Vernon) advises on data security and technical setup. All home workers must complete risk assessments, follow security protocols, report issues promptly, and maintain work-life balance. The Board reviews policy effectiveness annually.

6. Procedures

6.1 Eligibility and Arrangements All staff, associates, and consultants are eligible for home working if their role allows (e.g., remote delivery, admin). Arrangements are agreed via contract or flexible working request, with trials if needed. Hybrid models (e.g., 2-3 office days) are standard, based on team needs. Reviews occur annually or on change (e.g., health needs).

6.2 Data Security Refer to Information Governance and Data Protection Policy for full details. Home workers must use secure networks (VPN if sensitive data), password-protect devices, and avoid public Wi-Fi. Data breaches are reported immediately to the DPO. IT support includes remote diagnostics and secure access guidance.

6.3 Set-Up and Equipment The organisation provides laptops, monitors, and ergonomic accessories for employees (via Access to Work if adjustments needed). Freelancers provide their own but can claim via self-assessment. Set-up costs (e.g., broadband contribution) are reimbursed for employees. Risk assessments cover workstation setup, with self-assessment tools provided.

6.4 Expenses Employees can claim home office allowances (e.g., £6/week HMRC flat rate or actuals for heating/lighting). Freelancers claim via self-assessment. Travel expenses follow standard policy. No charges for organisation-provided equipment.

6.5 Employer Access and Monitoring Regular check-ins occur via phone/video (weekly for remote staff). Performance is monitored fairly through outputs, not presence. Home visits are only for risk assessments with consent. IT access is for support only, with privacy respected.

6.6 Performance Management Home workers receive the same opportunities for training, development, and promotion. Performance is assessed on results, with regular feedback. Sickness/absence reporting follows standard procedures.

6.7 Health and Safety Refer to Health and Safety Policy for full details. Home workers complete annual self-assessments covering DSE, slips/trips, electrical safety, and emergencies. Support includes ergonomic advice and adjustments. Accidents are reported under RIDDOR if work-related.

6.8 Stress, Mental Health, and Work-Life Balance Wellbeing is prioritised with regular check-ins, access to EAP, and stress risk assessments. Home workers are encouraged to take breaks, use annual leave, and disconnect outside hours. The HSE Talking Toolkit is used for conversations. Support covers work or personal stressors, with referrals to occupational health if needed.

7. Training, Awareness, and Support

Annual home working training covers DSE, security, and wellbeing (accessible formats). Induction includes policy briefing. Resources like HSE guides are provided. Support is available via managers or external helplines.

8. Monitoring, Review, and Continuous Improvement

Policy reviewed annually or on changes. Monitoring via assessments, feedback, and incident logs. Learning co-produced with Experts by Experience. Feedback welcomed; annual summaries in CIC report.

9. Conclusion

Pathways Associates CIC is committed to home working that empowers staff and advances our mission. By ensuring safety, security, and support, we foster an inclusive, flexible culture aligned with our disabled-led values.