

# Energy Efficient Working from Home

## 1. Introduction

You may be considering working from home as part of your flexible working agreement. The 'Employee Guide' highlighted some of the benefits of adopting this style of working. It's also worthwhile thinking about the financial and environmental impact of a decision to work from home. Will your personal costs increase? Will your new style of working be better for the environment from a CO2 perspective? There's no hard and fast rule here as everyone has individual circumstances to consider.

This paper highlights some of the areas you'll need to consider, and contains links to external websites which could help you to save money and be more aware of your carbon footprint.

## 2. Travel

How many of us have sat in a traffic jam during rush hour on our way to work? Stressful and frustrating isn't it? Flexible working can offer the opportunity to work from home or locations closer to home, without having to make a daily commute to our traditional office base. It can also offer the opportunity to travel into work at a more convenient time. This can hold positive benefits for flexible workers such as reduced commuting costs, and work life balance time savings. It can also create positive benefits for the environment in reduced CO2 emissions.

"As major investment in significant new road capacity is unlikely, and possibly undesirable, so road usage has to be managed. Technological advancements mean many more people can now perfectly sensibly complete their work from home, or from remote locations, or even while mobile, often making it unnecessary to travel to a central office location on a daily basis. In addition to this changing attitude to working location, more and more employers are recognising the obvious inefficiency of requiring staff to be at their desks from nine-to-five, necessitating commuting when everyone else is doing the very same thing."

Philip Gomm continued: "The beauty of smarter working is that everyone's a winner; even those who cannot inject some flexibility into their daily routines. Each person who can stagger their journey or avoid making it all together is one less person those of us who are tied to rigid rush-hour travel patterns will have to fight for road space with every morning. Now that must be something we all dream about." Philip Gomm, Head of External Communications, RAC Foundation, May 2012.

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Take some time to think about your current travel patterns. How might these change as a result of flexible working? What time savings might you gain and how will you utilise this? Are you anticipating a fuel saving as a result of reduced commuting?

Your existing travel to work may be driven by a need to reach a particular destination by a particular time – perhaps to get a parking space? The time and location aspects of flexible working can change your working pattern and provide opportunities to consider other transport methods such as public transport, cycling, walking, car sharing.

Think about reasons why you need to travel to work. Can meetings be achieved using technology? Have you considered:

[Audio conferencing?](#) [Video conferencing?](#)

**Links for more information on travel**

<http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/expenses>

[www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/travel](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/travel) - smarter driving or eco-driving could save the average UK driver between £250 and £300 each year in fuel. With fuel prices rising and falling all the time, smarter driving such as reducing speed and reducing the weight inside your vehicle could save you even more in the future. Smarter driving means driving your car more efficiently which produces less CO<sub>2</sub> – the main gas contributing to climate change.

<http://carfueldata.direct.gov.uk/> Car fuel data, CO<sub>2</sub> and vehicle tax tools.

### 3. Energy at Home

A popular question from flexible workers is whether personal heating and lighting costs will increase as a result of working from home for a proportion of the week. The answer will vary according to personal circumstances. For example, the season of the year may influence how much energy is consumed – are you more likely to use less energy in summer and more in winter? Is the home already used by someone else during the working day?

Are the travel costs savings likely to outweigh any additional energy costs? Do the intangible benefits of flexible working outweigh these costs e.g. additional flexibility and work life balance?

In order for you to see exactly how your electricity is used, one solution is to invest in a smart meter. These are devices which tell you how much electricity is being used in your home. Some attach to your wall sockets others can be wireless. They will tell you exactly where you are using electricity, how much it is costing you and how much carbon you are emitting to the atmosphere. You will then be able to see exactly where you can save electricity at any time of the day.

### **Energy Saving at Home**

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If you're going to work from home, why not think about making your home as efficient as possible? You'll save money on your energy bills. Find out more from the Energy Saving Trust.

<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/Take-action/Improve-your-home>

There are some simple steps every flexible worker can take to make a difference to carbon levels, to stay warm, save energy and pay less when working from home. See links below.

<http://www.actonenergy.org.uk/sustainable-home> - our homes are one of the biggest contributors to carbon levels across the UK but there are plenty of simple actions we can take to reduce the amount we emit into the atmosphere, and save money on energy costs at the same time.

### **The Green Deal**

The Green Deal is a government scheme for making energy-saving improvements to homes and finding the best way to pay for them. The scheme is changing, but may be worth checking out, find out more:

<https://www.gov.uk/green-deal-energy-saving-measures>

The improvements that could save the most energy depend on your home, but typical examples will include:

- insulation - e.g. solid wall, cavity wall or loft insulation
- heating
- draught-proofing
- double glazing
- renewable energy generation - e.g. solar panels or heat pumps

**Home Working Risk Assessment (for contracted homeworker), to accompany Flexible Working Agreement.**

**See energy suppliers information below:**

#### **Suppliers Information**

Energy suppliers also provide a range of guidance to make your home more efficient for working at home.

Here are a few links to supplier advice (no recommendations implied)

<https://blog.npower.com/2012/10/working-from-home-how-to-create-an-energy-efficient-home-office/>

<http://www.sse.co.uk/beinggreen/>

<http://www.britishgas.co.uk/smarter-living/save-energy/energy-saving-tips.html>

<http://www.edfenergy.com/products-services/for-your-home/home-energy-saving-improvements/>

<https://www.eonenergy.com/for-your-home/saving-energy/need-little-extra-help/home-improvements>

<http://www.scottishpower.co.uk/energy-efficiency/energy-efficiency>

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