

LONE, FLEXIBLE AND REMOTE WORKING POLICY

This policy outlines guidelines for Attic staff who work at the Attic Office, from home or from a venue or space utilised by Attic to carry out its activities. The intention is to ensure the safety of our staff as well as maximise their efficacy and productivity but at the same time making reasonable adjustments where required and giving more flexibility to their working lives.

Where staff are required to work alone, both the individual staff member and Attic have a duty to assess and reduce the risks which lone working presents.

This policy is designed to alert staff to the risks presented by lone working, to identify the responsibilities each person has in this situation, and to describe procedures which will minimise such risks. ([*Covid specific considerations](#))

Definitions

For ease of reference where this policy refers to 'employees' this includes but is not exclusive to: employees, freelancers, workers and volunteers of Attic Theatre Company.

1. **A lone worker** is a staff member who performs an activity that is carried out in isolation from other workers without close or direct supervision.
2. **Working from home** is a facility that enables staff to work away from the office, most notably with the use of digital technology, thereby reducing commuting time and potentially providing a more efficient and productive team.
3. **Flexible working** provides staff members with the opportunity for a healthy work life balance by not bound to fix working hours and freedom to schedule the work. It can also support staff with any parental or caring responsibilities.

Where this policy refers to 'lone working' this includes lone working, remote working and flexible working.

Attic has a commitment to:

- supporting staff both in establishing and maintaining safe working practices
- recognising and reducing risk
- the provision of appropriate support for staff with a clear understanding of responsibilities

Terms and scope

All employees with 26 weeks continuous service have the statutory right to request flexible working for any reason.

Not all jobs are suitable for home working. Staff can request to work from home only if their job duties permit it.

Work from home arrangements can be occasional, temporary or permanent.

Working from home does not alter staff's terms and conditions of engagement.

Reasons that could demand telecommuting include but are not limited to:

- Parenting
- Caregiving
- Bad weather
- Emergencies
- Medical reasons
- Work-life balance
- Overlong commute

Other reasons for working from home depend on staff and Attic's judgement

Both staff and Attic will consider these elements before asking/approving work from home:

- Is the staff member eligible by nature of their job?
- Are there any cybersecurity and data privacy concerns?
- Will collaboration with the staff team become difficult?
- Do staff have the necessary equipment or software installed at home?
- What are the conditions of staff's home/alternative place of work (noise, space, internet connection etc.)

To ensure that staff performance will not suffer in remote work arrangements, we advise our remote staff to:

- Choose a quiet and distraction-free working space.
- Have an internet connection that's adequate for their job.
- Dedicate their full attention to their job duties during working hours.
- Adhere to break and attendance schedules agreed upon with their manager.
- Ensure their schedules overlap with those of their team members for as long as is necessary to complete their job duties effectively.

It is the general responsibility of staff to inform Attic of any updates or changes to their remote working environment or situation. Should a staff member have concerns about their work from home set up it is their responsibility to feed this back to Attic for discussion and mitigation.

Policy and safeguarding

Whilst working from home staff are still required to adhere to all company policies and protocols.

Under no circumstances will any work or meetings in-person with vulnerable older or young people be conducted from a staff member's home. Failure to adhere to this will result in disciplinary action.

Attic owned IT equipment such as Laptops and printers used for work are covered by Attic's insurance policy. Attic will discuss insurance needs for personal equipment with staff. Attic may reimburse a portion of the coverage when applicable.

Data Protection, Privacy and Security

Equipment utilized by staff to undertake their role and/or that we provide is company property. Staff must keep it safe and avoid any misuse. Specifically, staff must:

- Keep their equipment password protected.
- Store equipment in a safe and clean space when not in use.
- Follow all data encryption, protection standards and settings including secure passwords and antivirus/malware software.

- Refrain from downloading suspicious, unauthorized or illegal software.
- Ensure that family members do not have access to Attic documentation and files.

Failure to adhere to this and any breach of data protection or cybersecurity may result in disciplinary action.

Costs/expenses

Staff (employees) may be eligible make a claim to Inland Revenue for tax relief on expenditure related to working from home. This will be processed as part of the PAYE payroll. Attic does not accept any liability for costs or other issues relating to home working except where these are specifically identified in this policy. If the staff member has requested to work from home expenses for heating, lighting etc., will not be reimbursed. Where circumstances necessitate that staff work from home internet services and utilities (e.g. water, gas and electricity) will not normally be paid or reimbursed unless they are extraneous to usual household provision. Call costs related to work duties will be reimbursed. Itemised billing is required.

Communication

It is essential that good communication is maintained at all times between Attic and staff. Both parties should plan and agree how they will communicate effectively with each other. These arrangements should be agreed and regularly reviewed. Attic will inform staff of meetings, activities and other events they would expect them to attend and will also ensure that staff are kept up-to-date with information and developments relevant to their work.

Personal Safety

- Staff may be exposed to risk because there is no-one to assist them and so before working alone, a risk assessment will be undertaken and shared with staff.
- Staff should take all reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety, as they would in any other circumstances. This should include provision to transport and keep secure any equipment needed to undertake the role as well as their own personal safety.
- Attic recommends that staff ensure they have a suitable working environment ie sufficient desk space, adequate lighting, heating, ventilation, an appropriate chair with lumbar support.
- Staff should also take adequate steps to ensure physical and mental well-being, including standing up from desks regularly (5 minutes every hour is recommended) as well as ensuring to take a full lunch break and sticking strictly to working hours. It is recommended that staff do other things to stay mentally and physically active outside of their working hours.
- Staff should avoid taking any undue risks such as working at height or manual handling when working alone. Should any instances occur the staff member should use their own discretion, keeping their personal safety as a priority and report that they were unable to fulfill the task accordingly. Attic will review the duties and implement measures to mitigate the risk.
- Attic holds adequate Employer's liability, however, are not liable for any accident or injury which contravenes this and/or Attic's Health and Safety Policy.
- Attic will ensure that there is a robust system in place for logging of hours worked and that this is reviewed and monitored regularly.
- Where staff work alone for extended periods and/or on a regular basis, Attic will make provision for regular contact, both to monitor the situation and to counter the effects of working in isolation.
- Where there is any reasonable doubt about the safety of a lone worker in a given situation, consideration should be given to sending a second worker or making other arrangements to undertake the task.

Attic reserves the right to withdraw working from home, lone and remote working initiatives. Reasonable notice of withdrawal shall be provided.

* In light of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic it has been necessary to take steps to ensure our staff and beneficiaries remain safe.

Attic recognises that Covid-19 has forced staff to work from home and that this has created a sudden change in normal routines. We understand that the impact means that some staff may have enhanced caring responsibilities that may make it more difficult to attend work. Staff are encouraged to discuss what any impact this may have and/or the hours that they are able to work. Attic is committed to working with staff to respond to individual needs with flexibility and consideration. This should be discussed and agreed with the General Manager at the first available opportunity.

Lone working may be necessitated due to lockdown's or social distancing requirements. At the time of writing live delivery is being resumed and we fully anticipate that by January 2021 activities can be delivered in person. However, we are mindful that the situation is ever changing and as such, may have to pivot our delivery from live to online activities, utilising digital platforms to continue to engage with those participants, teams and stakeholders that would most benefit from our services.

We will be reviewing the situation on an ongoing basis, balancing the need to safeguard staff and participants' health and wellbeing with the legislative measures in force as the pandemic progresses, at all times working in line with the protocols set in place by Attic and the venues we work in. We will therefore need to adopt a flexible approach between live and online delivery and will keep all staff updated regarding any decision-making in this area.

This procedure is owned by Attic Theatre Company
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