

Agile Working

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Summary of Changes

Section	Change

Agile (Remote) Working Procedure

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1.0 Introduction

This procedure supports the Agile Working Policy [HR13] and outlines the process to be followed as well as the remote working arrangements where staff are not working from an Ark owned or leased office space.

This procedure details guidance for staff to ensure that they are kept safe and are supported appropriately by Ark and their line manager when they are not working in an Ark owned or leased office space. See Appendix 1 for the checklist of required activities when out with a normal office environment. Appendix 2 provides the checklist for a normal office environment,

2.0 Health & Safety

Remote workers are covered by employer and employee responsibilities under Health and safety legislation. Ark has a duty under health and safety legislation to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all employees. Equally, all employees are required to take reasonable care at work for their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions at work.

Remote working does not remove Ark from the ultimate responsibility for risk assessments. To ensure that Health and Safety standards are maintained, it may be necessary for Ark representatives to visit the remote worker's home to conduct health and safety risk assessments. Such visits will be prearranged and at a mutually convenient time. However, where this is not practicable, employees will receive information and guidance, to allow them to assess the risks of their working environment, referring any problems or issues that they cannot deal with themselves to their manager or Health & Safety Advisor.

Employees therefore have a responsibility for their own and others health and safety while they are carrying out work activities regardless of the work location in accordance with the Ark Health and Safety policies and procedures.

All employees should familiarise themselves with the health and safety policies associated with remote working and ensure that they understand their personal responsibilities. This includes the following:

- Display Screen Equipment Policy and Procedure [HS09]
- Display Screen Equipment Self Assessment form [HS09]
- Lone Working [HS12]
- Stress at Work [HS20]
- Extra Duty of Care [HS21]
- Fire Safety [HS05]

A Display Screen Equipment Assessment must be carried out (see Appendix 3). Where a remote worker does not have a suitable work station already set up at home, Ark will support the employee to create this space by providing a small budget (max £50) to purchase a desk and will arrange for their chair from the Priory to be taken home if necessary. Receipts must be presented to claim expenses.

The basic principles of fire prevention should be adhered to by remote workers.

Smoke detectors should be fitted and operational and it will be the employee's responsibility to ensure it is maintained and in working order.

Electrical equipment should always be switched off at the end of the working day.

Remote workers should know the exit route from the property in event of fire, not store combustible materials like paper files near a heat source or where they would endanger means of escape. It is the remote workers responsibility to have a competent person advise and repair any faults or damage to electrical circuits at home

3.0 Staff Well-Being

Staff well-being is paramount to the success of remote working and Ark recognises that being able to separate home and working life is crucial.

Ark provide an Employee Assistance Programme via Care First that is free to Ark employees, to offer help and advice on a wide range of topics which are listed below:

Work life balance	Relationships	Childcare Information
Health and well-being	Debt	Disability and Illness
Education	Consumer Rights	Workplace Pressure
Careers	Bereavement and loss	Stress
Elder care information	Life Events	Immigration
Anxiety and depression	Family Issues	Bullying and Harassment

There is no need to ask Ark or a line manager for permission to use Care First. The contact details are: **0808 168 2143** and staff will be able to speak to a professional counsellor or an information specialist 24 hours a day 365 days a year.

Care First can provide booklets, articles and information on support services in local areas and even short term face-to-face counselling when required all completely confidentially.

The website offers extensive resources including articles on health, issues at home, issues in the work place, relationships, childcare information and online counselling in real-time.

This can be accessed here www.carefirst-lifestyle.co.uk or via Ark's website. To access it on Ark's website go to the home page, click on the staff portal, where you will see Employee Assistance Programme. Login using the username and password provided below:

USERNAME: Arkhousing

PASSWORD: Association

Care First also have an APP for mobile phones which can be downloaded from Play Store or App Store. The App is called CF Zest and staff will need to login and create a password then can set up an account. Once logged on, a wellbeing assessment can be carried out and the App will score each individual and support the setting of goals to improve health and wellbeing. The App also has a lot of good information regarding healthy eating and exercises.

4.0 Individual & Team Support

Remote working requires Ark and line managers to put in place appropriate support for staff and teams to ensure normal practice is followed as much as possible. Where teams or individuals are working remotely Ark will:

- Ensure regular team meetings take place at least quarterly and that all staff have access to attend either in person or by the use of technology
- Ensure regular communications with the teams via email, group chats, phone calls, updates
- All staff will be provided with regular supervision in line with requirements as set out in Ark's Performance Management Policy [HR05]. Diary bookings should be timetabled and booked in advance. Remote workers should maintain regular contact with their manager and colleagues, and should not allow more than one week to pass without 'touching base' to catch up on organisational and staff issues
- Clear objectives and targets will be agreed to ensure that output is measurable and performance can be monitored
- Remote workers will have access to development opportunities and will discuss their career ambitions with their line manager through normal 1:1's and agree if and how Ark can support
- Remote workers will be expected to agree their working hours and availability with their line manager. Flexibility can be applied providing that objectives and outputs are delivered as agreed between the staff member and line manager. The outlook diary of the staff member should be updated to show availability and non-availability

- Trust will be given to remote workers to perform their job role and training to ensure those employees, especially new staff, have gained enough information and absorbed enough of Ark's culture to be effective and comfortable in their role
- All staff will be expected to make use of their annual leave throughout the year and must ensure that the statutory minimum is used each year i.e. 28 days, full time equivalent
- The easy access to work when alone or at home can make it particularly difficult to stop working during busy periods. All staff are encouraged to take regular breaks, stretch and get some fresh air
- Normal absence reporting procedures apply for staff who are working remotely
- Ensure that the same standards are applied to remote workers and office workers in all aspects of employment and that all of the team responsibilities are transparent to avoid judgement being applied to those that are working remotely

5.0 Line Managers Support

As a manager of a remote or disperse team, Ark will provide support and guidance to ensure that managers have the skills required to manage performance of the team and individual team members, no matter where their work base is.

All line managers will be provided training relating to:

- Managing remote teams
- Appropriate and regular communications
- Health & Safety requirements for line managers
- Ark's Performance Management Policy and process
- Objective setting – team and individual
- Chairing remote meetings
- Ark Values

5.1 Ark's Values

It is essential that line managers operate within the Values of Ark and that openness and transparency is a focus to ensure that trust is gained in the working relationship with the team and individuals within the team. Line managers must respect each team members personal circumstances and work with individuals to create a positive working relationship and environment.

6.0 Digital & Technology

Ark will ensure that remote workers are provided with the equipment and technology required to carry out their role. The ICT Team will ensure the following is provided (if necessary):

- Laptop and/or desktop
- Monitor
- Keyboard
- Mouse
- Mobile Phone
- Access to MS Teams or some other form of remote meeting software
- Ability to connect remotely via Citrix
- Remote support from ICT for issues

6.1 Ark Equipment

All ICT equipment (including portable computer devices) supplied to staff is the property of Ark. It must be returned upon the request of Ark to allow essential maintenance work and support. All ICT equipment will be supplied by Ark's ICT Department and hardware and software must only be provided by Ark.

Equipment should not be left where it would attract the interests of the opportunist thief. In the home it should also be located out of sight of the casual visitor. For remote working it is recommended that the office area of the house should be kept separate from the rest of the house where possible. Wherever possible equipment must be secured whenever it is not in use.

Staff must ensure that user names and passwords are kept in a separate location to the portable computer device at all times. Wherever possible all removable media devices, paper documentation and computer device, should be securely stored.

ICT reserve the right to remotely deploy critical system and software updates, anti-virus management and anti-virus software updates. These updates will be deployed every Friday, where required, (or the next online access thereafter) and as such will require system restart(s).

Non-critical but recommended software maintenance (for software such as Citrix Workspace and Microsoft Teams) to be undertaken routinely twice a year as part of an

ongoing system health checks. Remote system health checks will be scheduled in advance and all users will be required to allocate time within their workload to accommodate this procedure.

6.2 Access Controls

It is essential that access to all personal and sensitive information is controlled. This can be done through physical controls, such as locking the home office or locking the computer's keyboard. Alternatively, or in addition, this can be done logically such as by password controls or User Login controls.

Computer devices should be switched off, logged off, or the keyboard locked when left unattended, even if only for a few minutes.

Access to the Internet from Ark owned ICT equipment, should only be allowed via onward connection to Ark's Citrix Servers and not directly to the Internet.

6.3 Access Controls

It is the staff members' responsibility to ensure that the following points are adhered to at all times:

- Do not install any personal screen savers on to an Ark owned device
- Will not change the configuration of any Ark owned device
- Will not install any hardware to or inside any Ark owned device, unless authorised by the ICT Department
- Will allow the installation and maintenance of Ark installed Anti Virus updates immediately
- To inform Ark's ICT Department of any Ark owned device message relating to configuration changes
- Store all Ark business data on the server network and not held on the device
- Report all issues to Ark's ICT Helpdesk
- Do not remove or deface any asset registration number
- Request any new or changes to user registration from the staff members Line Manager. Managers must state which applications users require access to
- Requests for upgrades of hardware or software must be approved by Ark's ICT Department. Equipment and software will then be purchased and installed by Ark's ICT Department

- Ark equipment can be used for personal use by staff so long as it is not used in relation to an external business. Only software supplied and approved by Ark can be used (e.g. Word, Excel, Adobe, etc.)
- No family members may use the ICT equipment. The ICT equipment is supplied for the staff members' sole use
- Ensure that reasonable care is taken of the ICT equipment supplied. Where any fault in the equipment has been caused by the user, Ark may recover the costs of repair if the repair is not covered by Ark's insurance policies
- The user should seek advice from Ark before taking any Ark owned ICT equipment outside the United Kingdom. The equipment may not be covered by Ark's normal insurance against loss or theft and the equipment may be confiscated by Airport Security personnel
- Carry out regular health checks of all electrical equipment required to work remotely.

6.4 Governance

Ark may at any time, and without notice, request a software and hardware audit, and may be required to remove any equipment at the time of the audit for further inspection. Staff must co-operate fully with any such audit.

Any user who chooses to undertake work remotely in relation to their official duties using their own ICT equipment must understand that they are not permitted to hold any database, or carry out any processing of personal or sensitive information relating to Ark, its employees, or customers out with Ark's Citrix servers. Under no circumstances should data or sensitive data as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 ("the GDPR"); be emailed to a private non-Ark email address in breach of the Openness and Confidentiality Policy [G13], Privacy and Data Protection Policy [G24].

6.5 Staff Training

Staff working remotely will be provided with training relating to:

- Physical security dangers and risks associated with working within any remote office or mobile working location
- Supply and use of Ark ICT equipment
- Reporting issues to the ICT Department
- Access controls
- Removable media
- Staff responsibilities

- All other parameters around remote working as described within this procedure

7.0 Data Protection, Information Security and Confidentiality

Securing data when users work remotely is a serious issue; particularly in relation to Ark's need as an organisation to protect data in line with the requirements of the GDPR, as laid out in Openness and Confidentiality Policy [G13], Privacy and Data Protection Policy [G24]. These policies apply at all times regardless of the working location.

Devices are provided to assist staff to conduct official Ark business efficiently and effectively. This equipment, and any information stored on Ark devices, should be recognised as valuable organisational information assets and safeguarded appropriately.

Ark provides employees with access to the personal and confidential information they need to do their job and in turn expects the following:

- This information must not be disclosed to others who are not authorised to see it
- When working remotely, the employee is responsible for the security of equipment, files and any other information in their possession, including the transportation of such items whenever outside of the Ark office environment. It is particularly important to ensure that non-authorised personnel (in the home environment or whilst working remotely) cannot gain access to confidential or personal information
- All efforts must be made to secure Ark data and equipment and wherever possible, this equipment should be locked away
- Any paper-based documentation that contains personal or confidential information must be disposed of securely at the office in a confidential way e.g. shredded. Employees are encouraged to fully utilise any electronic document management systems, to reduce paper file storage, printing costs and increase security
- Printing using a personal printer is kept to a minimum
- Any loss of equipment or data should be reported immediately to the staff members line manager and the ICT Department

7.1 Risk Mitigation

By following this procedure and associated policy will mitigate the following risks:

- Equipment damage, loss or theft
- Accidental or deliberate overlooking by unauthorised individuals
- Unauthorised access to personal or sensitive information
- Unauthorised introduction of malicious software and viruses

- Potential sanctions against Ark or individuals imposed by the Information Commissioner's Office as a result of information loss or misuse
- Potential legal action against Ark or individuals as a result of information loss or misuse
- Ark's reputational damage as a result of information loss or misuse

7.2 Data Breaches

Non-compliance with this procedure could have a significant impact on organisational performance and any employee found to be in breach may be subject to Ark's Disciplinary policy and procedures.

8.0 Requesting Remote Working

8.1 Ark requests

Ark may require staff to work remotely from time to time or on a longer term basis where this is required and has been agreed with the staff member.

As part of this arrangement, Ark will ensure that they fulfil all requirements as laid out in this procedure and associated policy.

The suitability of the remote premises will be assessed and where this is the staff members home all Health & Safety assessments must be carried out and the remote working checklist completed by the staff member and line manager.

8.2 Staff Member

Employees who are interested in working remotely for all or part of each week should discuss this in the first instance with their Line Manager. If required this can then be agreed with the appropriate SLT member. The Head of People & Organisational Development and the appropriate SLT member must approve the request before an individual is authorised to progress on to becoming a remote worker.

Remote workers are managed in accordance with existing terms and conditions of employment, with the exception of specific amendments that are agreed to reflect the needs and nature of working remotely.

The place of work will be agreed with the line manager and the suitability of the premises will be assessed and remote working will only commence with Ark's agreement.

9.0 Remote Working Costs

All remote working expenses e.g. heating/lighting costs, internet connection are the responsibility of the individual. You may be able to claim tax relief (maximum of £6 per week) for additional household costs if you have to work at home on a regular basis, either for all or part of the week. This includes if you have to work from home because of coronavirus (COVID-19). You cannot claim tax relief if you choose to work from home (see Appendix 4).

When working remotely, staff are responsible for:

- Any energy or heating costs / cooling costs
- Providing their own internet connection that supports their type of work
- Providing a working environment that meets health and safety standards
- Consulting with anyone with an interest in their property such as mortgage lenders, landlords, leaseholders etc. of the agile working arrangement
- Consulting their buildings and Contents insurer of their working from home arrangement
- Utilising Ark facilities wherever possible in order to minimise personal costs i.e. photocopying, postal services etc.
- Not arranging meetings at their home, there are suitable and adequate meeting facilities in Ark premises and/or customer locations for undertaking meetings

10.0 Implementation and Review

10.1 Implementation

All Ark Managers are responsible for the implementation of this procedure by their staff.

10.2 Review

The Head of People & Organisational Development is responsible for the review of this procedure, at least every 3 years. Any changes to the associated policy as a result must be submitted to the Board of Management for approval.

Appendix 1 – Remote Worker Checklist

	Action	Completed (insert date & notes)
1	The Line Manager to check if the employee has a suitable area at home to work and wishes to work remotely (if not, move to Appendix 2)	
	Is this an arrangement that the employee would like longer term	
2	The employee has in place:	
	Appropriate furniture	
	Mobile phone	
	Adequate internet connection	
	Appropriate Company Equipment	
	Smoke detector in place	
	Health check of electrical equipment has been carried out	
3	Employee to check home insurance covers remote working	
4	Employee to carry out DSE assessment and review this with Line Manager	
5	Line manager and employee agree approach to keeping in touch:	
	Phone/MS Teams and how regular	
	Team meetings scheduled by Line Manager	
	Planned meetings at an office location	
	Planned meetings at other locations	
	Hours of work agreed and diary updated to show when contactable	
6	Line manager and employee to agree how often he / she will attend the office	
7	Line manager and employee to agree how performance will be monitored and managed	
8	Line manager and employee to agree any arrangements for claiming expenses	
9	Line manager and employee to agree how often the 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.	
10	If required, Line Manager to ensure the individual's contract of employment is amended to reflect the homeworking agreement	
11	Line Manager to update the Extra Duty of Care Risk Assessment if there is one in place	

Appendix 2 – Priory Worker Checklist

	Action	Completed (insert date & notes)
1	The Line Manager to check if the employee wishes to work from the Priory	
	How many days per week	
	What hours	
	Have they signed off the Priory Risk Assessment?	
	Is the employee in the high risk category?	
	Do they need further support with their well-being?	
	Would medical input or OH assist?	
	Is an Extra Duty of Care Risk Assessment required?	
	Does staff member fully understand evacuation procedures?	
	Have you put in place lone working arrangements?	
2	How many other team members are working from the Priory?	
	Does this exceed the maximum permitted as per the risk assessment?	
	Do start/finish times need to be staggered to avoid contact?	
	Have individuals been allocated their own workstation?	
3	Line manager and employee agree approach to keeping in touch:	
	Phone/MS Teams and how regular	
	Team meetings scheduled by Line Manager	
	Planned meetings at an office location	
	Planned meetings at other locations	
	Hours of work agreed and diary updated to show when contactable	

Appendix 3 – DSE Assessment

Ark Remote Working – Self Assessment

Name	
Job Title	

Tick yes or no. If not applicable write 'n/a'

Display screens / Laptops	Yes	No	Action needed
Is the screen height acceptable – top of screen in line with eyes Do you need a plinth or external keyboard. See Infographic for guidance.			
Is the image on the screen stable and free from flicker Contact ICT if you have any problems with your Ark laptop / monitor			
Have you had your eyes tested every 2 years as a DSE user Eye tests are free and DSE users have to get eyes tested – Ark will reimburse you £100 towards the cost of eyewear for use at DSE.			

Keyboard	Yes	No	Action needed
Are the symbols on the keyboard easy to read. Contact ICT if your keyboard symbols start to become unreadable. See Infographic for guidance.			
Is there adequate space at the front of the keyboard Are your elbows and forearms level with desk surface See Infographic for guidance.			

Mouse	Yes	No	Action needed
Is the device positioned correctly, close to the user and move smoothly. Keep mouse close to avoid overstretching			

Chair	Yes	No	Action needed
Does your current chair at home help you achieve a comfortable position. See Infographic for guidance You may need to arrange for your workplace chair to be used at home.			

Can the user place their feet flat on the floor. Use and item or footrest to allow upper legs to be slightly lower than hips			
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Desk / Work Surfaces	Yes	No	Action needed
Is the desk or work surface sufficiently large to allow a flexible and comfortable arrangement of all work equipment			
Is the desk / table strong and stable for use.			
Is there sufficient space below the desk so you can achieve a comfortable position. See Infographic for guidance			

Environment	Yes	No	Action needed
Is there sufficient space to enable easy access to the workstation			
Is there adequate natural and artificial lighting, suitable for screen work. You may need a desk lamp for winter working			
Does your workstation have access to fresh air / ventilation			
Are there any slip /trip /fall / electrical hazards in your work location that need to be removed. Wires / boxes / bags / files			

Equipment / Policy.	Yes	No	Action needed
Does the user need a document holder next to the screen? (E.g. if they transfer a lot of information from paper to screen).			
Do you take regular breaks away from the screen. See Infographic for guidance Stand and stretch every 20 mins and take lunch break / walk and stretch regularly.			
Have you read the Ark's home guidance info graph to help with your home working set up . Discuss any health issues connected to your remote working set up with your manager .			
You can also contact Ark's H&S adviser if you need support with homeworking safely.			

Staff / Manager review of temporary home working self assessment: Is any follow up action required for this assessment. Yes / No Date:
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User signature :

Manager signature :

ARK H&S adviser or others comments:

Actions / comments / issues relating to the workstation self assessment	Completed Yes / No
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	

Review date	Comments

Ark's Display Screen Equipment Policy and Guidance HS09 is available to view in Ark's Health and Safety Manual that is located in your main office or by accessing Ark's General Drive – Policies and Procedures – Health and Safety- HS09 Display Screen Equipment Policy.

Infographic Guidance can be found here <M:\Health & Safety\H&S Forms Templates\DSE Workstation\Working from Home Infographic.pdf>

Please keep this workplace assessment and review on an annual basis or when you change workplaces.

Appendix 4 – HMRC Tax

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/54800-customers-claim-tax-relief-for-working-from-home>

Click on the above link and scroll down until you see the link below:

HMRC is encouraging customers claiming tax relief for working from home to apply directly through GOV.UK.

Click on the above link and this will take you to the following page:

CLAIM TAX RELIEF FOR YOUR JOB EXPENSES then scroll down and click on the box **Check if you can claim.**

Answers the four questions and it should confirm that you can claim tax relief.

Click on **Claim your tax relief online.**

You will need to create a Government Gateway ID if you don't already have one. This only takes approximately 10 minutes and you will need various documents IE Driving Licence and Passport.

Enter your USERID and Password.

Click on **Accept and Continue** then scroll down to the bottom of the next page and click on **Start now.**

You will then be asked to enter the date you started working from home then **SUBMIT.**

Appendix 5 – Electrical Appliance health Check

Health checks should be carried out before electrical equipment is used, with the equipment disconnected. Employees should look for:

	Action	Comments
1	Damage to the lead including fraying, cuts or heavy scuffing, e.g. from floor box covers	
2	damage to the plug, e.g. to the cover or bent pins	
3	Tape applied to the lead to join leads together	
4	coloured wires visible where the lead joins the plug (the cable is not being gripped where it enters the plug)	
5	damage to the outer cover of the equipment itself, including loose parts or screws	
6	signs of overheating, such as burn marks or staining on the plug, lead or piece of equipment	
7	Equipment that has been used or stored in unsuitable conditions, such as wet or dusty environments or where water spills are possible	
8	Cables trapped under furniture or in floor boxes. These checks also apply to extension leads, plugs and sockets. A user check should be made when the equipment is taken into use and during use.	

Any faults should be reported to the relevant manager and the equipment taken out of use immediately