

## KEMPSEY SHIRE COUNCIL

### WORKING FROM HOME

### Procedure 5.5.56

Policy No. and Title	5.5	Conditions of Employment Policy
Procedure	5.5.56	Working from Home
Version	2	
Date Adopted	25 November 2020	

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### OBJECTIVE

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 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.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

- a) Both the Manager and employee 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 with an agreed level of productivity and associated performance indicators.
- b) The employee is responsible for home office requirements e.g. furniture, internet services or additional IT equipment such as monitors and printers for permanent use at home or other home office expenses such as stationery, printer supplies.
- c) Council expects an employee requesting to work at home (either on an ad-hoc or regular basis) to provide such furniture, lighting, etc. to ensure an ergonomically safe work environment.
- d) Employees must notify IT Support and their Manager immediately if any Council property is broken or damaged to enable repairs to be made.

### GUIDELINES

All working from home arrangements must be made in accordance with this procedure and be approved by both the Manager and the relevant Director. Ad-hoc working from home arrangements can be approved by the employee's Manager.

The General Manager will consider on a case-by-case basis any application for an arrangement that does not comply with the guidelines in this procedure.

All requests to work on a regular basis from home should be made in writing and include the number of days at home. Employees who wish to work from home on a regular basis must apply online via the Documents portal. Applications will be assessed within 14 days.

Confirmation will be provided in writing outlining the details of the negotiated agreement such as nominated days and hours per week to be worked from home.

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

- a) Employees are permitted to work a maximum of 2 to 3 days per week from home or a total of 5 days per fortnight or no more than 50% of the employee's regular work schedule.
- b) Employees working from home regularly, must have a designated workspace at home.
- c) Employees must complete the Working from Home self-assessment checklist and return it to their Manager/Supervisor. The Manager 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.
- d) The employee must confirm they have access to a first aid kit.
- e) The employee must confirm they have working smoke alarms fitted in their dwelling.
- f) Employees working from home must be available to be contacted during normal business hours, utilising Microsoft Teams to show their availability status.
- g) Employees must also be available to attend the workplace if required to attend corporate functions including employee events, Leadership forums and designated face to face meetings or training on their agreed working from home days.
- h) The duration of the agreement will be initially for a maximum of 6 months. New agreements will need to be negotiated and submitted if an employee requests to extend the duration beyond 6 months. Subsequent agreements will be for a maximum of 12 months.
- i) Working from home arrangements may be varied from time to time by agreement by both parties (employee and Manager/Supervisor).
- j) Working from home arrangements may be terminated or varied at the discretion of the Manager/Director with two weeks' notice if the employee fails to comply with the terms and conditions of the agreement or if the working from home arrangements don't meet business needs.
- k) 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.

## **Key issues**

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 staff member'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.

## **Work to be performed**

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) What equipment or other resources are needed to perform this work, and are they easily transportable to the home-based work site?
- g) Are there safety issues in the performance of the work at home?
- h) Does the work require access to confidential documents that should not be removed from the office?

## **Criteria for approval**

- a) A request to work at home will be considered on merit, considering Council's convenience and needs.
- b) Working at home arrangements are not automatically available to any staff member.
- c) 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. A staff member's personal reasons for requesting to work at home will not be grounds in themselves for either approving or rejecting a proposal.

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:

- Internet connectivity
  - Minimum 12Mbps connection with low latency
  - Satellite and mobile/wireless connections can be problematic – please liaise with IT to assess if required
- Agreement on working hours and level of flexibility
- Level of supervision and support required for the individual including:
  - Level of capability demonstrated by the employee
  - Demonstrated ability to work independently
  - Proactive in their communication with managers / supervisors when relevant
  - Past performance of the employee
- Manager/supervisor and staff member working relationship and practices
  - Priority setting
  - Work expectations and deliverables
  - Communication approach
  - Interaction with other team members and other stakeholders
  - Service level expectations for internal clients or community members
  - Review periods for the WFH arrangement
- Discussion around how to manage risks and challenges of WFH arrangements
  - Managing work and personal boundaries
  - Potential distractions at home
  - Access to equipment

## **Attendance at the normal place of work**

- a) For any working at home arrangement, days/hours will be set for a staff member to attend their normal place of work in order to maintain work contacts, give and receive information, collect and deliver work, attend meetings and training courses.

- b) In general, meetings with other persons in relation to Council business should 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.

## **REHABILITATION**

- a) Employees recovering from an illness or injury may work at home provided approval is given by their Manager, in consultation the Principal WHS Advisor where applicable. They should also be able to reasonably perform their usual duties or other duties as specified by their Supervisor/Manager.
- b) 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.
- c) Employees working at home will provide the Principal WHS Advisor 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.

## **WORK PLANS**

Both the Manager 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.

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.

All work plans and updates should be stored in the employee's personnel file.

## **VARIATION**

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.