

TOLLER PORCORUM PARISH COUNCIL

Homeworking Policy

Updated: 9 July 2025 | Next review date: May 2027 | Last review date: 9 July 2025

Adopted: 28 September 2022

Introduction

Toller Porcorum Parish Council (the Council) does not have premises and therefore all employees will be home-based. This policy describes the working arrangements and expectations that apply to home-based employees.

Safe working environment

1. Health and safety for home-based staff applies in the same way as office-based staff, insofar as is reasonably practicable, that you work in a safe manner and follow all health and safety instructions issued by the Council.
2. You must complete and submit a 'Homeworking Risk Assessment' to the Staffing Committee. This is a checklist for you to identify any possible hazards in your home working area. Following completion of the checklist, measures may need to be taken to control any risks identified. This checklist should be completed annually, or more frequently if there are any changes to your arrangements such as new equipment or changes to your home-office space.
3. A Display Screen Equipment assessment is included in the Homeworking Risk Assessment and you must ensure this remains up to date. If you have any questions about the risk assessment, or if you identify any potential risks when carrying out the assessment, you should refer these to the Staffing Committee in the first instance.
4. Some of the most important considerations include: -
 - a. If possible, an area should be set aside from the rest of your living space to ensure that you are able to work from home without distractions,
 - b. Your home office should have adequate space for you to work safely and comfortably,
 - c. Your desk should be large enough to accommodate your equipment and paperwork,
 - d. You should have sufficient storage and your workspace should be organised so equipment is close to hand,
 - e. Your work area should be well lit, with natural lighting if possible,
 - f. Equipment and sockets should be situated to avoid potential trip hazards, and,
 - g. You must also ensure that you visually check the cables of any electronic equipment supplied to you regularly (and at least every 6 months) and report any defects.
5. The Council reserve the right to visit you at home at agreed times for work-related purposes, including health and safety matters and to inspect, service or repair equipment (e.g. for PAT testing).

TOLLER PORCORUM PARISH COUNCIL

Facilities and equipment

6. The council will provide you with the following equipment for you to work from home and we will maintain and replace these items when necessary.
 - a. Office chair, if required
 - b. Filing cabinet or other lockable storage (for staff who hold personal data)
 - c. Printer/scanner
 - d. Laptop computer
7. It is your duty to ensure that proper care is taken of the equipment provided to you and to let the Staffing Committee know of any need to maintain or replace the equipment. Should the risk assessment identify any further equipment that is necessary, please discuss this with the Staffing Committee.
8. All equipment provided by the Council is for you to work safely and effectively at home and cannot be used for personal use by you or your family.
9. All equipment will belong to the Council and you will be required to return it promptly should you leave our employment. If the Council is unable to make suitable arrangements, it may collect the equipment and any documents before your last day.

Hours of work

10. Your contract of employment specifies the number of hours you work but not when. You should let the Council know when you will usually work and be contactable by telephone or email. There may be times in the working week when you are usually available but are not and these should be flagged to the chair of the Council.
11. You must be mindful to take adequate rest breaks which should be, as a minimum:
 - a. A break of at least 20 minutes during each working day over 6 hours,
 - b. A daily rest break of at least 11 continuous hours, i.e. the time between stopping work one day and beginning work the next day, and,
 - c. At least one complete day each week when no work is done.

Potential conflicts of interest

12. During your hours of work, the Council expects that your work environment enables you to work effectively and that you are not distracted by domestic matters. It is not appropriate to combine homeworking with caring for a dependant.
13. If there is an emergency and you need to attend to a non-work matter, then you should notify the chair of the Council.

TOLLER PORCORUM PARISH COUNCIL

Data protection

14. As a home-worker you are responsible for keeping all documents and information associated with the Council secure at all times. Specifically, homeworkers are under a duty to:
 - a. Keep filing cabinets or other lockable storage and drawers locked when they are not being used,
 - b. Keep all documentation belonging to the Council in the locked filing cabinet or other lockable storage at all times except when in use,
 - c. Set up and use a unique password for the laptop computer, and,
 - d. Ensure that documents are saved to the server rather than the laptop computer's hard drive.
15. Furthermore, the laptop computer and other equipment provided by us must be used only for work-related purposes and must not be used by any other member of the family at any time or for any purpose.
16. If you have a telephone conversation where you are discussing confidential work matters, you should ensure that such calls take place in privacy to avoid inadvertent breaches of confidentiality.

Visits to work premises

17. As the Council does not have premises, attendance to training, performance assessment meetings, team briefings etc., will be held at Toller Porcorum Village Hall, another suitable location or online. This will normally not be frequent, and the dates and times of such visits will be agreed in advance.

Insurance, mortgage or rental agreements

18. Whilst the Council's Employer's Liability Insurance extends to home-based staff, and any council equipment installed in your home will also be covered, you should ensure that any agreement with your landlord or mortgage lender allows you to work from home, and that your house buildings and contents insurance will not be invalidated by you working from home.

This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.

This policy is based on the model Homeworking Policy provided by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), last updated 9 August 2024. It was issued by Worknest HR, a company that provides HR advice and guidance to town and parish councils.