

Working from Home Procedure V3

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Part 1 OBJECTIVES

1. As an employer of choice, Kempsey Shire Council supports Working from Home, providing employees with the opportunity to be able to work from home, when and where it is possible while ensuring Council continues to operate efficiently and effectively. The opportunity to work from home is a privilege.

The purpose of this document is to provide employees and Council with general guidelines for assessing and managing work from home requests, especially those requests for ongoing work from home arrangements as part of an employee's normal work schedule.

Part 2 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 Both the employee and their supervisor are responsible for implementing and evaluating work plans in relation to the duties that will be performed at home, the task or activities to be undertaken.
- 2.2 The employee must designate an appropriate space for working while at home. This space could be a particular room (for example, a study) or a particular area of a room. The **home office** should have a desk and sufficient space to perform work.
- 2.3 The employee is responsible for all costs involved in establishing and maintaining a home office, including but not limited to furniture, office equipment, telecommunications expenses, stationary, printer supplies, electricity, heating and cooling. Council will not reimburse or otherwise compensate employees for any expenses incurred by working from home.
- 2.4 Employees must notify Information Technology and their supervisor immediately if any Council property is broken or damaged.

Part 3 GUIDELINES

- 3.1 All working from home arrangements must be made in accordance with this procedure and be approved by the Group Manager. Ad-hoc working from home arrangements can be also approved in writing by the employee's supervisor in consultation with the Group Manager.
- 3.2 The General Manager in consultation with the relevant Director will consider on a case-by-case basis any application for an arrangement that does not comply with the guidelines in this procedure.
- 3.3 Employees who wish to work from home on a regular basis must apply online via the Documents portal in Learning Hub. Applications will be assessed and the applicant notified of the outcome as soon as practicable.
- 3.4 The employee and employer must discuss requests as soon as practicable, give prompt consideration to any issues or concerns raised in relation to the request,



and explore measures to avert or mitigate any adverse effects of the proposed change.

3.5 Confirmation will be provided by a system generated email. Refusal will be explained in person by the supervisor.

3.6 The following guidelines apply to all regular Working from Home arrangements:

- a) Fulltime employees are permitted to work a maximum of two days per week from home and no more than 40% of the employee's regular work schedule.
- b) Part-time employees are permitted to work a maximum of 50% of their regular work schedule from home so long as this allows them to attend the office on at least one day a week as agreed with their Group Manager. This day or days may change from time to time to meet operational requirements such as collaboration or team meetings.
- c) Employees working from home regularly, must have a designated and appropriate workspace at home.
- d) Employees must complete the Working from Home self-assessment checklist in Learning Hub. The supervisor will discuss any issues with the employee to ensure that the working from home arrangement is safe. The self-assessment checklist must be completed on renewal of the agreement, or whenever a material change occurs to the home working environment.
- e) Employees working from home must be available to be contacted during normal business hours, using Microsoft Teams to always show their availability.
- f) Employees working from home must be able to receive calls from Customer Services and make outbound calls. Council provides remote access to Interactive Intelligence and the ability to login from a remote number for this purpose but will not provide or subsidise telephone services at employees' homes. Council's customer experience standards and response timeframes still exist when working from home.
- g) Employees must also be available to attend the workplace if required to attend corporate functions including events (eg. all staff BBQs or breakfasts), leadership forums and designated face to face meetings or training on their agreed working from home days. Non-attendance at these corporate functions because it is an employee's agreed work from home day is not acceptable reason. Additionally, an employee should not travel to or from work for a corporate function during work hours when it is an agreed work from home day. In that situation the employee should attend work for the entire day, unless agreed in writing with their supervisor.
- h) Employees working from home are required to follow the same processes for notifying of absences (e.g. sick leave, carer's leave) as if they were working in the office.



- i) Working from home days will not be exchanged due to leave, public holidays etc without prior written approval of their supervisor.
- j) The duration of an approved agreement will be initially for a maximum of 12 months. Subsequent agreements will be for a maximum of 12 months.
- k) Working from home arrangements may be varied from time to time by agreement by both parties (employee and supervisor). If Council does not want to continue the working from home arrangement for any reason, it may terminate the arrangement at any time. Council does not require an employee's agreement to terminate a working from home arrangement. If Council terminates a working from home arrangement, the workplace participant will be given at least 24 hours' notice.
- l) Employees with leaseback vehicles must book out their vehicle in the Pool Car system when working from home.
- m) All other terms and conditions of employment as outlined in the employee's employment contract and Council policies and procedures also apply when working from home.
- n) Employees on probation would not have work from home arrangements approved until the successful completion of their probationary period, unless approved by the General Manager.

Part 4 KEY ISSUES

- 4. Consideration of the following issues should precede any decision to approve staff working at home on a regular basis:
 - a) The nature of the work and its suitability to a working at home arrangement.
 - b) The employee's preferred work environment and need for quiet, uninterrupted time to be appropriately productive.
 - c) Whether or not this quiet environment can be provided at the workplace.
 - d) Impact on team dynamics/workloads in the immediate work area.
 - e) Potential positive and/or negative effect on the quality of Council's processes, procedures and outcomes.
 - f) The adequacy of the proposed communication mechanisms for maintaining regular contact with supervisors, colleagues and Council as a whole.
 - g) The adequacy of the proposed work area and equipment in relation to the Council's WHS obligations and standards.
 - h) Ensuring the arrangement is not a substitute for dependant's care or sick leave.



Part 5 WORK TO BE PERFORMED

5. A decision about whether an employee can work at home will consider the nature of the duties performed, and whether they can be readily and safely performed at home.

Considerations will include:

- a) Can the work be done without direct supervision?
- b) Does the work require face-to-face communication with customers?
- c) Does the work require face-to-face communication with other staff?
- d) What will be the impact of the arrangement on co-workers?
- e) Is the workflow controllable?
- f) Are there safety issues in the performance of the work at home?
- g) Does the work require access to paper-based files (these must not be removed from the office)?

Part 6 CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL

- 6.1 A request to work at home will be considered on merit, considering the impact on Council's operations and requirements.
- 6.2 Circumstances vary and decisions to grant proposed arrangements will be based on specific requirements and the individual's reasons for requesting to work at home. An employee's personal reasons for requesting to work at home will not be the sole grounds for either approving or rejecting a proposal.
- 6.3 Once the position has been assessed and approved to be able to have a regular working from home option, the next step is to assess if the individual currently employed in the role is able to complete the role when working from home. This will involve a discussion around the following:
- a) Internet connectivity:
 - i) Minimum 12Mbps connection with low latency
 - ii) Satellite connections can be problematic – Information Technology is unable to provide support for Council systems to employee with these technologies.
 - b) Agreement on working hours and level of flexibility, noting the requirement to be available by Teams during business hours.
 - c) Level of supervision and support required for the individual including:
 - i) Level of capability demonstrated by the employee;
 - ii) Demonstrated ability to work independently;
 - iii) Proactive in their communication with managers/supervisors when relevant;
 - iv) Past performance of the employee.



- d) Supervisor and employee working relationship and practices:
 - i) Priority setting;
 - ii) Work expectations and deliverables;
 - iii) Communication approach;
 - iv) Interaction with other team members and other stakeholders;
 - v) Service level expectations for internal clients or community members;
 - vi) Review periods for the WFH arrangement.

- e) Discussion around how to manage risks and challenges of WFH arrangements:
 - i) Managing work and personal boundaries;
 - ii) Potential distractions at home;
 - iii) Access to equipment;
 - iv) Unstable internet connection.

Part 7 ATTENDANCE AT THE NORMAL PLACE OF WORK

- 7.1 For any working at home arrangement, days/hours will be set for an employee to attend their normal place of work to maintain work contacts, give and receive information, collect and deliver work, attend meetings and training courses.
- 7.2 Meetings with other persons in relation to Council business must not take place at the employees' home. Current terms and conditions applying to employees working at their normal place of work apply to the employee working at home.

Part 8 REHABILITATION

- 8.1 Employees recovering from an illness or injury may work at home provided approval is given by their manager in consultation with the Work Health and Safety Manager where applicable. They should also be able to reasonably perform their usual duties or other duties as specified by their supervisor.
- 8.2 An application to work at home on health grounds must be supported by written medical advice with any limitations or restrictions on activities clearly stipulated.
- 8.3 Employees working at home will provide the Work Health and Safety Manager and/or the nominated rehabilitation provider with access to the home-based work site for the purpose of verifying its appropriateness for work-based rehabilitation, subject to the provision of 48 hours' notice or by agreement.

Part 9 WORK PLANS

- 9.1 Both the supervisor and employee should agree in advance what work will be completed, including to what standard and within what time frames. Any work



should be consistent with that normally expected of the position, as described in the relevant position description and the employee should also ensure that they have completed their contracted hours each day.

- 9.2 The work plan should be in writing (email is satisfactory) and should focus on achievable goals and targets which are agreed to by both parties. Regular progress reports should also be included in the work plan.
- 9.3 All work plans and updates should be stored in the employee’s personnel file.

Part 10 VARIATION

10. The General Manager reserves the right to renew, vary or revoke this procedure which will be reviewed periodically to ensure it is relevant and appropriate.

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