



Working From Home

In case of a pandemic or other unforeseen circumstances that may require a significant amount of staff to work from home at one time, this working from home policy should be interpreted as a guideline and followed where pragmatically possible, considering the relevant circumstances at that time.

Purpose

This policy sets out the procedures to be followed when considering a temporary or permanent working from home arrangement. It also describes the conditions to be met when such requests or requirements have been approved and agreed between the staff member and manager.

Scope

This policy applies to all Northland District Health Board (DHB) employees who seek to, or are requested to, undertake some, or all, of their duties from home.

Principles

- Northland DHB is committed to policies and procedures which support flexibility in the workplace that benefit Northland DHB and staff
- Northland DHB recognises that there are circumstances where allowing a staff member to regularly or temporarily work from home may assist the staff member to balance his/her work, health issues and/or family or other responsibilities. It contributes to climate change mitigation, and reduction in hospital parking pressure. There might be circumstances where Northland DHB requests staff to work from home such as during a pandemic to reduce infection transmission or other government imposed lock down
- However, Northland DHB also recognises that it is not always appropriate or suitable for a staff member to carry out some or all of these duties from home and there are reasons why approval of a working from home arrangement may be refused, limited or cancelled
- When an employee works from home the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 apply as if the person were at their workplace under the direct control of their employer. Employees working from home must cooperate with Northland DHB in the organisation's efforts to comply with occupational health and safety requirements
- No clients, patients or members of the public are to be seen from home.

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Definitions

Agreed working from home hours: Days, times and/or hours of work agreed between the manager and the staff member for the staff member to carry out his/her duties at the home-office.

Home office: The area designated by the staff member within the staff member's home as the worksite in which the staff member will carry out the home-based work as per the Working from home arrangement.

Hours of work: Ordinary hours to be worked by a staff member, as detailed in relevant employment agreements.

Manager: The person who has the responsibility for the management of the staff member.

Self-check tool for employees working from home: A checklist completed by the staff member confirming that their home office meets occupational health and safety requirements and identifies any probable risks associated with the home office. This document must be satisfactorily completed before the home office is considered suitable for the proposed working from home agreement.

Staff member: Any person who is an employee of Northland DHB including, for the purpose of this procedure, contracted staff, seeking to enter into a working from home arrangement.

Working from home agreement: The agreement to be entered into between Northland DHB and the staff member to formalise the working from home arrangement.

Working from home arrangement: An approved arrangement for a staff member to regularly carry out defined duties from his/her home office during the agreed working from home hours, on an ongoing basis or for a specified period of time, the terms of which are set out in the working from home agreement entered into between the staff member and Northland DHB.

Method

The establishment of a full or part-time off-site workplace may arise from the request of an employee or from organisational requirements.

Tasks and responsibilities of the employee:

1. Perform the self-check tool for employees working from home in [Appendix A](#).
2. Complete the online Northland DHB [Office Wise training MOO11](#).
3. Comply with the employee obligations as laid out in this policy after agreement of the working from home arrangement.

Tasks and responsibilities of the manager:

1. Assess suitability of the role/tasks for off-site work
2. Assess suitability of the staff member for off-site work.
3. Assess information technology and other equipment requirements, security and costs.
4. Discuss the health and safety requirements for the proposed work environment based on the self-check tool for employees working from home.

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Suitability of role and/or tasks and staff member

The manager should consider the general nature and requirements of the staff member's work duties and the ability to work autonomously and carry out his/her work at home as efficiently and effectively as working at Northland DHB's premises.

The Manager can consider the following:

- Does the job holder ("they") manage other people?
- Who mainly controls the job holder's ("their") work?
- How frequently do they need to liaise with the Manager for reporting or direction?
- How frequently do they need to liaise with colleagues?
- How much of their work requires immediate attention, as opposed to long-term deadlines?
- Does the position need to be covered when they are away?
- Are other people doing a similar function in the workplace?
- Is the equipment required to do the job only available in the workplace?
- Do they need access to files and papers in the workplace?
- Is the work of a highly confidential/sensitive nature?
- Can they be contacted by colleagues/manager when away from the workplace?
- What percentage of their time is spent in meetings?
- Do they have to respond to customers' requirements immediately?
- What impact will their work style have on administration support staffs' workload or pattern of work?
- Balancing social interaction at the workplace versus time and frequency of working from home

Technology, equipment and security

The manager also needs to consider (and, where relevant, cost) the following:

- Provision of hardware/software
- Access to Northland DHB network: How will security of the Northland DHB network be protected?
- Data security: ensuring physical security of the laptop or PC used, to protect Northland DHB information
- Usage: protection of Northland DHB equipment from inappropriate use by others
- Support: negotiation of support requirements with Northland DHB infrastructure
- Additional equipment items such as furniture and lighting.

Implementation process

Having considered the reason for working remotely, suitability, necessary equipment and working from home hazards, the manager must decide whether the employee can work at home, some or part of their work time, in a way that benefits both Northland DHB and the employee.

If both employee and manager are in agreement with the request/requirement and are satisfied that all occupational health and safety measures meet the required standard, then the details of the arrangement will be recorded in the working from home agreement in [Appendix B](#).

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The self-check tool in Appendix A and working from home agreement will be signed by both staff member and manager. A copy of the signed agreement will be kept on file by staff member and the manager.

Employee obligations

Each employee who has approval or is requested to work from home must comply with the following:

- Complete and sign the self-check tool for employees working from home, give the signed form to their manager, and complete a new self-check tool if circumstances change.
- Complete the online Northland DHB Office Wise training MOO11
- Northland DHB's Health and Safety Policy and Incident Reporting system continues to apply to the organisation and the employee when working from home. Any incidents or accidents must be reported as an adverse event via Datix on the Northland DHB website. The employee will assume responsibility for supplying electricity and adequate/secure internet, including all costs ensuring that internet is secure where wireless broadband is used
- Staff working remotely must follow the companies policies as if working at the organisation's workplace
- The employee will take responsibility to assess which meetings require physical presence at the organisation's workplace or where participating via phone or video/zoom might be suitable
- When work circumstances require this, the employee will return to work at the organisation's workplace
- The employee will pick up supplies/drop off any materials/bring equipment in for service when they are at the organisation's workplace, and they will not be reimbursed for that travel or time: i.e. this task will be part of an employee's normal commute
- The employee must be contactable and available for communication with the manager and other staff members during the agreed working hours
- The employee will ensure the security of all Northland DHB equipment and return it if requested
- The employee will maintain Northland DHB information in a secure and confidential manner as per their employment contract
- The employee will use Northland DHB equipment and supplies only for work purposes.

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Monitoring

The manager, in conjunction with the employee, will review the work from home arrangement after 4 weeks to consider changes. The agreement will be reviewed when home or work circumstances change, a temporary agreement ends and otherwise will be reviewed annually.

Other costs

Northland DHB will not contribute to the running costs of the employee's home work space (e.g. electricity, internet, office furniture) if the request or requirement is approved. Northland DHB has no insurance or other liability for the use of the employee's own vehicle or home/other premises for their work.

References

Health & Safety at Work Act 2015

Northland DHB policies

Health and Safety

Code of Conduct

Safe Information Systems [IS] Practices

Appendices

Appendix A: Self-check tool for employees working from home

Appendix B: Working from home agreement

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Appendix A: Self-check tool for employees working from home

Northland DHB is committed to conducting its activities in such a way as to protect the health, safety and wellness of all employees.

Purpose:

This self-check tool has been developed to support Northland DHB staff who work from home in identifying necessary tools and equipment and factors and hazards that may negatively impact on their safety, health and wellbeing.

Method:

Complete the self-check and hazard register as your baseline and provide a copy to your manager, review this periodically.

Resources:

- Officewise training is available in LEARN Northland DHB Intranet listed under Professional Development Employee Assistance Programme provided by RAISE (formerly EAPWorks). This is a free counselling service for all Northland DHB staff. Call 0800 735 343, e-mail enquiries@raisementalhealth or go to the RAISE website.
- ACC website Habitat at Work Website <http://www.habitatwork.co.nz/>
- ACC website: Guidelines for using Computers November 2010
- General Practitioner

Hazard register procedure:

Slips, trips and falls feature as high risk activities in both work and home environments. Working alone may limit how or when support is available in the event of discomfort/pain, injury, illness, violence, emergency or other events. This may increase the risk of harm.

- Based on the self-check identify potential hazards and the harm that could occur
- Decide if they can be eliminated or need to be minimised
- Where necessary support can be requested from Northland DHB Occupational Health & Safety personnel
- Record your findings and controls in the hazard register
- Review your hazard register regularly and make changes to the controls as required. Advise your manager of concerns
- Report workplace discomfort and/or pain as an adverse event via Datix on the Northland DHB website.

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Self-check tool for employees working from home:

Details:

Date of self-check:	
Your name:	
Your job title:	
Home office location(s):	
Line manager's name:	

Tools and equipment:

Do you have a computer or laptop?	Employee owned: Northland DHB owned:
Do you have adequate internet?	
Do you have a landline/mobile?	Employee owned: Northland DHB owned:
Do you have a printer?	
Do you require other tools, equipment, hardware or software for your duties working from home which are not available to you at the moment?	

Workplace layout and tasks:

Do you have a dedicated work or office area?	
Is the chair fully adjustable?	
Does the chair have adequate lumbar support?	
Is the computer setup easy to adjust to follow the recommended ergonomic computer setup?	
Do you have a work routine in place to allow for sufficient breaks while doing repetitious work such as typing or writing?	

Environmental factors:

Is your working environment suitable in terms of heating, lighting and ventilation?	
Do you have sufficient space to work and move freely without clutter?	
Do you have sufficient separation from other individuals in the home, particularly children?	
Are there slip or trip hazards such as trailing cables?	

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Security/emergency/fire plans in place

Do you have any concerns for your personal safety or receiving support at the offsite working location?	
Can any equipment and sensitive data be secured when not in use?	
Do you have a clear escape route in the event of a fire?	
Is there a working smoke alarm nearby	

Health and wellbeing

Are there other personal health, wellbeing, discomfort issues or concerns related to the work place setup or working from home?	
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Hazard register

Hazard	Harm that could occur	Controls	Today's date

Notes or comments:

Signature staff member:

Signature manager:

Date:

Date:

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Appendix B: Working from home agreement:

Your name:	
Your job title:	
Home office location(s):	
Line manager's name:	

- I have completed the Northland DHB Office Wise online training
- Hazards have been identified based on the self-check tool and controls are documented in the Hazard register.

Details of the working from home arrangement:

Reason for request:

Start date and duration:

Agreed time working remotely (eg 1 day a week, full time):

Agreed hours of work (important for ACC purposes):

Is technology, equipment and security arranged?

Describe how communication (email, phone, other) will be coordinated:

Other conditions or agreements:

Signature staff member

Signature manager

Date:

Date:

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