

2.1.20 WORK FROM HOME (WFH) AND WORKING REMOTELY

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this policy is to outline our guidelines for employees who from time to time are required to work from a location other than Windermere offices to fulfill their roles and duties and to also define conditions for working from home arrangements and obligations.

Working remotely has been a standard practice of Windermere for many years. This type of work has always focussed on meeting the needs of the consumer and to allow for flexibility in meeting them in places or spaces that best work for them and the service we are providing.

Windermere acknowledges that since the conclusion of the COVID-19 lockdown periods in Victoria (February 2022) the opportunity for Working from Home has remained a part of our Employee Value Proposition. At Windermere Working from Home is viewed as a mutually beneficial arrangement and appropriate for certain roles under certain circumstances by agreement.

This policy outlines the condition and boundaries regarding what Working from Home means for all Windermere employees, in accordance with the Ways of Working (WoW), by outlining the responsibilities, the scenarios for authorising and the conditions.

As outlined in the Ways of Working (WoW) Framework. Working from Home arrangements must be considered in line with the needs of consumers, operational requirements of the organisation, organisational and team operating rhythms, safety and security of individuals, resources and systems, and potential psychosocial hazards.

Working from Home agreements remain solely at the discretion of Windermere unless stipulated as a legislative requirement. Changes to work requirements or employee conditions will initiate review of the ongoing suitability of any existing Working from Home arrangements.

This policy operates in conjunction with the Outreach Safety policy where remote working and outreach services form part of the employee's daily activities. This policy does not outline Outreach Safety practices or requirements. All outreach employees are required to ensure they are familiar with the Outreach Safety policy.

Scope

This policy applies to all full-time, part-time, casual employees and contractors. The application of this policy will be considered on a case-by-case basis subject to the requirements of the role and operational needs of Windermere.

All Windermere employees are contracted as site-based employees with the requirement for attendance at a Windermere site for all standard hours as contained within their position description and employment agreement. Sites will be nominated based on role and operational needs of Windermere and will also be noted on each position description



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and employment agreement. Windermere reserves the right to alter the location as nominated on occasion based on the operational requirements of the business.

Work From Home and working from Alternative Remote Location opportunities and conditions are viewed as part of the Employee Value Proposition and not a contractual agreement.

Definitions

Working from home (WFH) - is working from the address stated on your Employment Agreement/Personnel File in ConnX that is your principal place of residence.

Alternative Remote Location - is working from an alternative residential location not stated on your Employment Agreement/Personnel File in ConnX that is approved under certain circumstance for occasional and defined period.

Working remotely - is working from another location that is not your WFH location, or approved Alternative Remote location, or a designated Windermere location, and is in general referred to as a 'remote location' where outreach work is performed.

Remote location - is a non-Windermere site where work is performed. This includes but is not limited to work performed at:

- a consumer's home or a mutually agreed location such as a café
- co-locations
- employee's vehicle or Windermere fleet vehicle
- courtroom
- school or community location to meet consumer needs or the needs of Windermere.

Anchor Day - scheduled site-based days to work face-to-face with their team as directed by the program Supervisor &/or Manager

Site-Based - is any Windermere office and /or other venues reasonably directed by the organisation (e.g. all staff forum, end of year event locations, face to face training etc)

IFA - is an individual flexible work arrangement form that is located on ConnX (go to: ConnX / My Details / Workflow Forms / Individual Flexible Work Arrangement).

Ways of Working (WoW) – A Framework that outlines opportunities and conditions for Working from Home as part of Windermere's flexible working arrangement as contained within the Flexible Working Policy. The Ways of Working (WoW) framework is located at: Intranet / Key Documents / Ways of Working Infographic.

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In conjunction with the flexible working policy and Windermere code of conduct, WFH may be considered on a case-by-case basis for employees with consideration to the inherent requirements of the role they are employed to fulfil including the needs and potential impact on consumers, operational requirements of the organisation, organisational and team operating rhythms, individual performance, safety and security of individuals, resources and systems, and potential psychosocial hazards.

All position descriptions will state whether or not working from home arrangements can be considered based on the inherent requirement of the role solely to support consideration of its availability to the employee.

Requests for work from home and working from an alternative remote location will be considered based on role requirements, point in time organisational preferences and be subject to review on a regular basis.

Working at a remote location to meet the needs of consumers as part of outreach practices are managed as part of the daily operations of service delivery.

Principles and Guidelines

WFH Approval Process

1. When an employee commences with Windermere, the private home address provided in the employment Agreement and personnel file in ConnX is deemed the principal place of residence unless advised otherwise during the course of employment. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that their home address is recorded correctly and is kept current at all times on ConnX. In accordance with this policy, this address will be deemed the WFH location.

WFH & WAYS OF WORKING REQUIREMENTS

1. In accordance with the Flexible Working at Windermere Policy and 'Ways of Working' framework, employees granted approval to WFH will be required to work from a Windermere office / site on nominated days including but not limited to: anchor days; team events, All Staff Forums, end of year celebrations; face to face training; supervision and any other requests in person at a Windermere site or another location as directed by the organisation.
2. Windermere reserves the right to request employees to attend a Windermere office or another location to fulfil organisation needs at any time during an employee's tenure at short notice even if such a request falls on an employee's preferred WFH day. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure their ability to respond to such requests.
3. Windermere believes that regular direct contact or interaction with fellow members of the organisation is beneficial to the good physical or psychological health of employees or the organisation and hence will not endorse a 100% WFH arrangement.

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ALTERNATIVE REMOTE LOCATION REQUESTS, WITHIN AUSTRALIA

1. When an employee commences with Windermere, the private home address provided in the employment agreement and personnel file in ConnX is deemed the principal place of residence unless advised otherwise during the course of employment. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that their home address is recorded correctly and is kept current at all times on ConnX. In accordance with this policy, this address will be the WFH location.
2. Windermere recognises there may be circumstances where an employee may need or seek to temporarily work from an alternative remote location for a short duration of time however this must be subject to written approval.
3. Where an employee is working from an alternative remote location (that is not their WFH location) for one full workday or less, the onus is on the employee and their Supervisor and/or Manager to ensure both parties are aware of the location, with prior written approval. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that their alternative remote work location is tracked and shared via their outlook calendar/team calendar. Where an employee is working from an alternative remote location, it is their responsibility to conduct a risk assessment including cyber security risks i.e. connection must be on a secure network with no hot spotting from free Wi-Fi in public spaces, internet cafes or ethernet cables, and physical and psychosocial aspects. Where concerns present, they need to raise with their supervisor/manager immediately.
4. Where an employee is working from an alternative remote location for greater than one day, in accordance with this policy, the onus is on the employee and their manager to ensure that both parties are aware of the location. Where a stay is greater than one workday approval is required by completing an IFA form in ConnX and will be subject to review based on length of time and purpose.
5. Employees requesting an alternative remote location for greater than one day, and on a repeated occasional basis will be required to complete an Ergonomic Assessment Checklist at the time of the IFA.
6. Note: Ergonomic Assessment Checklist can be found here - <https://windermere.snapforms.com.au/form/ergonomics-assessment-checklist>
7. Approval to work from an alternative remote location will be subject to approval and be viewed as a time limited arrangement subject to approval for each occasion.
8. Where an employee is seeking to relocate on a permanent basis i.e. change their principle place of residence, this will only be granted if the place of residence is within Victoria and when it remains within 1.5 hours travel time (by vehicle as identified by google/maps) from the Windermere site nominated on the position description and employment agreement and where the employee is able to fully commit to meeting all Ways of Working conditions including regular on site attendance as required. All associated expenses for fulfilling these requirements will be the full responsibility of the individual employee. An inability to meet these requirements will be viewed as an inability to meet the inherent requirements of employment with Windermere and will impact on the approval process and potential or ongoing current employment status.

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9. Windermere will not support permanent relocations outside of these geographical boundaries, Windermere may however support temporary alternative remote location working intrastate or interstate for a short term period of no more than 2 weeks, per annum, where a family or personal emergency has arisen and all working remotely conditions and considerations can be met.
10. For permanent relocations, and short term inter/intra state requests, the manager will need to submit an IFA form via ConnX, with endorsement from their line Director, and People and Capability. For short term inter/intra state requests the IFA should include circumstances of the emergency. Approval will not be provided for purposes of extended holidays, nor where the emergency is deemed of significant magnitude to inhibit fair working conditions or personal/private preferences.
11. Windermere is unable to support any requests for any international remote working requests under any circumstances.

CONSIDERATION FOR APPROVING SHORT TERM INTRA OR INTER STATE WORKING REQUESTS

1. When reviewing an employee's application to work inter/intra state, Managers are required to give consideration to the following:
 - a. Are the Employees' duties suitable for them to complete remotely, for up to a 2-week period?
 - b. Is the staff members direct line of reporting available to increase contact during this period to ensure safety and KPI requirements?
 - c. Will the duration of the application to work inter/intra state negatively impact on consumers and/or the team?
 - d. Will the employee be contactable for business purposes, using all normal methods of communication (including mobile telephone, email and other electronic means)?
 - e. Does the employee agree to be available to attend to work responsibilities during core Victorian business hours and be able to participate, in a professional manner in conference calls, meetings, etc as required?
 - f. Does the employee have the availability of sufficient and suitable equipment and a safe working environment as per Ergonomic Assessment Checklist, noting Windermere will not pay for alterations to the work environment nor will it pay for office equipment or services such as a desk, internet access etc.
 - g. Does the employee have sufficient information, experience and training to undertake work safely and with minimum assistance and direction?
 - h. Will the employee provide contact details to their work colleagues and agree to be contactable at any time during Windermere's normal business hours?
 - i. Will the employee be able to undertake a full Ergonomic Assessment prior to commencing any Windermere business from the alternate location?
 - j. To what extent does the family or personal emergency impact directly on the individual and their ability to fulfill workplace obligations during standard hours?
 - k. Has evidence been provided relating to the family or personal emergency?

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- I. Be an environment free from distractions and can comply with Privacy requirements (e.g. calls not overheard, screens not visible, data not visible).

NOTE: Final approval is to be provided by the relevant Director via an IFA and all documentation forwarded to People & Capability.

CONSIDERATION FOR APPROVING ALTERNATIVE REMOTE LOCATION REQUESTS

1. When reviewing an employee's application to work from an Alternative Remote Location, Managers are required to give consideration to the following:
 - a. Are the Employees' duties suitable for them to complete from the stated designated location?
 - b. Has the time period been clearly stipulated?
 - c. Will the alternative remote location impact on consumers and/or the team?
 - d. Will the employee be contactable for business purposes, using all normal methods of communication (including mobile telephone, email and other electronic means)?
 - e. Does the employee agree to be available to attend to work responsibilities during core Victorian business hours and be able to participate, in a professional manner in conference calls, meetings, etc as required?
 - f. Does the employee have the availability of sufficient and suitable equipment and a safe working environment as per Ergonomic Assessment Checklist, noting Windermere will not pay for alterations to the work environment nor will it pay for office equipment or services such as a desk, internet access etc.
 - g. Does the employee have sufficient information, experience and training to undertake work safely and with minimum assistance and direction?
 - h. Will the employee provide contact details to their work colleagues and agree to be contactable at any time during Windermere's normal business hours?
 - i. Will the employee be able to undertake a full Ergonomic Assessment prior to commencing any Windermere business from the alternate location?
 - j. Is the environment free from distractions and compliant with Privacy requirements?

NOTE: Final approval for single non-consecutive days can be provided directly by the Manager, for any greater period this is to be provided by the relevant Director via an IFA and all documentation forwarded to People & Capability.

Injury and Incident Reporting

1. In the event an incident (serious or minor) resulting in injury or illness occurs whilst WFH; an alternative remote location or remote location, the Windermere employee must complete the Windermere Incident Report Form on the Intranet and distribute as instructed within the timeframes specified in accordance with the Windermere Incident Reporting policy. In the event of an injury, an investigation will be conducted to determine whether an employee injured was actively engaged in work at the time of injury.

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COMMITMENT TO Workplace Health and Safety (WHS)

1. Windermere is committed to providing a safe working environment for all employees, wherever they are working from.
2. Under the OHS Act 2004, Windermere has a duty of care for the health and safety of employees and others at the workplace. This duty extends to identifying and managing the WHS risks and putting appropriate controls in place in every workplace where the employee carries out work as far as is reasonably practicable.
3. The WHS duties apply to both physical health and mental health.
4. To ensure a healthy and safe environment, Windermere's preference for the physical and psychosocial environment an employee works in must be specified. Sometimes managers will require an employee's physical environment to be reviewed for WHS risks before being approved for remote work. To ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of our employees, direct supervisors will:
 - a. Encourage employees to have suitable breaks and work reasonable hours whilst working from any location
 - b. Provide guidance on what is a safe working environment, work practices and physical activity; and why employees should not be sedentary all day
 - c. Require employees to familiarise themselves and comply with good ergonomic practices, consistent with any workplace policies and procedures
 - d. Maintain regular communication with employees
 - e. Consider any pre-existing injuries the employee may have and any reasonable adjustments that are currently in place to make sure that these are able to be applied at any new site
 - f. Consider the mental health and wellbeing of the employees and appoint a contact person in Windermere who they can talk to about any concerns related to their working experience, this could be a member of the team or People and Capability
 - g. Consider workstation set up, such as desk, chair, monitors, keyboard, mouse and computer.

Privacy and Security

1. All Windermere Employees no matter where they are working from:
 - a. Must observe all relevant Windermere policies and procedures and shall take all precautions necessary to secure Windermere information and intellectual property.
 - b. Must ensure any (and all) Windermere property is not used by anyone other than the employee themselves.
2. Must lock device screens when not in use. Only Windermere authorised personnel can access information displayed on the screen. Any unauthorised access to Windermere information must be reported to the relevant Supervisor immediately and an Incident Report Form submitted.
3. Are responsible for ensuring the premises and motor vehicles, from which remote based work is carried out, are secure at all times. Employees must report any accidental or intentional loss/theft of Windermere property or documents to their manager immediately and report the incident.

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Hours of work

1. The Windermere employee agrees to maintain an accurate and up to date record of hours worked and keep in communication with their supervisor throughout the working period to ensure safety, risk and duty of care obligations are met. The hours to be worked shall be within the normal span of hours under applicable Awards and any hours worked outside this must be agreed to by the relevant supervisor in advance, as per the Flexible Working at Windermere policy. For business continuity work hours must be within Australian Eastern Standard Times (AEST).

Review

1. All 'Ways of Working' arrangements shall be reviewed by the relevant supervisor regularly via supervision, paying particular attention to situations where the employee:
 - a. Experiences difficulty in separating personal commitments from work requirements such as employee's being distracted by home duties, family care requirements or work environments not deemed suitable for ergonomic or privacy issues.
 - b. Experiences isolation from their Windermere office environment i.e. the employee feels a significant sense of loss from being unable to participate in a traditional office environment.
 - c. Experiences a near miss, an injury or feels there are safety related issues in a remote working arrangement.
 - d. Or presents as potentially refusing or avoiding attending requests to attend site-based requirements.
 - e. Is unable to perform all aspects of their position description and/ or meet KPI's as determined by the Manager.
 - f. Breaches of any aspect of this policy or there are inadequate safety procedures.

Use of Nighthawk and Windermere mobile phone hotspots (for internet connectivity when working remotely)

1. The Nighthawk Modems are available to outreach users only and are provided on a request basis via the helpdesk ticketing system. They are designed to aid in securely and safely accessing the internet when conducting outreach work only.
2. Nighthawks are not to be used to work from home in lieu of having a proper internet connection or for personal reasons. Staff wishing to work from home are to provide their own Internet connection and not hotspot to Windermere iPhones or Nighthawks. If your connection at home is not secure, stable, or fast enough to support the needs of working from home or if you don't have an internet connection, then you are encouraged to rectify the issue or you will need to attend and work from the nearest Windermere office.

Responsibilities

Employee Responsibility

1. Employees working from any location must:

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- a. Adhere to Windermere's values, policies and procedures at all times
 - b. Be contactable during their working hours (AEST time), and within the normal span of business hours and maintain a current and up to date outlook calendar
 - c. Ensure fitness for work requirements are met. If staff members are unwell or unable to work due to other reasons, then leave entitlements are to be accessed
 - d. Ensure compliance with health and safety requirements
 - e. Adhere to all privacy, connectivity and cyber security requirements.
2. Employees have health and safety obligations to minimise risks wherever they are working. These obligations include:
- a. Following procedures about how work is performed.
 - b. Maintaining a safe work environment, such as designated work area, ensuring comfortable access, providing adequate lighting and ventilation, repairing any uneven surfaces, or removing trip hazard.
 - c. Managing safety in their work area, such as maintaining electrical equipment and installing and maintaining smoke alarms.
 - d. Using equipment as per the manufacturer's instructions and is not damaged or misused.
 - e. Reporting any health, safety and wellbeing hazards, risks, near misses, injury and incidents accordingly.
 - f. Maintaining accurate and up to date records of hours worked within normal span of business hours, submitted through the ConnX timesheet.
 - g. By agreement, providing authorised Windermere employees or other approved parties with access, where necessary, for matters such as WHS ergonomic assessments.
 - h. Taking reasonable precautions that are necessary to secure Windermere's equipment.
 - i. Adhering with all WFH and Working Remotely policy requirements and Ways of Working conditions.

Manager's Responsibility

1. Ensure the employee is working in accordance with their WFH, Alternative Location Arrangements and/or remote working arrangements and adhering to Windermere's Ways of Working framework, values, policies and procedures including:
 - a. Review and sign off on records of hours worked on time sheets as required.
 - b. Monitor and review WFH, Alternative Location Arrangements and/or remote working arrangements as recorded in the remote work arrangements on a regular basis e.g. during supervision.
2. Ensure through direct lines of reporting scheduled communication meetings including methods of disseminating information to all employees.

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Standards

- QIC Health and Community Services Standards
- Social Services Regulations
- National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care Services including Education and Care Services National Law & Regulations 2011
- Victorian Child Safe Standards
- Victims of Crime Service Standards & Charter
- National Disability Insurance Scheme (Provider Registration and Practice Standards) Rules 2018
- Rainbow Tick Standards

Relevant Legislation

- NDIS Act 2013
- Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004

Related Policies & Links

This policy must also be read in conjunction with the following Windermere policies:

- Occupational Health and Safety
- Outreach Safety
- Working Alone
- Vehicle
- Remote Access
- Privacy
- Transporting Files
- Supervision
- Injury and Incident Reporting
- Working Remotely Agreement form
- Flexible Working Policy

For queries or concerns related to this policy, contact the QI Team:

policy@windermere.org.au