



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Equipment for temporary homeworking for members and members' staff

14 May 2020

Reference: SPCB(2020)Paper 22

Executive summary

1. On 20th March 2020 we launched the Business Continuity Temporary Homeworking Policy to support Members, Members' Staff and SPS Staff working from home as a result of Covid 19. The policy provides guidance to help employers and employees assess the suitability of roles for homeworking.
2. Any individual who has an underlying health condition or a suspected condition which requires an adjustment to be made to their working environment can complete the forms and those adjustments will be assessed and where appropriate furniture or IT will be issued or changes recommended to the working environment.
3. Although the SPCB has sought to support those with health conditions, we now need to consider the medium to longer term impact of COVID 19 in terms of working effectively, comfortably and productively from home.
4. The proposed policy covers certain items, such as keyboard, mouse, laptop riser, chair or table.
5. This paper sets out the policy and procedures for how Members and Members' Staff can request items centrally, how we will continue to meet our legal obligations, and how it will be funded.

Issues and Options

Option 1 – Recommended Central Approach

6. Members and Members' staff should continue to complete the Homeworking Self-Assessment Checklist. The form has been updated to include a list of IT equipment and furniture which may be requested to support safe, comfortable and productive homeworking, and which is available from existing Parliament suppliers and will be paid for centrally from SPS funds.
7. The equipment and furniture will remain the property of the SPS. Should the individual who is using the equipment no longer require it, it will be collected, and either be re-used as part of our sustainability initiatives or re-cycled.

8. The employing Member should send any completed forms to the Covid19 Queries mailbox. A member of the BIT and FM helpdesks will be in touch to confirm the requirement and to agree a delivery date to the requestor's home address. The Health and Safety Advisor and trained DSE assessors may also check the forms and if needed will contact the individual to establish if further advice or adjustments are needed.
9. A limit of £1500 per Member has been placed on this; thereafter requests would require approval by SPCB.

Option 2 – Member funded

10. If a Member wants to purchase IT equipment or furniture for themselves and their staff they can do so via the Members' Expenses Scheme. We would recommend that the cost of any IT or furniture for Member's use would be met from the Office Cost Provision given the home is a temporary workplace.
11. The SPCB agreed on 30th March 2020 to meet costs in relation to the homeworking allowance for Members' staff from the Incidental and Ancillary Employment cost provision (IAECP) as part of the good employment practice element of the provision. We would recommend a similar approach be adopted here and that the costs associated with the purchase of IT equipment or furniture for Members' staff also be met under the IAEC provision. All such costs would be published in line with our current arrangements.
12. It is important that the kit purchased is suitable for homeworking and therefore if a Member wishes to do this, we have developed simple guidance for them to follow. This guidance will be added to the FAQs and highlighted to those Members and their staff who propose to purchase equipment through the Expenses' Scheme, rather than the recommended central route. This guidance will need to be followed in order for the costs to be claimed through the Scheme.

Resource Implications

13. The recommended option will provide IT equipment and furniture from the SPCB central budget. We are still working with suppliers to finalise costs.
14. The recommended option of centrally providing kit, also removes any tax liability for Members or their staff and helps ensure that it can be re-used in the future.
15. This is an additional budgetary requirement arising from managing the pandemic for SPCB. It can be met by reprioritising other planned spend.

Governance issues

16. DSE Assessors will, where required, carry out a check on all submitted forms to follow up on any issues with the individual and make recommendations to help the individual or their employer resolve them.

As the employer, Members will authorise any spend for audit requirements through either the forwarding of completed forms or approval of purchases through the Expenses' Scheme.

Publication Scheme

17. This paper can be published in accordance with the SPCB's publication scheme.

Decision

18. SPCB are invited to agree:

- That IT equipment and furniture is provided to Members and Members' Staff who are currently working from home and that the associated costs are met centrally; and
- Where Members choose to purchase IT equipment and furniture through the Expenses Scheme the associated cost for Members will be met from OCP and for Members' staff will be met from the IAEC Provision.

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