

Hybrid Working Policy

Introduction

Open Awards is committed to flexible working, with the aim of meeting the needs of both the organisation and employees. This is however not a contractual entitlement.

Other types of flexible working (such as amended hours) are not automatically part of this agreement on working from home or hybrid working. Please refer to the relevant policies.

This policy has been agreed in consultation with Open Awards and is subject to an annual review.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually for the next three years and then a further formal consultation will be undertaken. All employees will be involved in the reviews although more weight will be given to those employees directly affected.

Definitions

Some Open Awards employees have contracts of employment that specifically state that they are remote workers. They are not affected by this policy.

Open Awards will seek to ensure all roles are considered for hybrid working; and all new roles will be assessed for hybrid working. Equally staff who wish to work in the office five days a week (Monday – Friday) should discuss that with their line manager at the earliest opportunity.

Hybrid working

This applies to employees whose 'usual' place of work would be the Open Awards office but under this policy they will split work between home and the office. The office will continue as the main place of work, with no travel expenses being paid to attend the office.

Colleagues can choose to attend the office on the days that the office is open. Colleagues must attend on the days they are rota'd and with the exception of annual and exceptional work pressures this will not be for more than three days a week.

Open Awards will seek to accommodate individual requests where possible.

Equality

Open Awards will treat staff fairly and equally. We will not disadvantage anyone who is working from home or hybrid working.

Wherever an employee is working, they will have access to:

- support
- opportunities – for training, development and promotion

Line managers will communicate regularly with everyone they manage. An employee will not be excluded from anything because of where they work.

Open Awards will use technology to make sure everyone can take part in conversations, meetings and activities.

If an employee is disabled, Open Awards will make reasonable adjustments when they are in the workplace and working remotely.

Requests

Open Awards is seeking to have office attendance on standard days (Monday – Wednesday – Friday).

Colleagues asking to alter this office attendance pattern should apply in writing and explain why they are making the request – for example, if they are a disabled person asking for a reasonable adjustment. A formal Lone Working Risk Assessment must be completed before any request can be agreed.

If colleagues wish to submit a formal flexible working request, refer to the Open Awards flexible working policy.

Working Environment

Open Awards will assess whether the home (or other location) is suitable for work.

Health and Safety

Open Awards will provide guidance on health and safety for you to take account of whilst working from home. Additionally we will ask you to undertake an annual DSE

self-assessment for your home working station, as well as your office workstation An appropriate checklist will be provided.

Home Risk assessments must be conducted by staff themselves and returned to their line manager when requested. Guidance can be obtained from line managers, the Finance and Resources Director or the Open Awards Health & Safety representative.

Laptops and chargers must undergo Portable Appliance testing and be returned on designated PAT testing days as advised. Visual inspections can be carried out on a regular basis and any issues with equipment reported to Open Awards IT department as soon as possible.

Moving Home

Employees must notify their line manager and Finance department of any change of address and a new DSE risk assessment will be required. Similarly any temporary work location other than your home address must be pre-approved by your line manager.

Data Protection/Confidentiality

Open Awards colleagues working at home must ensure that they are able to meet the conditions within their contract of employment regarding security and privacy.

Care must be taken to ensure paperwork is not taken home unless necessary. If it is it must be locked away when not in use and shredded when no longer needed or returned to the office for shredding.

Colleagues must ensure that information is not shared with people who are not Open Awards employees.

Colleagues must ensure that they have a suitable and secure internet connection. Open Awards laptops must be used for work related purposes only and only by Open Awards staff. Laptop screens should be 'locked' when left unattended.

If the Risk Assessment identifies any concerns Open Awards will work with colleagues to address those concerns. However, if concerns are not addressed or cannot be addressed Open Awards reserves the right to direct staff that they must work from the Open Awards office.

Costs and Expenses

Open Awards will provide staff with a laptop and suitable monitor if deemed necessary. Paper can be provided, although this must be agreed with your line manager in advance as it not expected that colleagues will require paper. Printer

cartridges will not be provided as it is expected any printing would be done at the office.

Items that are required for health and safety reasons should be discussed with your line manager as soon as possible. Any equipment provided must be documented on the DSE checklist/Risk Assessment and recorded in the personnel file by the Line Manager.

Open Awards expects all staff provided with Open Awards equipment to keep it safely, ensure it is only used for the purpose intended and return it in good condition at the end of their employment or when otherwise directed.

It is not Open Awards policy to provide or pay for internet connection for home-working. Staff who do not have access to an Internet connection must discuss this with their line manager as soon as practical.

Mortgage, Lease and Insurance

Open Awards insurance covers equipment provided by Open Awards. Any damage or theft should be reported to your Line Manager and Director of Finance and Resources immediately. Open Awards also holds Employer Liability and Public Liability Insurance.

Employees should:

- tell their mortgage provider or landlord, and home insurer, that they intend to work from home
- check there isn't anything in their mortgage agreement, lease or home insurance that prevents them from working from home
- check with their home insurer that they are covered if work equipment causes damage
- Staff must not arrange meetings with providers or anyone on Open Awards business within your own home. This is for your own safety.

Conditional

This policy is subject to an annual review as detailed above. However, if work issues are being caused by the adoption of this policy Open Awards reserves the right to review the policy earlier. All colleagues will be involved with this review.

Open Awards Code of Conduct equally applies and it is expected that employees are working and contactable during normal office hours whilst working at home, unless agreed with their line manager.

If individuals are felt to be abusing the policy they will have their right to hybrid working reviewed and after investigation may be directed to attend the office on a full time basis. Systematic abuse may be treated as gross misconduct. Please refer to the Disciplinary and Capability procedures for more information.