

## Diocese of Elphin – HR Policy Handbook

**Document Name:** E-Working Policy  
**Document No:** 3.1.9 (original)  
**Effective Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> February 2019  
**Written By:** Frank Mitchell, HR Advisor  
**Approved By:** +Kevin Doran, Bishop of Elphin



*Operating under the patronage of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, the Diocese of Elphin aims to provide staff members with a safe, caring and supportive Christian environment in which to carry out their work. Work objectives are to be advanced with due regard to the needs and dignity of each staff member and with due regard for the individuals and communities the diocese serves.*

*This document outlines the Diocesan policy on E-Working. It is applicable to parishes, offices, agencies and any entity operating under the governance of the Diocese of Elphin (hereafter referred to as "the employer"). Line Managers (Bishop, Priests, Deacons, Religious, Lay Personnel who supervise staff members) are responsible for communicating this policy and having it signed off by their staff member(s).*

### Introduction

An E-working staff member/volunteer is a staff member/volunteer who works part time or full time from home.

### Policy

E-working provides staff members/volunteers with flexibility in relation to working arrangements, under an E-working agreement/contract. There may be limited options to apply for full time/part time E-working working for some staff member/volunteers. This policy on E-working is contingent on completion of an assessment of feasibility (see below, page 2).

### Applicability

"The employer" will consider requests for E-working. However, the move from Office to E-working will be at the discretion of your line manager and all requests will be evaluated in line with the needs of "the employer". In all cases, the decision as to whether E-working may be granted will solely depend on management being satisfied that the needs of the diocese/parish/entity will not be adversely affected.

Any move from Office to E-working working will be for an initial trial period of 3 months to ensure that there is no negative impact on operational requirements. "The employer" reserves the right at the end of the trial period to revert individuals to office-based work where operational reasons dictate. Where this occurs, you will be given 1 (one) months' notice of the change.

### Pattern of work

A staff member/volunteer's days and hours of work will be stated in his or her contract of employment/volunteering agreement. For existing staff member/volunteers moving to E-working, their contract of employment/volunteering agreement will be amended or replaced to take account of new terms and conditions of employment. You will be notified in advance of any changes or variation to your hours of work. All staff members/volunteers are required to be flexible to meet the needs of "the employer" and may be required to work additional hours.

### Pay and benefits

Where there is a change in hours, salary and all benefits, will be prorated to reflect a staff member's E-working arrangements. Annual leave and public holiday benefits will be calculated in accordance with the provisions of the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997.

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### Promotion and training opportunities

E-working staff member/volunteer will be eligible in the same way as office-based staff members/volunteers for promotion and training and development opportunities.

### Return/move to full-time work

Staff member/volunteers who wish to move to office based work may apply in the normal way for full-time/part-time vacancies that occur. They should, in the first instance, inform their manager.

"The employer" reserves the right (outside the trial period) to revert individuals to office-based work where operational needs dictate. Where this occurs, you will be given 1 (one) months' notice of the change.

"The employer" will consider all requests from an E-working staff member/volunteer to revert back to office-based work taking into consideration the needs of the diocese/parish/entity.

### External working

Before taking up employment, "the employer" requires that all full-time/part-time E-working staff members contact their line manager in advance.

### Applications

If you wish to apply to move to E-working or return to office based work, you must apply in writing to your line manager.

All applications will be discussed with the individual in terms of his or her personal needs and the needs of "the employer". "The employer" will treat all requests seriously and will explore, where possible, how the request can be accommodated. The suitability of the application will be determined by objective criteria. Following the process of the application, the applicant will be informed of the manager's decision within a reasonable time frame. If the request is unsuccessful, the manager will inform the applicant of the grounds for refusal. Every effort will be made to facilitate the staff member/volunteer's request.

### Assessment of Feasibility

The following series of questions will assist in deciding if e-working is feasible.

#### Diocese/Parish/Entity

- What, if any, are the potential cost savings of having e-working? (rent, over-heads, etc)?
- How will e-working affect parishioners/clients/visitors (both internal and external)?
- What are the potential benefits, if any, of e-working?
- Is the role suitable for e-working? (No contact with parishioners/clients etc)
- What are the technology and security issues?

#### Job

- Has the job been analysed to determine whether the work is suitable for e-working?
- Has the effect on parishioners/clients/managers (both internal and external) been identified?
- What are the possible implications for team working, flexibility and quality of service?
- What will be the effect on staff members/volunteers who are not e-working?

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### Person

Has the staff member/volunteer shown evidence of:

- Good time management skills?
- Good problem solving and decision making skills?
- Good communication skills?
- An ability to cope with minimal social contact during working hours?
- A track record of good performance on the job?
- The personal discipline required to work at home?

### Operation

Once a decision has been made to go forward with an e-working arrangement, the following questions need to be addressed and included in a new agreement/contract.

### Working time

- Are working hours flexible or fixed?
- What core hours, if any, must be worked?
- What hours/days must the e-worker attend at the workplace?
- How will working time be recorded?

### Equipment

- What equipment and furniture, if any, is available for example: laptop, printer, desk, telephone, broadband?
- How will these be maintained?
- What insurance provisions are necessary?
- Is the staff member/volunteer allowed to use the furniture/computer for personal use?
- Is there provision for prevention of misuse?

### Security/Confidentiality

- What security measures are needed to protect "the employer's" property and information?
- Is there a need for a confidentiality agreement?
- Is the staff member familiar with the Diocesan Data Protection Policy 3.1.1
- Is there a secure place for storing equipment, documentation?
- Are normal password protections adequate?

### Health and Safety

- What measures will be made to ensure the safety of the home office?
- Is there permission to access the home office for health and safety inspection?
- When will a health and safety assessment take place?
- Is there adequate space available?

### Reporting procedures

- What reporting procedures need to be put in place?
- What communication structures should be formalised?
- What meetings must the staff member/volunteer attend?

### Social isolation

- What measures will be implemented to prevent social isolation?
- How will contact with managers and colleagues be maintained?
- What communication structures will be put in place to involve the staff member/volunteer?

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### Training

- What training in relation to working remotely may be required by the e-worker and e-worker's managers?
- How will normal training provision be accessed by the e-worker?

### Leave Arrangements

- What reporting procedures will be used with regard to sick leave absences?
- What application procedures will be used with regard to other leave arrangements (annual leave, compassionate leave, force majeure leave, etc)?
- Are there any specific arrangements that need to be made in relation to public holiday benefit?

### Monitoring/Review

- How will the e-working arrangement be monitored?
- What statistics or measurable outputs will be monitored to assess the effectiveness of the e-work arrangement?
- How will normal ongoing performance management operate?

### Expenses

- How will expense of running a home office, travel, phone, etc be managed?
- Have arrangements in relation to travel been clarified to ensure there are no additional costs involved?
- Have any tax implications been identified?

### Suspension of e-working

- A provision for temporarily suspending e-working arrangements where there are over-riding business needs or where there is a need for the staff member/volunteer to be based at the office needs to be understood and agreed.
- E-working arrangements will be suspended where performance/absence issues emerge?

### Termination

- Procedures/notice requirements will be put in place for terminating the e-work agreement.
- Provisions for returning organisation property at the end of the e-working arrangement need to be documented.
- The agreement for e-working includes a provision for terminating e-working arrangements where there are overriding business needs

Requirements arising out of the operational issues listed above will be documented in an agreement as an addendum to the staff member's contract of employment/volunteering agreement.

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### E-working risk assessment checklist

The following steps are a useful aid in completing a risk assessment for an e-worker:

1. hazards will need to be identified by the employer and the e-worker. Training of e-workers in identifying hazards may assist in this identification process. Alternatively the use of photographs to clearly identify the work station set up and any possible hazards may be beneficial;
2. who may be harmed by the hazards identified in the home. This may include the e-worker, children and any visitors who may come to the home;
3. employers must assess the risk of harm to the health and safety of those persons identified above;
4. when the potential risks have been assessed, the employer should consider what controls are needed to minimise the level of harm. Key to this is the information and training provided to the staff member working from home;
5. the risk assessment should be in writing and should be reviewed from time to time, when there is a change in the working procedures, conditions or the e-worker is having difficulties;
6. provide information regarding the correct set up of a workstation is essential.

*For further information please contact:*

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