

Central England Area Quakers Meeting (CEAQM)

Hybrid Working Policy 2022

1. Principles

1.1. Central England Area Quakers Meeting (“the employer”) believes that its workforce is its most valuable asset and is committed to attracting and retaining the very best talent. It also appreciates that the UK workforce is becoming increasingly diverse and includes a high percentage of parents and individuals with caring responsibilities, as well as those whose interests and aspirations impact on their time.

1.2. We recognise the importance of helping employees balance their work and home lives by offering flexible working arrangements that enable them to balance their work commitments with other priorities. One such flexible working arrangement is hybrid working.

2. Scope of this policy

2.1. This policy is applicable to all employees.

2.2. This policy is non-contractual and may be updated at any time.

3. What is hybrid working?

3.1. Hybrid working is defined as a working arrangement where employees conduct their duties both in the workplace and remotely, such as from home. Whilst working remotely, employees maintain the same contractual obligations, such as core working hours.

3.2. There are two main categories of hybrid working:

- *Occasional/ad hoc hybrid working*: this arises in relation to specific pieces of work or for specific periods. It does not follow a regular pattern and is subject to the prior approval of a line manager. It may be granted as part of a phased return to work after maternity or sickness absence, or be a temporary arrangement due to family commitments or domestic circumstances
- *Regular hybrid working*: this is an agreement between the employer and the employee for a permanent combination of homeworking and attendance at a the employer workplace, on a regular and on-going basis.

3.3. Whatever the circumstances leading to a situation where employees are moved into, or recruited under, a hybrid working arrangement, this policy applies and all employees must comply with the requirements set out below.

4. Eligibility

4.1. Hybrid working is available for all employees employed at the employer.

4.2. Where hybrid working is suitable, employees will be eligible to make a request for hybrid working in the following circumstances:

- where the employee has successfully completed the probationary period/ a period of training attached to their job role
- where the employee's role does not involve supervisory duties that require undertaking in person alongside the team members involved
- where their home environment is suitable
- no aspect of the employee's recent appraisal was marked as unsatisfactory
- the employee's disciplinary record is clean.

4.3. the employer will carefully assess the needs and requirements of a role before determining how the hybrid working relationship will work. It will only be permitted where the employee's line manager is satisfied that the needs of the business can continue to be met while the employee works partly from home.

4.4. Hybrid working must be cost-effective and ensure that there is no significant increase in workload on colleagues.

5. Occasional/ad hoc

5.1. There may be occasions where, to enable completion of a particular project or piece of work, it would be beneficial to both the employer and the individual for the employee to work partly at home for an agreed period of time. In this situation the employee should discuss the requirement with their line manager.

5.2. Together the employee and line manager should consider and reach agreement on the temporary duration of hybrid working, the work to be delivered during this period, any equipment requirements and any implications on any other duties that the employee has. A decision will be taken on a case by case basis.

6. Making permanent hybrid working applications

6.1. Employees that wish to apply for permanent hybrid working should submit an application to their line manager.

6.2. If the request is for a permanent arrangement, it will be treated as a statutory flexible working request in accordance with our [Flexible Working Policy](#). Employees must have 26 weeks' continuous service to make a statutory request for flexible working and must not have made a prior request for flexible working within 12 months previous to the date of their request.

6.3. If the employee is not eligible to make a statutory flexible working request, they will need to wait until they are eligible to have their request for hybrid working considered.

6.4. Separate to requests from employees, managers may also seek to agree the implementation of permanent hybrid working arrangements.

7. Process for submitting applications for hybrid working

7.1. The line manager's prior authorisation is required for each occasion or series of occasions that an employee wishes to work partly from home. In making the decision the employee's line manager is responsible for ensuring that:

- the work is suited to hybrid working and there are clear and measurable objectives and outcomes
- the employee has the necessary skills and personal qualities to do this work
- there is no significant increase in the workload of colleagues as a result of the employee partly working from home
- the employee is able to provide an adequate and suitable workspace in the home
- arrangements are in place for effective communication between the employee and the workplace
- there are no adverse effects on budgets, costs or the quality of service delivery, and
- the authorising of hybrid working will not adversely affect the smooth running or overall performance of the service.

7.2. Furthermore, agreement for hybrid working is totally dependent upon certain criteria being fulfilled. The employee needs to:

- be sufficiently self-motivated to manage their workload independently, and under their own initiative
- be adaptable in order to solve problems and different pressures associated with working alone
- not have commitments in the office at the time they wish to work from home
- have notified their manager of their hours of work and location
- have left a contact telephone number and email address, and be available on both during the nominated working times
- comply with the employer's policies including holiday, sickness absence, performance review etc.

7.3. Where hybrid working is being considered on a regular basis the manager will take appropriate advice and will also check whether the employee's home is capable of complying with current Health and Safety requirements. This will involve ensuring a home working risk assessment is undertaken (see later sections) which will consider a number of health and safety factors. Managers responding to hybrid working requests must do so in accordance with the flexible working policy and any refusal must be for one of the eight prescribed reasons as set out in the legislation.

8. Trial periods and contracts

8.1. For any occasional /ad hoc hybrid working there is no requirement for any trial periods or changes to the employee's contract of employment.

8.2. If it is agreed that an employee works partly from home on a regular ongoing basis, a reasonable trial period may be appropriate. This will be agreed with the employee and confirmed in writing: usually the employee will be given a variation to their contract of employment, tailored to suit the hybrid working arrangements and including details of any trial period.

8.3. During the trial period, the employee and line manager will review the arrangements. Either party may propose reasonable amendments to the terms of the arrangement to facilitate a smoother working arrangement. If a request to return to full office based work is made by the employee, every attempt will be made to agree to this.

8.4. At the end of the trial period, if the line manager determines that the trial has been successful, the hybrid working arrangements can continue. A contract variation will set out the permanent terms of the arrangement for the employee to work partly from home.

8.5. During or at the end of the trial period, if either the employee or the employer comes to the view that the arrangement is not working, a return to full office-based working may be required.

8.6. The employer reserves the right to bring the hybrid working arrangement to an end at any time during or at the end of the trial period; this would usually be where the arrangements have been unreasonable or unworkable, or the employee's work quality etc has suffered to the detriment of the employer. We aim to give reasonable notice in these circumstances.

9. Equipment

9.1. Occasional/ad hoc work from home will not normally result in the employee being provided any equipment by the employer for use at home. It may be applicable in some instances for employees to use the employer equipment, e.g. a shared laptop or mobile phone, for the purposes of working from home. In this case, permission must be granted by the manager in advance of the equipment being removed from the office.

9.2. For regular hybrid workers the employer may provide equipment as required, this will be agreed with each individual employee. Where this is done, the equipment will remain the property of the employer, and as such we will have right of access to the equipment. If an item of equipment is deemed necessary for work, the employee should contact their manager with details of their request.

9.3. An inventory of all equipment provided will be kept by the employee's manager; all equipment and furniture provided by the employer will remain the property of the employer at all times. On termination of either the home working arrangement or the employee's employment, the equipment must be returned to the employer.

9.4. Employees are expected to ensure that proper care is taken of the equipment and materials provided by the employer and that it is used in accordance with the employer's [Staff IT policy](#) and procedures.

9.5. Where an employee uses personal equipment for work purposes, the equipment remains their responsibility and the employer is not liable for any loss, damage, repair or replacement of any such equipment. Equipment should be used in accordance with our [Staff IT Policy](#) and [Data Protection Policies](#).

9.6. Hybrid workers are responsible for ensuring that they have adequate broadband and telephone facilities at home.

9.7. For occasional hybrid working, the costs of electricity, water, heating, telephone, broadband and other utilities) will not be covered by the employer; these costs remain the employee's responsibility.

10. Running costs, expenses and tax implications

10.1. For occasional hybrid working and where employees have applied to undertake hybrid working, the costs of electricity, water, heating, telephone, broadband and other utilities will not be covered by the employer; these costs remain the employee's responsibility. Employees should consult the HMRC webpages on "[Claim tax relief for your job expenses](#)".

10.2. For regular hybrid working for employees where there are no sufficient facilities at the workplace and who have been told to work hybrid or from home by the employer, [subject to eligibility](#), the employer will reimburse the employee the maximum payment allowable under HMRC rules in respect of their broadband internet account and utilities costs associated with the use of their home for business purposes. This payment will be included in their monthly salary.

10.3. Any equipment provided by the employer is intended solely for business use by the employee only. Provided this requirement is adhered to, hybrid workers will not be subject to additional taxation.

11. Data Protection

Whether occasional or regular hybrid working, employees must keep the employer's data and materials safe and secure at all times, ensuring sufficient precautions are being taken to maintain confidentiality in accordance with our [Staff IT Policy](#) and [Data Protection Policies](#).

12. Hours of work

12.1. Employees are required to work their contracted hours whilst working from home. Any variation of the agreed working pattern must be agreed with the manager in advance. All employees who wish to change their hours of work (e.g. from full time to part time, part time to full time, job share etc) should submit a flexible working

request (subject to meeting eligibility requirements). Employees can request the variation of hours at the time of the hybrid working request.

13. Health and Safety

13.1. The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HASAWA) places duties on employers, self-employed people and employees. Under the HASAWA, employers have a duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of their employees, including hybrid workers who work a proportion of their contractual hours from home.

13.2. Most of the Regulations made under the HASAWA apply to workers working from home as well as at an employer's workplace. These include, for example, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the Display Screen Equipment Regulations 1992, the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992, the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 and the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended) (COSHH). Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, employers are required to do a risk assessment of the work activities carried out by hybrid workers.

13.3. the employer's health and safety policies apply to hybrid workers as they do to all employees. Hybrid workers themselves must also take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of anyone else who may be affected by their actions or omissions, and are required to comply with the following considerations in respect of the space utilised as their workplace in their home environment.

14. Risk assessment

14.1. A risk assessment on the workplace and the working arrangements will be carried out with each employee for whom hybrid working is being considered on a regular basis. This will take into account any personal characteristics (e.g. disability, location of home). Completing a risk assessment involves identifying the hazards relating to the home worker's work activities and deciding whether enough steps have been, or can be, taken to prevent harm to them or to anyone else who may be affected by their work. A risk is the chance, great or small, that someone will be harmed by a hazard. A hazard is anything that may cause harm.

14.2. Any steps necessary from the risk assessments will be undertaken to ensure the hybrid worker has a safe workplace.

14.3. A specific risk assessment will be done with hybrid based employees who inform their manager that they are pregnant.

14.4. If the risk assessment highlights risks that cannot be resolved by reasonable means, the hybrid working arrangement cannot commence until such issues have been resolved. The employer reserves the right to withdraw their consent for hybrid working if subsequent risk assessments (for example, because the employee moved home) returns with issues that cannot be resolved.

15. Electrical equipment

15.1. All employees including those who work partly from home, are required to use all equipment supplied by the employer safely and in accordance with best practice and manufacturer's guidelines. Any electrical equipment provided by the employer will be checked for safety, but home workers will be responsible for any other equipment used by them in their work activities and will continue to be responsible for the safety of electrical sockets and wiring in their home.

15.2. Home workers are required to immediately report any equipment defects to their manager.

16. Fire hazards

16.1. The following safety rules apply with respect to fire:

- All hybrid workers are advised to install one or more smoke alarms at home
- Electrical equipment should be switched off at night and when away from the home
- If an unaccompanied home worker smokes whilst working in their home, the usual fire precautions should be taken and cigarettes or matches should not be discarded into waste paper baskets
- A clear exit that is not obstructed by e.g. bags, furniture or boxes etc should be maintained at all times
- Where there are fire extinguishers, these should be kept in an appropriate position and maintained regularly.

17. Hazardous substances

17.1. The safety of any substances provided by the employer to the hybrid worker will be suitably labelled with the appropriate information supplied in relation to any substances which are hazardous to health, so that employees can identify these.

18. Manual handling

18.1. Hybrid workers should not lift heavy or awkward items by themselves and should take care to avoid the risk of injury by lifting any objects properly and asking for help, if available. Where help is not available, the load should be reduced where possible and all sensible precautions taken to minimise risk to the individual.

19. Housekeeping

19.1. At home hybrid workers are requested to:

- ensure that they have adequate workspace either in a separate room in the house or a separate work area
- ensure that there are no trailing leads that they might trip over
- keep work areas free of clutter as much as possible

- ensure that their work area is maintained to work in a safe and healthy environment
- ensure that lighting and heating and ventilation is adequate.

20. Security

20.1. Hybrid workers are responsible for ensuring that the same standards of security of information and equipment that would apply in the office are maintained.

20.2. The line manager will advise on the security measures that must be taken to protect the information used by the hybrid worker. This may include locking devices for computer equipment, arrangements for transfer of data between the office and the home and making arrangements for the disposal of confidential waste.

20.3. Hybrid workers must not reveal to service users or other external stakeholders that they are working from home, nor provide their personal address or contact details. Any meetings between the employee and service users or external stakeholders must take place either at the employer's offices or some other appropriate work venue.

21. Tax implications

21.1. Any equipment provided by the employer is intended solely for business use by the employee only. Provided this requirement is adhered to, hybrid workers will not be subject to additional taxation.

22. Interested parties

22.1. Before starting any form of home working, the worker should inform any party with an interest in their property of the intention to work partly from home. There may be terms or conditions, leases, restraints or covenants, for example in the mortgage or title deed, which prevent working at home and it is the worker's responsibility to make appropriate arrangements.

23. Insurance

23.1. Home working may invalidate an employee's home contents insurance policy; hybrid workers are therefore required to ensure that their policy covers them for working at home, and should cover the furniture and equipment installed by the employer in their home. the employer reserves the right to request sight of the policy wording before home working commences; a copy may be taken for the employee's personal file.

23.2. The employer will potentially be liable at all times for loss, damage or injury caused by furniture and equipment which it has installed, irrespective of who suffered the loss. the employer will not be liable for any loss, injury or damage that is not directly connected with the furniture or equipment that it has installed. Home workers must prevent unauthorised use of furniture and/or equipment belonging to the employer.

24. Expenses

24.1. Our normal expenses procedure applies to hybrid workers.

24.2. However, where hybrid workers travel between their home and usual work locations as defined in their contract of employment, travel expenses do not apply.

25. Policy implementation and review

25.1. This policy is implemented with effect from 1st January 2023. The CEAQM Employment committee has overall responsibility for implementing and monitoring this policy, which will be reviewed on a regular basis following its implementation and may be changed from time to time.

25.2. Any queries or comments about this policy should be addressed to your line-manager.

Agreed by CEQ Employment Committee November 2022

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Version 1