

Facilities Management from A to Z



Based on The FM Lexicon by Martin Pickard
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Homeworking

Homeworking is the term used to describe the practice of performing paid work in the home rather than in a separate building. Until relatively recently homeworking was the exclusive preserve of the self employed and of lowly paid pieceworkers assembling Christmas crackers or stuffing envelopes. However the information technology revolution has created two new kinds of homeworker.

Many office based managers or travelling sales staff found that their laptops and mobile phones meant that they could spend some of their time working from home. This was usually a matter of convenience for them where they could save on travelling time and work without interruption. However many employers now offer the opportunity to work from home as part of a flexible working package with all the support that entails.

In addition to those who now occasionally work from home as well as other places, there is now another breed of people who have their home as their permanent place of work connected to the parent organisation by the new information and communication technologies. These teleworkers have roles that require little interaction with co-workers and only need connectivity to information systems.

A structured homeworking programme can offer significant benefits to both employer and employee. Property assets can be better utilised or reduced, key workers may be retained or skills sourced from a wider recruitment pool, productivity can be increased and carbon emissions lowered as travel is reduced. For the individual less travel time, improved home life balance and increased autonomy can be very attractive.

The growing levels of homeworking have given facility managers new challenges extending the remit for many beyond their own property portfolio. The provision of suitable furniture and equipment, the delivery of mail and supplies, the supply and maintenance of telephony and IT equipment and the management of risk assessments, safety and insurance will usually all fall to the facilities management team.

The Health & Safety Executive publish a useful guidance leaflet on Homeworking. Code: INDG226 which can be downloaded from www.hse.gov.uk

The Telework Association is a membership organisation providing information, advice and support to enable individuals, whether employed or self employed, to make a success of mobile, home-based and flexible ways of working. www.tca.org.uk