



Whitepost Farmhouse, Laindon Common Road, Little Burstead, Billericay, Essex CM12 9SY

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Homeworking Policy

Introduction

This policy applies to any work being done at home, whether by an employee who spends all of their working week at home (“a permanent homemaker”), part of their working week at home (“a part week homemaker”) or only works at home on an occasional basis (“occasional homemaker”). The term “homemaker” or “homeworking” in this policy covers any of these employees.

Visual Interior & Partitions Ltd supports homeworking in appropriate circumstances either on an a permanent, temporary or occasional basis. Where working from home is a new arrangement, employees will be required to sign a ‘**Homemaker Agreement**’. Those signing this agreement must comply with its contents and the decision as to whether any homeworking is appropriate remains with the Company. Where an employee has worked from home from the commencement of their employment, all terms will be within their contract of employment.

The homeworking environment

Homeworkers should ensure that they have a suitable environment in which they can focus on work, free from disruption e.g. by having adequate care arrangements in place for dependants who may be at home during working hours. Homeworking must not be used as a replacement for a dependant’s care arrangements.

The environment must also be safe and comfortable and fulfil all Health & Safety requirements (see below).

Working arrangements for homeworkers

Working from home will only be possible if it can be ensured that the homemaker’s absence from the workplace will not create problems for other employees and that their home conditions are conducive to effective working.

Part week and occasional homeworkers must indicate clearly in their work electronic calendar when not in the office. In addition, their office business phone number should be diverted to a mobile or alternative number on homeworking days.

For insurance and safety reasons homeworkers must not hold meetings with clients, colleagues or any non-Company persons at their home unless otherwise authorised/requested by the Company for legitimate business reasons. Where meetings are required, these should take place on Company premises wherever possible, or in an alternative and suitable meeting space. Video/conference calls may be an alternative suitable option.

Home address and other personal details must not be disclosed, and all mail should be addressed to the main office.

Restricted access materials must not be taken out of the office, copied, or compromised in any way. Homeworkers must take all precautions necessary to secure sensitive information.





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Standard working hours apply regardless of the employee's place of work and therefore apply regardless of homeworking arrangements. These are contained in an individual's contract of employment.

Homeworking may be withdrawn, on a permanent or temporary basis, where the arrangement is not proving successful or operating effectively. Homeworkers may also face disciplinary action under the Company's disciplinary policy if the system is found to be abused.

Equipment

The Company will provide any necessary equipment as appropriate to a homeworking role.

The following will apply to any equipment provided:

- it remains the property of the Company,
- it must not be removed from the designated homeworker's address without the authority of Management,
- it must not be used other than for work purposes unless otherwise agreed,
- the homeworker is responsible for taking reasonable care of the equipment,
- the homeworker will be responsible for any damage to equipment which goes beyond normal wear and tear, including the damage caused when transporting the equipment,
- the homeworker must report any damage to or malfunction of the equipment, to Management as soon as possible,
- when working from the office the homeworker will be required to bring with them any relevant equipment required to carry out their duties.

The homeworker should ensure that there is sufficient internet connection available in order to support the work they are to carry out. Where there are connection issues affecting the homeworker's ability to carry out their duties, they must contact Management immediately. Homeworkers may be required to work from an alternative location, including the possibility of returning to the office, either permanently or until the issue is resolved.

Homeworkers will be required to sign a deduction from pay agreement for any equipment provided.

Provided reasonable notice is given, homeworkers may be requested to allow other employees of the Company, or contractors acting on the Company's behalf, to have access to their home, in order that those employees or contractors may:

- install, inspect, replace, service, repair or maintain Company equipment,
- carry out a risk assessment,
- collect items belonging to the Company on termination of employment, if they have not already been returned within the period requested.

Insurance

All Company property provided to homeworkers for use in their home will be covered under the Company insurance policy.



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Any homeworker provided with Company property must not cause or permit any act or omission which will avoid coverage under the Company insurance policy. If in any doubt as to whether a particular act or omission will have this effect, the homeworker should consult Management immediately.

Homeworkers who hold a household/home insurance policy should notify their insurer of their homeworking arrangements and are responsible for ensuring that those arrangements do not breach any policy condition, restrictive covenant affecting their home address, local authority planning restriction or mortgage condition.

General liability

Homeworkers remain responsible for ensuring:

- the safety of any visitors to their home, as well as any other family members, particularly children,
- that the general fabric of their home and its fixtures and fittings, including in any area in which they work, are maintained in a safe and functional state for performance of work, including any parts of a domestic electric system,
- that the costs of electricity, water, heating, telephone, internet connection and other utilities (save as specifically agreed otherwise) are paid.

Confidentiality, data protection and use of Company systems

Homeworkers must comply with the duties and obligations to confidentiality, data protection and use of the Company's systems and network under the Company's relevant policies.

In accordance with the Company's policies and procedures, homeworkers are responsible for maintaining the security and confidentiality of any business-related resources, equipment, or information to which they have access, and in particular to follow the Company's IT Policy.

Homeworkers should:

- take reasonable steps to restrict the access of family and friends to work equipment, materials, documents, or other data to avoid damage or loss and maintain business confidentiality.
- ensure that all confidential material, paper or electronic, should be securely destroyed as soon as any need for its retention has passed.
- take reasonable care of work-related information and Company property when travelling.
- not install or update any software on to Company owned IT equipment without permission from Management.
- not change the configuration of any Company owned devices.
- allow the installation and maintenance of Anti-Virus software and any operating system updates when required.
- not alter or disable any element of the configuration of devices or 'jail break' (modify to remove restrictions imposed by the manufacturer or operator) them.
- only save business critical data in approved storage locations.
- report all faults, stolen or lost hardware to Management.





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- ensure requests for upgrades of hardware or software are approved by Management prior to request; this includes mobile apps from the relevant provider.
- in the event of a lost or stolen mobile device, report the incident to Management immediately. The device will be remotely wiped of all data and locked to prevent access by anyone other than the Company. If the device is recovered, it can be submitted to Management for re-provisioning. The remote wipe may destroy all data on the device, whether it is related to Company business or otherwise.
- co-operate fully with any software or hardware audit conducted by the Company. The Company may be required to remove any equipment at the time of the audit for further inspection.
- maintain security of and do not share any information concerning passwords, usernames, network credentials or requirements used to access the Company information and systems by remote working/mobile working with other employees, unauthorised users, third party vendors, family, friends, or members of the public.
- always be aware of the potential for other people (including family, friends, and colleagues) to overlook screens and keyboards and view personal or confidential information, or passwords, and ensure this is not taking place.
- be aware of surroundings and ensure work is conducted in a location where it is not possible for a screen/document to be seen or a conversation overheard.
- ensure that all applications are properly closed/logged off, browsers are closed, and internet sessions are logged off, prior to network connections being logged off and closed.
- send any email communications that have personal or commercially sensitive information using password protection/encryption where applicable.
- not install any screen savers on Company owned equipment.
- when leaving desks temporarily during the working day, even if only for a few minutes for example during a break, lock all portable computer devices.
- report any information or data breach or accidental disclosure immediately to Management.
- not use hardware such as mobile phones, laptop, and tablets, not provided by the Company for Company business unless prior authority has been obtained from Management.
- only use location-based services and mobile check-in services which use GPS capabilities to share real time user location with external parties when carrying out work duties.

Access to Company data will be controlled through secure server access provided by the Company. This may include multi-factor authentication where applicable.

The Company will deploy updated Anti-Virus signatures and critical security updates to all users who work away from the Company premises. Homeworkers must ensure that any Company devices are connected to the corporate network at least once every working week to enable these updates to install.

Health and safety risk assessments



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The Company has certain obligations under health and safety legislation which may require it on occasion to perform a risk assessment of the work activities carried out by a homeworker. The purpose of completing a risk assessment is to identify the hazards relating to the homeworker's work activities and to decide whether sufficient steps have been taken to prevent harm to the homeworker or anyone else who may be affected by their work.

Risk assessments in relation to the working environment of a homeworker may, depending on what approach is viewed as most appropriate by the Company, be carried out by another employee or contractor on the Company's behalf (and to facilitate this the homeworker may be required to provide access to their home to the extent described above), or as a self-assessment by the homeworker.

Where self-assessments are required, appropriate guidance and advice will be provided to the homeworker, and the homeworker is expected to cooperate fully and follow such guidance.

All risk assessment findings will be recorded and reviewed as appropriate.

It may also be appropriate to conduct a **Stress Risk Assessment** to ensure the wellbeing and mental health of homeworkers is well managed.

Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessments

Display Screen Equipment (DSE) is a device or equipment with a display screen and often refers to a computer screen. However, it includes both conventional display screens and those used in emerging technologies such as laptops, touch screens and other similar devices.

In a work environment, desktop computers are traditionally looked at when considering DSE, but it is important to consider other display screens such as tablets, laptops, and smartphones.

The DSE regulations require an assessment/analysis of DSE so that the risks can be identified and controlled.

DSE assessments are required by all 'users' of display screen equipment. A 'user' is described as someone "who habitually uses display screen equipment as a significant part of their normal work". DSE regulations cover equipment such as the desk, screen, chair, disk drive, telephone, printer, document holder, work surface or other peripherals to the display screen equipment, and the immediate environment surrounding the equipment as well as the tasks being undertaken by the user of the equipment.

When using DSE, users should plan their activities so that their daily work is periodically interrupted by breaks, or changes of activity to reduce their workload at that equipment. To achieve this, users must ensure they take regular breaks during the workday for activity changes, for example phone calls, meetings, natural breaks, refreshments, or changes to posture to avoid stiffness, eyestrain and upper limb disorders.

Workstations should meet certain requirements however this is not always possible or suitable for some environments or tasks. Where this is not possible to do, the Company shall reduce the risks identified in consequence of an assessment to the lowest extent reasonably practicable.



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Where a homeworker works with DSE:

- the Company will ensure a DSE assessment is carried out, that the equipment is safe and fit for use, and advice will be provided to the homeworker on how to use it safely, including information on breaks from work,
- the Company will provide training on the set-up and use of DSE,
- they may be entitled to eye tests paid for by the Company, in line with standard guidelines for other employees and in line with Company policy.

In the event an accident occurs, or the homeworker contracts an illness or sustains an injury, or generally feels unfit to work, Management must be notified as soon as possible. A homeworker must also inform Management as soon as possible if they become pregnant.

For further health and safety information, see the Company's **Health and Safety Policy**.

Communication and meetings

To minimise the potential isolation of homeworkers, and/or to allow for their proper supervision and management, Management will, where appropriate, involve homeworkers in regular meetings. Homeworkers are required to attend such meetings. If a homeworker cannot attend a scheduled meeting for good reason, they should notify the person organising the meeting in advance. If a homeworker does not attend meetings repeatedly, this may constitute a failure to follow a reasonable management instruction and may result in disciplinary action and/or the homeworking agreement being revoked.

In addition to regular meetings, Management will ensure that regular contact is made between the homeworker and members of their team.

Homeworkers may be required to attend Company offices and/or other locations according to the needs of the business.

Homeworkers are expected to be contactable during the agreed hours of work. Contact outside these hours will only be made in cases of emergency.

Training and development

Training of homeworkers will take place as appropriate and required. Homeworkers will be expected to participate in any departmental or general training sessions, at Company premises where required.

Homeworkers will have the same opportunities as office-based employees to apply for advertised vacancies within the Company.

Absence from work

Where a homeworker is unwell or unable to work, the normal absence and related reporting procedures in the Employee Handbook apply.

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Monitoring and Review

The success of homeworking depends on there being the necessary monitoring and support systems in place.

Although homeworkers will not be treated any differently to office-based employees, different techniques may be required to manage homeworkers. It is the responsibility of Management to have in place a system of monitoring by results, targets and objectives that are agreed with the homeworker so that output can be measured, and performance properly evaluated.


Homeworking permission will be reviewed and possibly withdrawn, on a permanent or temporary basis, if it is demonstrated that:

- The performance of homeworker suffers as a result.
- That the effective and efficient operation of the team or department is compromised.
- That the ability of the wider organisation to fulfil its objectives is compromised.

Requests to work from home

Where someone is not already working from home but would like to request to do so, requests for permanent or temporary homeworking (full or part week) should be made using the 'Homeworking Request Form'. If the request constitutes a statutory Flexible Working Request, this will be dealt with under the Company's Flexible Working policy.

This policy will be reviewed annually as a minimum.

Date of Issue: 01 November 2025	Signed: 
Date of Next Review: November 2026	Print Name: Philip Barker

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