



**SONIC HEALTHCARE
UK**

Staff Policy

Sonic Healthcare UK - Working from home policy

Version 2



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1 Introduction

The Working from Home Policy provides guidelines for employees when working remotely. It defines eligibility based on job nature, reasons for remote working and procedures for requesting remote work. The policy ensures that remote work is appropriate for both employees and the company.

2 Purpose

- 2.1.1 The purpose of this policy and procedure is to provide a framework of understanding about how home working operates at Sonic Healthcare UK. It is based upon the principles outlined below, which also meet the requirements of all relevant employment legislation and support a new and modern way of working.
- 2.1.2 Sonic Healthcare UK recognises that for mutual benefit homeworking is an option for many job roles within the company. This policy defines what home working means for the company and what needs to be in place to ensure the wellbeing of employees. It is the company's policy to encourage open discussion with employees to ensure that questions and problems can be resolved as quickly as possible.

3 Scope

- 3.1.1 The policy and procedure applies to all employees and where appropriate, contractors or temporary staff. In order for the policy to be effective, it is essential that all colleagues at Sonic Healthcare UK are aware of the policy and procedure and adhere to it. Ultimately it is the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team in conjunction with HR to ensure that this is the case.
- 3.1.2 No Sonic Healthcare UK employee will be deemed as a home-based worker so there will be no change to Sonic Healthcare UK's responsibilities as an employer or of employees' responsibilities to work to required policies and processes.

4 Policy Principles

- 4.1.1 Sonic Healthcare UK will provide appropriate training and support to colleagues involved in the management of the staff. Any colleague at a management level should satisfy themselves that they understand the requirements of this policy and the related policies and procedures.

- 4.1.2 Sonic Healthcare UK will promote best practice in the management of home working. It will regularly review its provisions to ensure that they are legally compliant and reflect best practice.
- 4.1.3 Sonic Healthcare UK will support home working and this will be agreed between the line manager and the individual taking into consideration team and business needs. Individual needs for flexibility will also be considered on a case by case basis via our Flexible Working Policy.
- 4.1.4 Whilst home working, employees must take responsibility for their work during Sonic Healthcare UK office hours; the system is reliant on there being trust between managers and employees. This is so fundamental that any breach of trust will be treated very seriously and may be regarded as misconduct. Appropriate action may follow under the Disciplinary Policy. If misconduct is found, the agreement to work at home may be withdrawn.
- 4.1.5 Working at home is a benefit available to staff and is entirely dependent on the nature of their contractual role and the needs to the service. Home working is not a requirement nor an automatic right and any arrangements must be agreed in advance with the line manager. There will be some circumstances where working from home is not a viable option or where the operational needs necessitate a different approach. For example a member of staff's performance is being reviewed under the capability procedure may not be considered suitable for home working. Such circumstances are expected to be the exception not the norm.

5 Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1.1 Working from home relies on outcome based management. This means that staff are managed based upon their results. To achieve this staff are expected to deliver outcomes within their contractual hours. The arrangements for how hours are worked will be agreed in advance with line managers.
- 5.1.2 This approach will require a strong commitment by managers and employees to plan and ensure that regular 1-2-1 meetings take place and relevant targets are used to represent the outcomes required. Working from home requires some changes in relationship between employees and their managers. All responsibilities are set out below.

5.2 Employee's Responsibilities

- Agree working arrangements with their manager
- Ensure that their manager can contact them at all times during working hours.
- Meet agreed work objectives, deadlines , with a focus on outcomes and achievement.
- Take care of Sonic Healthcare UK equipment such as laptops, particularly when travelling or working from home. Any loss, damage or theft must be reported to the manager and the police if appropriate.
- Comply with the IT security and data protection requirements.
- Complete all mandatory training.
- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety and follow the Display Screen Guidance and other health and safety arrangements and procedures.

5.3 Line Manager's Responsibilities

- Ensure that safe working practices are understood by employees and that they have the tools they need to do their jobs effectively
- Ensure, in consultation with other managers, that working arrangements mean we do not exceed our desk capacity on any one day, and can deliver the requirements of the business unit, that are expected.
- Plan which members of staff are working in and out of our onsite locations on any given day. This will necessitate thinking creatively about how home working could work for their staff.

Line Manager's will ensure their staff:

- Understand that it is not a right or compulsory to work from home, but, depends on role and service needs
- Have access to the appropriate technology to work effectively both in the office environment and from home
- Have access to appropriate training and support to work effectively in the new ways
- Take responsibility for creating a safe working environment when working from home
- Have access to appropriate support equipment to assist in the creation of a safe working environment when working from home
- Have SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely) objectives, priorities and targets which can be measured in line with the Performance Reviews, as well as clarity about the outcomes expected of their job role

- Have their individual circumstances and requirements (particularly where an employee has a disability) taken into account, including the needs of newly appointed staff, trainees and apprentices who may initially need to come into the office more often for support rather than working at home
- Have access to continuous performance review process which includes regular 1:1 conversations and/or supervision
- Ensure that information governance and health and safety requirements are adhered to at all times

5.4 Human Resources Department Responsibilities

- To provide interpretation and advice on this policy and procedure to ensure that it is followed, fairly, objectively and consistently.
- To ensure that effective implementation and embedding of this policy and procedure through education and regular monitoring activity.

6 Policy Development

To be reviewed every 3 years, in light of legislative changes or upon Executive Board request.

7 Job Roles

- 7.1.1 Working from home could be agreed between the manager and employee for several reasons e.g. ad hoc, regular fixed days, as part of a flexible working agreement or as part of a reasonable adjustment on the recommendation of occupational health for a phased return to the workplace. Where home working is part of FWR or sickness absence, please refer to these related policies where necessary.
- 7.1.2 Sonic Healthcare UK believes that some roles lend themselves to homeworking more readily than others. Under homeworking roles can be undertaken from the office or home. The balance between office and home working will vary depending on the role and the person concerned, and the days which are office-based days, and which are home-based days will be agreed. Home working will normally be no more than 50% per week to support team engagement, and business continuity, but where longer periods are required or agreed with the Head of Department, further approval from a Director should be sought.

7.1.3 All roles will have a designated workplace which may be as stated in the contract of employment. This may change by consultation and or a flexible working request.

8 Employees in probation period

8.1.1 It will be the expected, that new employees will initially be based on site for induction, training, familiarisation with the company and the team they work with.

8.1.2 The manager, taking into consideration performance and work allocated will decide when it is appropriate for a new member of staff to be able to carry out work from home.

9 Home working in practice

Where home working is mutually agreed, the employees will be asked to complete a homeworking agreement. Annex 1 lays out the Home Working Agreement that should be signed by the employee and the line manager. This will be held in the employee's personnel folder as well as a copy given to the employee.

9.1 Insurance cover

Employees should ensure that all Sonic Healthcare UK property is used appropriately and responsibly and that all reasonable precautions are taken to prevent damage and theft. Any damage or theft of Sonic Healthcare UK property must be reported to the line manager immediately. Employees working at home are covered by Sonic Healthcare UK's Employer's Liability Insurance and Public Liability Insurance providing the rules of this policy have been followed.

9.2 Communication and contact

Communication arrangements must be robust. Employees working from home should be readily contactable, normally by email and or telephone, during normal working hours. Home workers must let their line manager or colleagues know in advance (where appropriate) of any times they will be out of contact.

9.3 Information security

All employees working from home must ensure that they adhere to Sonic Healthcare UK policies, procedures and guidance in relation to Information Security, Data Protection and Freedom of Information.

9.4 Health and Safety

- 9.4.1 Sonic Healthcare UK have responsibilities under health and safety legislation when employees are working from home, including the requirement to undertake appropriate risk assessment. Annex 2 is a Home Working Health and Safety Self-Assessment Checklist that employees need to complete and sign in conjunction with their Line Manager. This will be held in the colleague's personnel file, as well as a copy given to the employee.
- 9.4.2 Staff will be provided with equipment which is appropriate for their job roles and in line with any reasonable adjustments that an individual has or as a result of the self-risk assessment.
- 9.4.3 As part of the self-risk assessment employees need to consider potential hazards such as Slip/trip hazards such as trailing wires, sockets or extension leads must not be overloaded, and emergency exits from the home.
- 9.4.4 Staff should be mindful if using laptops or portable devices in the home for long periods of time; that a docking station and separate keyboard is used where possible and that portable devices are not used in areas where good DSE posture is not able to be maintained e.g. sitting on the sofa, in bed etc. DSE training and assessment is provided on SonicLearn and staff must ensure they complete this and raise any issues with their line manager. Sonic Healthcare UK will supply equipment that is needed following home risk assessment.
- 9.4.5 Staff must carry out regular visual checks (at least monthly) on the electrical equipment provided for the work that they carry out at home. Any signs of defect, damage, overheating, loose cables etc., must be reported immediately to their manager and appropriate repair or replacement provided. Similarly, any equipment such as work chairs should be checked regularly for any sign of damage, wear or tear.
- 9.4.6 Staff must not continue to use any equipment which they feel is unsafe.

9.5 Additional household expenses

Sonic Healthcare UK will not pay any additional household costs.

10 Attendance and Availability for Work

- 10.1.1 Staff must be available and able to work on their contracted days whether they are in the office or working from home, unless absence is approved for an authorised form of leave or sickness. Any variation to this arrangement can only be made by prior agreement with the manager.
- 10.1.2 Employees should remember that the needs of the customer, and the service will always take priority. This may mean that staff could be asked to come into the office on a working from home day should a need arise. This may include situations when they are unable to connect to the business systems, or if they are asked to do so by their manager e.g. in the event of sickness of a colleague, inadequate cover, emergency or service need.
- 10.1.3 Where an employee is being asked to attend the office at short notice, managers should endeavour to make the call at a time that enables the employee to arrive at their normal starting time. Where this is not possible the employee's travelling time will be considered as part of their working day.
- 10.1.4 As a rule staff are expected to work in the same way, whether they are in the office or working from home. For example, if they would usually be available to answer the telephone, respond to emails etc. during the hours the service operates (usually between 08:00am-6:00pm) they will be expected to do this when working from home, unless a change is agreed with their line manager. The line manager will consider service needs before consenting to a change, and the employee is only expected to work in the same way during their contracted or rostered hours.
- 10.1.5 In the case of a systems failure, employees should contact their manager and ensure that they are notifying the IT department as soon as possible of any issues using the IT helpdesk services. This is to ensure that any disruptions to normal operations can be managed as soon as possible and decide on the appropriate course of action. In some cases this will involve seeking advice from senior management. Managers should activate their business contingency plans only when appropriate.
- 10.1.6 Where an employee experiences home Wi-Fi or power failure at home, they will also need to contact the line manager or department.

11 Patterns of Work

11.1.1 Ultimately the manager will have the responsibility for ensuring that service needs take priority; that staff are treated fairly and are trusted to take responsibility for themselves and their work when working from home.

11.1.2 Managers will, in consultation with the employee agree a pattern that best meets the needs of the service. Employees must understand that these patterns may be subject to review. Consequently employees may be required to alter their working pattern if required.

11.1.3 The arrangements for the scheduling of rotas will vary to suit operational needs. Rotas will also need to be reviewed to take into account new starters and leavers. Working from home is not a substitute for caring for dependants. Employees are expected to have made alternative arrangements for the care of their dependants during their working day.

12 Hours

Sonic Healthcare UK operates a 40 hour working week for corporate departments and 37.5 hour working week for Laboratory departments (up to manager level). The organisation will still accept applications for flexible working requests, and these will be managed in the normal manner via the Flexible Working Request Policy.

13 Homeworking From Another Country

The Company does not permit employees to work from another country when homeworking. This decision considers the legalities around GDPR, tax, right to work permissions and the Company's legal obligation to the Health and Safety of its staff. Should you undertake working from home as agreed by your manager, this should be from a UK address, details of which must be kept up to date on SonicHub/CoreHR.

14 Absences Sickness

14.1.1 When an employee is unable to work due to sickness, they must on the first day of absence, contact their manager at the earliest opportunity, according to local procedure.

14.1.2 Normally working from home is not to be used as a substitute for a working in the office day, when an employee feels “under the weather” i.e. they feel unable to make the journey into the office but feel able to continue their normal work from home. Last minute changes could impact on other team members and are therefore difficult to accommodate.

14.1.3 It is however recognised that there may be circumstances where such requests may be agreed by a line manager. In their discussion the manager should consider the hours the employee expects to be able to work and their likely output before determining whether it is appropriate for the employee to work from home in this situation. It is also imperative that the employee has the necessary equipment at home to be able to do this (i.e. laptop etc.).

14.1.4 An employee who has reported in as sick and will have it recorded as such, is not expected to work either in the office or at home. Managers should be respectful of this.

15 Recruitment

Working within a home working environment requires particular skills. It is therefore important that these are incorporated into Job Descriptions when making new appointments, where it is necessary to do so. Where areas of the business are able to offer homeworking, the following criteria are to be included in the employee specification for each post. These criteria should then be applied and assessed as part of the normal selection process.

15.1 Managerial posts

The Sonic Healthcare UK home working policy means that staff may be managed remotely. Managers must therefore be able to:

- Tailor their management style as appropriate to the needs of dispersed teams/ employees
- Understand and apply different strategies for the effective management of performance by outcomes.
- Set clear SMART objectives for staff within a working environment.
- Address conflicting needs of staff in a fair and equitable manner that engenders confidence and trust.

15.2 All other posts

15.2.1 The Sonic Healthcare UK home working policy allows staff to work from home where appropriate. To be able to do so you must:

- Have demonstrable experience of working to complete targets/objectives through independent working and problem solving,
- Make effective use of time management and prioritising skills.

15.2.2 The recruitment pages on the Sonic Healthcare UK website will be updated to reference the home working strategy. Interview panels should however be prepared to provide a fuller explanation of how home working operates within the team.

15.3 New starters

The induction and probationary procedures should be applied to new employees in accordance with the respective policies. Managers will however need to ensure that these employees receive an induction that incorporates the Home Working Policy and Protocols and how these operate within their service area.

16 Expenses and Travel

16.1.1 Sonic Healthcare UK will re-imburse employees up to the value of £150 total combined expenses for equipment to work from home such as a monitor and cable, laptop stand and mouse and keyboard. In order to claim up to £150 back, employees must submit an expense claim form through Sonichub along with a copy of their receipt.

16.1.2 If employees require an ergonomic office chair, Sonic Healthcare UK will reimburse up to £200. This can be claimed back by submitting an expense claim form through SonicHub/CoreHR along with a copy of their receipt. Alternatively, the company can order an ergonomic chair on an employee's behalf.

16.1.3 Sonic Healthcare UK staff wanting to request additional equipment can complete a business case. Requests will be considered on a case by case basis, and these will be reviewed by the Head of Department and the relevant department. As part of the Health and Safety Risk assessment, equipment needs may be identified and can be discussed between the line manager and H&S department, where appropriate.

16.1.4 This policy is subject to review of our Executive Directors and may be subject to change or withdrawal.

17 Document approval.

Document Approvals are recorded within the document record card within Sonic Healthcare UKs electronic quality management system (e-QMS).

Approved documents will be marked as active in the footer of the document. Documents that are not marked approved are not considered controlled. Printed copies are not permitted. Records of approval and reference copies of procedures are available from HR@tdlpathology.com.

18 Change Details

Change Request number	Change Detail	Implemented in Version Number
N/A	N/A	N/A

Annex 1 Checklist for homeworking

This is to ensure that both the company and you (employee) have everything in place to assist in the setting up of home working. Please ensure you and your manager provide a copy of this document to HR and keep a copy for your record of actions taken.

	Action	Completed (Insert date & notes)
1	Employer to make sure employee has a suitable area at home to work	
2	Employer to make sure employee has/is provided with:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Furniture 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone (or reasonable access to office phone) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT access 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate internet connection 	
3	Employee to check home insurance covers homeworking and a claim from a third party	
4	Employer to check its insurance covers business equipment in the homeworker's home and a claim from a third party	
5	Employer to carry out a health and safety risk assessment	
6	Employee to tell their mortgage provider/landlord of their plan to work from home and to check they are allowed to under their mortgage or rent agreement	
7	Employee to check if business rates will have to be paid	
8	Employer and employee to agree keeping in touch through, for example:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone/Zoom®/email 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned meetings at the main office/base 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned meetings through digital means 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-operation with colleagues 	
9	Employer and employee to agree how often the employee will attend the main base/office	
10	Employer and employee to agree how performance will be monitored and Managed.	
11	Employer and employee to agree any arrangements for claiming expenses, what can be claimed, how, when and what is taxable.	
12	Employer and employee to agree how often the homeworking arrangement	

	will be reviewed, and when and where review meetings will be held – if a trial period has been agreed, when that will be assessed, and what will happen if it doesn't work out	
13	Employer retain consent form below, and Employer and employee to sign it to show details of the homeworking arrangement have been agreed.	
14	Employer to check IT support is in place including what will be provided by who, when and how	

I, _____ agree that I may be asked to work from home, where it is appropriate to do so based on my role. I have undertaken the steps above to ensure I am able to work from home and I have completed the necessary risk assessment outlined in the working from home policy.

Signed:

Date:

Manager Name:

Manager Signature:

Annex 2 Homeworking Self-Assessment Checklist.

Thank you for completing this form. It will be used to assist the Company in ensuring that your working conditions at home comply with current best practice. Return this form to line manager to ensure any adaptations are noted and acted upon

Name:	Date of completion:
Address:	Department:

Fire	Yes	No	Comments
Is the work area tidy?			
Are waste materials regularly disposed of?			
Are exit routes clear?			
Do you have an escape plan?			<i>Know exactly what to do in an emergency</i>
Is a smoke alarm fitted?			<i>Alarms should be tested weekly & batteries as required or at least annually</i>
Do you have a suitable fire extinguisher readily at hand?			
Have you been trained how to use the fire extinguisher safely?			

Electrical Equipment <i>[either the Company's or your own but used for Company work].</i>	Yes	No	Comments
Is electrical supply adequate (i.e. sufficient sockets)?			
Any apparent damage?			<i>Cracked casing, missing screws, etc.,</i>
Any evidence of overheating?			<i>Look for discolouration</i>
Any obvious damage to leads or plugs?			
Are the cables secure in all plugs?			

Slips Trips & Falls [Work areas]	Yes	No	Comments
Floor coverings sound, and without defects?			
Are walkways clear of tripping hazards e.g. trailing cables?			
When seated at your desk can you move your legs & upper body together without twisting			

Working Environment	Yes	No	Comments
Do you have a room at home which will be used specifically as an office base?			If no; then in which room will the work be undertaken?
Is there sufficient space in the room to carry out your role effectively?			
Is the temperature reasonable?			
Is the ventilation comfortable?			<i>No drafts.</i>
Do you have adequate lighting, including any necessary task lighting?			

Manual Handling	Yes	No	Comments
Are you likely to have to carry or move any heavy loads in the home as part of your role?			If yes; then a manual handling risk assessment should be carried out.
Have you completed your online Manual Handling training?			

Display Screen Equipment (DSE)	Yes	No	Comments
Do you use DSE for more than an hour a day on a regular basis?			
Are you aware of the Company's policy on eye tests/provision of glasses for DSE users			

Working Alone	Yes	No	Comments
Have you discussed the need for a 'call in' procedure with your manager?			
Do you carry a mobile phone?			
Do you require a personal attack alarm?			

Hazardous Substances / Processes	Yes	No	Comments
Will you be expected to carry out any work with hazardous substances?			<i>Other than normal domestic products or low risk commercial items [tip-ex, etc.]</i>
If yes, has a COSHH assessment been completed & passed to you for action?			
If yes, have you agreed with your manager on the provision of any personal protective equipment you may need?			

Accidents / first Aid	Yes	No	Comments
Do you know the procedure for reporting any accidents or work related illness?			<i>All work related accidents [including those that take place in your home whilst working] must be reported using the internal reporting procedures.</i>
Do you have a first aid kit available when working at home?			

Well-being	Yes	No	Comments
Do you suffer any discomfort or ill health, stress mental ill health that you believe has resulted from your work?			<i>If yes, report to your line manager &/or the HR Department.</i>

Security	Yes	No	Comments
Is final exit door secured by mortice deadlock?			
All other external doors similarly secured or by Morticed security bolts?			
Do key operated window locks secure all accessible windows? Laptop and confidential files locked away when not in use?			

Company Supplied Equipment (list below)	Serial No.

Any other comments you have regarding your working environment, please list here

Employee Signature:

Date:.....

Risk Assessment Completed **Yes** **No**

Line Manager Signature:.....

Date: