

## **Introduction**

As a home-based organisation with no central office, all Creative Lives staff work from home. We recognise that working from home brings both opportunities and responsibilities, and we are committed to ensuring that all staff have the tools, support, and working conditions they need to work safely, effectively, and collaboratively.

This policy sets out our approach to home working, including health and safety, equipment, communication, wellbeing, and data security.

## **Principles of Home Working at Creative Lives**

- All staff work from home as the normal way of working at Creative Lives
- We trust staff to manage their working time responsibly, in line with agreed working patterns, outputs, and priorities
- Home working must not adversely affect service delivery, team collaboration, or individual wellbeing
- Regular communication, clear expectations, and shared responsibility for wellbeing are central to our approach
- Home working arrangements will be kept under review through regular one-to-ones and KPI check-ins, with flexibility to adjust where needed

## **Health, Safety, and Wellbeing**

Creative Lives and staff working from home have a shared responsibility to support their own health, safety, and wellbeing by:

- Completing a home working risk assessment (with support from their line manager) to identify and address any hazards in their home working environment
- Ensuring that their workspace is suitable for safe working, with appropriate lighting, seating, and equipment to reduce the risk of injury
- Taking regular breaks away from screens and avoiding prolonged periods of work without rest
- Reporting any health and safety concerns, including accidents or near misses, to their line manager as soon as possible

Line managers are responsible for discussing home working arrangements with their team members as part of their 1-1's and annual appraisal, reviewing risk assessments, and supporting staff to resolve any identified issues.

## **Equipment and Resources**

Creative Lives will provide reasonable equipment required to support safe and effective home working, which may include:

- A laptop or other IT equipment as needed for the role
- Contribution towards equipment to support safe home working (e.g. monitor, keyboard, mouse) where agreed with the line manager

## Creative Lives Home Working Policy

- Access to appropriate software, email, and shared drives or systems

Staff are responsible for:

- Taking reasonable care of any equipment provided by Creative Lives
- Ensuring the security of work-related information and equipment at home, in line with the Creative Lives GDPR Policy
- Reporting any issues with equipment to their line manager without delay

Where a health condition, disability, or other need requires a reasonable adjustment to be made, Creative Lives will work with the staff member to identify and implement appropriate solutions, in line with the Equality Act 2010. However, this policy does not imply that Creative Lives will fund general upgrades to home office setups where no specific legal or accessibility need exists. Staff are expected to maintain a safe and suitable working environment using the equipment provided.

### **Data Protection and Confidentiality**

All staff are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality and security of Creative Lives information when working from home. This includes:

- Using only Creative Lives devices for work-related activities
- Keeping devices password-protected and locked when not in use
- Storing any paperwork securely and disposing of confidential information appropriately
- Immediately reporting any data breaches or security incidents in line with the Creative Lives Data Protection Policy

Where staff occasionally choose to work from a café, library, co-working space or other shared location, they should take sensible steps to protect confidentiality.

This includes:

- Being mindful of conversations and screens when in public spaces
- Avoiding the use of unsecured public Wi-Fi
- Staff are expected to take reasonable precautions to ensure personal data and Creative Lives information remains secure, in line with our Data Protection Policy.

### **Availability, Communication, and Collaboration**

Staff are expected to:

- Be available and contactable during agreed working hours
- Keep their Google diary up to date with working hours, meetings, and availability
- Attend meetings (online or in person) as required by their role
- Engage actively in team communication and collaboration, using organisational platforms such as email, Google Workspace, Slack, or Zoom
- Notify their line manager of any periods of unavailability (e.g. sickness, medical appointments, caring responsibilities) following the normal absence reporting procedures

## Creative Lives Home Working Policy

Line managers are responsible for maintaining regular communication with team members, including check-ins and one-to-one meetings, to support wellbeing, share updates, and provide clarity around priorities.

### **Wellbeing and Work-Life Balance**

Creative Lives is committed to supporting staff wellbeing and positive work-life balance. This includes:

- Encouraging regular breaks and managing workload sustainably
- Supporting flexible working patterns where these can be accommodated alongside organisational needs
- Providing opportunities for social connection across the team online and where resources permit in person, recognising that remote working can present challenges around isolation and disconnection
- Offering access to support through line managers and wider organisational structures where wellbeing concerns arise

### **Reasonable Adjustments and Individual Needs**

Creative Lives is committed to creating an inclusive working environment. We will consider reasonable adjustments to home working arrangements to support staff with health conditions, disabilities, or other relevant needs, in line with the Creative Lives EDI Policy and the Equality Act 2010.

### **Review and Monitoring of Home Working Arrangements**

Home working arrangements will be reviewed regularly through one-to-ones and annual appraisals. Staff may request the option to use a hot desk facility, where this is available. Such requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account how the arrangement supports the wellbeing of the employee and the financial cost to Creative Lives.

### **Health and Safety Compliance**

Creative Lives will maintain records of home working risk assessments and monitor compliance through regular discussions between staff and line managers. Where health and safety concerns cannot be resolved, alternative arrangements will be considered to ensure staff wellbeing and safety.

### **Home Insurance**

Staff are advised to inform their home insurance provider that they are working from home in order to confirm that this does not affect the terms of their policy. This is particularly important if using a dedicated workspace, storing work-related materials, or using equipment provided by Creative Lives. Creative Lives is not responsible for the cost of any additional premiums or changes to insurance policies unless explicitly agreed as part of a reasonable adjustment.

### **HMRC**

Staff working from home may be eligible to claim tax relief on additional household costs, in line with HMRC guidance. Further information is available on

## Creative Lives Home Working Policy

the HMRC website, and staff are encouraged to check whether this applies to their circumstances.

<https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/working-at-home>

### **Creative Lives Home Working Self-Assessment Checklist**

This checklist supports Creative Lives staff to work safely and comfortably from home. It should be completed by each staff member and discussed with their line manager as part of the home working risk assessment process. If any issues are identified, these should be noted and actioned as appropriate.

#### **1. Workstation Setup**

- Do you have a suitable, dedicated space for working at home?
- Is your chair supportive and at the correct height for your desk or table?
- Is your screen positioned at eye level or adjustable to avoid neck strain?
- Is your keyboard and mouse positioned comfortably, allowing your wrists to remain straight?
- Is there sufficient space under your desk or table to move your legs freely?
- Do you have adequate lighting for your workspace (preferably natural light where possible)?
- Have you been provided with any necessary equipment (e.g. laptop, monitor, keyboard, mouse)?
- Is your equipment in good working order?

#### **2. Working Environment**

- Is your working area free from trip hazards such as loose cables or clutter?
- Is your working environment free from excessive noise or distractions during your working hours?
- Do you have suitable ventilation and temperature control in your working space?

#### **3. Working Practices**

- Do you take regular breaks away from your screen (e.g. 5–10 minutes every hour)?
- Are you managing your working hours responsibly and taking your agreed rest breaks?
- Do you feel able to maintain a balance between work and personal time?
- Do you feel comfortable to raise any health and safety or wellbeing concerns with your line manager?

#### **4. Communication and Support**

- Is your Google diary kept up to date with working hours, meetings, and availability?
- Are you able to stay connected with your line manager and team through regular check-ins and meetings?
- Do you have access to the IT systems, platforms, and shared drives you need to carry out your role effectively?

- Do you know how to report any IT issues or data protection concerns?

## **5. Wellbeing and Mental Health**

- Do you feel you have the support you need to manage your wellbeing while working from home?
- Are you aware of the options available if you need support with wellbeing or workload?
- Are you experiencing any feelings of isolation or disconnection from the team? (If yes, discuss support options with your line manager.)

## **6. Reasonable Adjustments / Individual Needs**

- Do you have any health conditions, disabilities, or other needs that require adjustments to your home working arrangements?
- Have these been discussed with your line manager and agreed actions put in place where needed?

## **7. Emergency Arrangements**

- Do you know who to contact if there is an emergency while you are working from home?
- Are your emergency contact details up to date with HR?

### **Signature (Staff Member):**

Name:

Date:

### **Signature (Line Manager):**

Name:

Date:

### **Actions Required (if any):**

[List agreed actions, responsibility, and target dates]