

EMPLOYMENT POLICY

Homeworking

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1. Scope & Purpose

- 1.1. The Lothian Group recognises the benefits of more flexible ways of working, including where employees perform their work.
- 1.2. The purpose of this policy is to set out the procedure to be followed when requesting homeworking, and to describe the arrangements which will apply when homeworking is agreed. Homeworking may constitute a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010, in which case, requests for such adjustments must be made under the linked Flexible Working Policy and are not covered for the purposes of this policy.
- 1.3. When considering homeworking the needs of the organisation will always take priority and those who are allowed to work from home must comply with this policy.
- 1.4. This policy applies to all employees of the Lothian Group who hold roles that can be performed away from Depots (e.g., administrative and office-based roles).

2. Definitions

- 2.1. **Hybrid Working** - Hybrid working is a form of flexible working where employees spend some of their time working remotely (usually, but not necessarily from home, and sometime in the workplace).
- 2.2. **Display Screen Equipment (DSE)** – DSE are devices or equipment that have an alphanumeric or graphic display screen and includes display screens, laptops, touch screens and similar devices.
- 2.3. **Flexible Working** – Flexible Working is a type of working arrangement which gives a degree of flexibility in how long, when, and where employees work, for example, job-sharing, part-time work or compressed hours.
- 2.3. **Remote Working** – Remote working is the practice of employees carrying out their role from a location other than Lothian's on-site locations.

3. Lothian's Approach to Homeworking

- 3.1 The degree to which homeworking is available to Lothian employees is dependent on the job

role and team requirements. Due to the nature of the business operations, Lothian employees are often required to be onsite to carry out the duties of their roles. Only where exceptional circumstances apply will an application to be fully remote be approved.

- 3.2 Some of Lothian's roles are customer and/or stakeholder facing and therefore require an increased onsite presence or are unable to be conducted from home. Homeworking will be based on role requirements and not the individual.
- 3.3 There is no automatic right for employees to work from home and homeworking will be solely based on manager's discretion. Homeworking is designed to be utilised on an occasional, ad-hoc basis and not be a formal arrangement unless agreed under the Flexible Working Policy.
- 3.4 Employees must be UK based and able to attend one of Lothian's premises if required, even if this falls on a day that they had planned to work from home e.g., due to changing business needs or sickness absence.
- 3.5 Employees are responsible for ensuring they complete their working hours as defined in their contracts of employment and take rest breaks as defined in their contracts of employment.
- 3.6 During agreed working hours, employees are expected to be working and available. Employees working remotely must ensure they do so in an appropriate environment with minimal distraction.
- 3.7 All employees must make their availability known to others, and must be contactable during working hours unless agreed otherwise with their line manager. For business continuity and emergency purposes, line managers must be aware where their employees are based and that they are contactable.
- 3.8 All appraisal, probation, and development related conversations should take place in person.
- 3.9 Any arrangements agreed under this policy are not contractual changes.

4. Potential Benefits of Homeworking

- 4.1 Lothian recognises that homeworking can provide many benefits to employees and the business, such as:
 - It allows employees to manage their time more efficiently and focus more effectively on a piece of work where concentration is important resulting in increased productivity

- It reduces travel time and associated costs
- It lowers Lothian's environmental impact through reduced emissions from reduced travel to work locations
- It enhances employee work/life balance, supporting wellbeing, reducing stress, and can provide increased motivation, engagement and job satisfaction
- It can reduce absenteeism and related costs

5. Homeworking Request Procedure

- 5.1 To be eligible for homeworking, the following criteria must be met:
- Employees must have successfully passed their probationary period for the job role
 - Employees must have a suitable environment for homeworking, including a strong internet connection.
- 5.2 All requests for homeworking must be sent in writing to the line manager. Requests for homeworking will be granted 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.
- 5.3 All requests for homeworking are at the discretion of the employee's line manager. An employee's disciplinary, attendance or performance record will be taken into account when considering an application for homeworking.
- 5.4 When reviewing a request for homeworking, the line manager will usually meet with the employee as soon as possible to discuss the reasons for the request, the proposal on how this change might work, as well as any alternative arrangements where appropriate. The line manager may also consider visiting the employee's home to assess its suitability, as well as carrying out a data protection risk assessment before a decision is made.
- 5.5 Lothian reserve the right to refuse homeworking should any of the above criteria cease to apply or if other performance or wellbeing concerns arise during the period of homeworking.
- 5.6 In addition to the above criteria, an employee's line manager might also take the following into account when assessing an employee's suitability for homeworking:
- The ability to work independently
 - Self-motivation
 - Self-discipline
 - Good time management
 - The ability, through remote technology, to access materials needed and speak with

relevant stakeholders or team members when required to do so

- Being able to separate work and home life.

6. Equipment and Resources

- 6.1 Lothian will provide any equipment we consider you reasonably require to work from home and any equipment we provide will remain our property. Where equipment is provided you must:
- Use it only for the purposes for which we have provided it
 - Take reasonable care with it and use it only in accordance with any operating procedures and our policies and processes
- 6.2 Beyond equipment provided by Lothian, whenever staff are working from home, it is the responsibility of the individual to ensure they have:
- Appropriate broadband capacity
 - Lothian's remote access installed on their laptop
 - Access to an appropriate working environment
 - Diverted telephone calls from their desk phone to their mobile phone
- 6.3 It is your responsibility to ensure you have sufficient and appropriate equipment for homeworking. Lothian are 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 us.
- 6.4 Lothian are not responsible for associated costs of you working from home such as the costs of heating, lighting, and electricity.
- 6.5 When an IT or other problem prevents an employee from working effectively from home, they should contact the IT helpdesk straightaway. An employee may need to come into work until the issue has been resolved.

7. Communication and Contact

- 7.1 Employees who are homeworking are expected to be working and available during their normal working hours. When working remotely, but offline, an appropriate response message should be set for emails to indicate availability.
- 7.2 Employees must ensure their line manager has a mobile number to contact them on in the

case of emergencies.

- 7.3 Employees and the respective line managers must ensure they agree a method of communication, and a way to indicate where they are working on any given day during any agreed periods of hybrid working.
- 7.4 If you become unwell on a day you are due to work from home or are unable to work for any reason, the usual absence reporting procedures apply as detailed in Lothian's Attendance at Work Policy.

8. Health and Safety

- 8.1 Employees working from home have the same health and safety responsibilities as all other employees. Employees are required to take reasonable care of their own health and safety while working at home and should comply with Lothian's Health and Safety policy statement and follow all health and safety instructions issued.
- 8.2 Lothian retain the right to check all homeworking areas for health and safety purposes. A risk assessment may be carried out prior to homeworking to assess the employee's homeworking space including work equipment, display screen equipment, manual handling risks and first aid access.
- 8.3 There is no increased risk from display screen equipment (DSE) work for those working from home on an occasional, ad-hoc basis. However, all staff should complete a Workstation Display Screen Equipment Assessment (Appendix 1) on their remote workstation. It is up to line managers to ensure this has been completed.
- 8.4 All accidents that occur whilst working from home must be reported immediately to their line manager in line with Lothian's Health and Safety Policy statement.
- 8.5 For personal safety, employees must always use:
- Lothian's addresses for post and not their home address
 - A Lothian landline or mobile number. Desk phones can be forwarded to work mobile phones.
 - A meeting room on site for face-to-face meetings. Work-related meetings between customers or clients in an employee's home are prohibited.
- 8.6 Employees must have completed Lothian's Health and Safety e-learning before working from

home.

9. Security, Confidentiality and Data Protection

- 9.1 Employees are responsible for ensuring the security of all company documents and information whilst working from home and are obliged to:
- Keep all papers containing confidential information in locked cabinets when not in use;
 - Lock their computer terminal whenever it is left unattended; and
 - Comply with Lothian's Data Protection Policy
- 9.2 Whenever an employee is prompted to install a legitimate update to their computer or other equipment, they must do so straightaway. If employees are concerned about the legitimacy of such a request, then they must contact the IT helpdesk.
- 9.3 Employees must report any actual or potential breaches of security, confidentiality or data protection to Lothian's Data Protection Officer at dpo@lothianbuses.co.uk immediately.
- 9.4 All IT equipment provided by Lothian, must be used for work-related purposes only and must not be used by any other member of your household or third party at any time for any purpose.
- 9.6 Employees should only use IT equipment issued by Lothian for work-related purposes and must not use their personal computer.
- 9.7 Any confidential waste should be disposed of on-site in a confidential waste bin.
- 9.8 If an employee is unsure of any aspect of security, confidentiality or data protection, they must speak with their line manager.

10. Useful Links

[Home working – your health and safety responsibilities \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/working/home/)

11. Linked Policies

- Flexible Working Policy
- Data Protection Policy

- Attendance at Work Policy
- Managing Performance Policy
- Health and Safety Policy Statement

12. Version Control

Version No.	Date of Change	Change Made By	Key Amendments
V1.0	28.06.2024	P Butler	Published

This policy does not form part of employees' terms and conditions of employment and may be varied from time to time in accordance with business and legislative requirements.

