

8 February 2023



H Beaver

By email: fyi-request-21563-a2f3aa2d@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe H Beaver

INFORMATION REQUEST – Remote working

We write in response to your email dated 14 January 2023 in which you requested the following information:

- **I kindly request details on the total per year since 2019 of full time council employees who are permitted to work remotely (from home) 4 days or more per week.**
- **If possible please break down numbers to show amount who have temporary concessions to for remote work and those who have 4 days or more stipulated in their contract.**

We have considered your request in accordance with the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (“**LGOIMA**”) and respond as follows:

We do not collect data on employees who work from home. We have remote working guidelines (refer Annex A) and the ability to work from home/remotely depends on the role. Not all roles can work remotely. We encourage an open conversation between the manager and the employee to discuss the following:

- the needs of customers, both internal and external
- the needs of the team and TCC
- whether the nature of the work is suited to working remotely
- specific individual needs (where known).

These remote working arrangements are informal and are not recorded as part of an employee’s Individual Employment Agreement (contract).

If an employee requires a formal ‘Flexible Working Agreement’, this application is considered in alignment with part 6AA of the [Employment Relations Act 2000](#).

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

We may publish this response on our website as your request may be of interest to others. All personal information will be removed and only the question and answers will be seen.

If you wish to discuss this decision with us, please feel free to contact the writer.

Ngā mihi

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kath Norris', written in a cursive style.

Kath Norris
Team Leader
Democracy Services

Annex A – Working Remotely Guidelines

Working from home or other locations

Many of our people choose to work from locations other than the office for part of their working week. This flexibility is an important element of our accommodation planning, but more importantly it brings many benefits, including:

- better work-life balance (i.e. more flexibility of time for family, exercise and other interests and commitments)
- a feeling of being more trusted to work productively from home
- reduced travel and parking needs of our staff, freeing up space for other people
- increase in productivity for some staff
- increase in the uptake of digital collaboration tools
- modelling behaviours that contribute towards our city's sustainability.

Who can work remotely?

The ability to work remotely depends on your role – not all roles can work remotely. Your people leader will consider the following before agreeing to flexible arrangements:

- the needs of customers, both internal and external
- the needs of the team and TCC
- whether the nature of the work is suited to working remotely
- specific individual needs (where known).

Your responsibilities when working remotely

When working remotely, all of the usual employment obligations apply – the only thing that is different is your location.

You should ensure that you:

- only work from a location that is safe and suitable
- where possible, eliminate hazards to your health or safety. If this is not possible, reduce the risk as much as you can, by applying risk controls
- do not hold meetings with customers at your home. You may, at your discretion, host meetings at your home with work colleagues
- take your usual rest and meal breaks
- do not work during annual leave or sick leave periods specified on a medical certificate (remember to record leave in CHRIS)
- make necessary childcare arrangements and don't treat working from home as a substitute for childcare

Making the arrangements

Before working remotely, you need to discuss the options with your people leader and agree on the arrangements. In some situations, you may be required to submit a formal request in writing by filling in the flexible working application form.

Security of information and equipment

All policies that apply to staff who are working in the office, also apply when you are working remotely (and from home). It is your responsibility to keep all work information secure, especially customer records and any other sensitive material. It is also important that reasonable care is taken of company information, data and equipment.

Technology and equipment requirements

The council will supply a standard working from home kit and may supply additional technology to assist you to work remotely e.g. additional screen. When requesting to work remotely, think about the technology that may be needed to make it work. In the first instance, you should discuss your needs, based on your role and the percentage of time you will be working remotely, with your people leader.

Expenses

Working remotely should not create additional unidentified or unexpected personal costs for you or TCC.

If you are travelling to another office or location to work (other than your usual place of work) you will be responsible for all usual travel costs incurred when travelling to and from your remote work location.

The reimbursement of personal costs will be in line with council's expense policy.

Guidance for people leaders

If you are a people leader, check that your team members have all the office furniture, computer equipment and other aids they require to work safely and without risk to health.

1. **Think** about what could harm your people while working from home. This could include workspace set up, electrical wires or loss of social interaction with the team. Everyone is different, so take time to think about each member of your team.
2. **Talk** to your team members – they can help you identify the things that may cause harm and assess the level of risk. Some of your team may have care responsibilities at home or other factors that may impact their ability to work. Work with your team members to plan for each situation.
3. **Work together.** It might not be possible to put in place the ideal set up straight away, so work together to identify the best way to manage this in the short term.
4. **Check in.** Once you have worked together to identify things that could cause harm and put in place controls to manage them, check in regularly to see how things are going. Use regular one to one conversations to discuss any issues with desk set-ups, check in on their wellbeing and remind team members to report any injuries or near misses via Vault/Damstra.
5. **Take action.** If your team member is having problems or raises a concern, ensure the issue is captured in Vault/Damstra and seek assistance from your health and safety business partner to determine next steps.
6. **Encourage and promote** activities to ensure teams members stay connected. This could include team days, coffee catchups, quiz nights or social engagements. (Connect is one of the 5 ways to wellbeing at work)