

## **Working Away from the Centre Policy**

This policy document covers the following two areas:

- 1. Working time when away from the centre**
- 2. Working from home**

Also see: Appendix 5 to Financial Procedures – **“Policy on Subsistence Allowance when working away from the centre”**

### **Introduction**

LGEC supports its staff in working flexibly in order to enhance the life-work balance, to make the most of professional and personal development opportunities and to enable them to carry out specific elements of their work. This may mean that staff need from time to time to work away from LGEC’s main office base to attend training, run events, complement childcare or other personal arrangements, etc.

This policy document details the ways in which LGEC facilitates effective working, how to account for time spent, subsistence allowances and the handling of LGEC documents when away from the centre, and the procedures that should be followed when doing so.

General points:

- A normal LGEC working day for a full-time member of staff is 7 hours long, not including meal breaks. A minimum break of 30 minutes should be taken if the working day is longer than 6 hours. This applies whether working away from the centre or at home.
- All LGEC documents should be filed at the centre, although it is appreciated that non-confidential material will need to be removed from the office on a temporary basis while working away from the centre. Ideally, documents to be worked on should be used in an electronic format and save to memory stick. However, sometimes documents are unavailable in electronic format. Where this is the case, copies of documents should be taken with the originals remaining in the appropriate place in the LGEC filing system. Original documents that have been removed from the centre should be returned as soon as you are back in the office and filed in the appropriate place. A note of files or documents removed should be kept. Confidential information should not be removed from the centre.

## 1. Working Time When Away From The Centre

### Regular Work Travelling

- For your usual work activities, working time generally includes the journey from the centre to the place of work and back to the centre (e.g. to a community meeting)
- Time you would usually take to travel between home and work is not included.
- For employees that commute by train, work done on the train may be counted towards their contracted hours.
- If your home is nearer to a work destination than the centre, working time starts/ends from the time you arrive at/leave the destination.

### Travelling to conferences, training & events etc...

- Time spent travelling to things outside your normal working activities is generally counted as working time.
- Time you would usually take to travel between home and work is not included, unless your home is nearer to the destination than the centre.
- For journeys by train, when you are able to do some work activity, but choose not to, the time can only be counted as half working time (e.g. a 3 hour journey = 1.5 hours working time) However, if you choose to do work on the train, you can include all the journey time as working time.
- Example: A staff member has full day training in London. The train leaves at 6.33am, and arrives at 9.33am. The staff member can work for 3 hours and count all 3 hours as working time. Or the staff member can do nothing for 3 hours – their normal 30 mins travel time to the centre would be deducted, then the remaining 2.5 hours would be counted at half time equalling 1.25 hours. The same would apply to the return journey.

### Time at conference, training & events etc

- All timetabled activities count as working time and a minimum break of 30 minutes must be taken if the working day is longer than 6 hours. This may include breaks between timetabled activities or taken during journey time if a break was not possible.
- Other time spent doing non-work activities do not count towards working time, for example socialising after an event. However, there may be a grey area in which a degree of judgement is required. For example, post-event socialising which clearly involves networking may be counted as work time. If in doubt, discuss this with your line manager.

### Residential Training Courses

- For residential courses or activities taking place over a longer period than a normal working day, a written agreement of what will count as work and non-work activities must be approved by your line manager beforehand.
- In general, meal breaks, sleeping and non-work activities do not count towards working time (e.g. socialising in the evening)

### Residential Activities that are part of LGEC Project Work

- From time to time LGEC project workers may need to be involved in 'residential' activities as part of their project work. Any project activity that takes place over more than one normal working day and requires the project worker to spend a night away from home will be deemed to be a 'residential'. Residentials will usually involve working with young people or community groups.
- For residential courses or activities taking place over a longer period than a normal working day, a written agreement of what will count as work and non-work activities must be approved by your line manager beforehand.

- In general, meal breaks, sleeping and non-work activities do not count towards working time (e.g. socialising in the evening). You need to ensure that you take a 30 minute break in each working period of 6 hours.
- If you have **designated supervisory responsibility** for young or vulnerable people during non-work related activities (as specified in written agreement mentioned above), you may count full working time.

**Timesheets must be completed, indicating whether full or half time hours are recorded on your return to the centre.**

## **2. Working From Home**

### **Background**

Situations have arisen in the past whereby some important LGEC documents have been rendered unavailable to LGEC. The financial cost to LGEC for these losses have been estimated to be several thousand pounds. The cost in terms of stress and in opportunity costs, the time spent on this could have been spent on writing a funding application.

The procedures outlined in this policy are to prevent similar losses occurring in the future and also deal with some wider issues associated with working from home.

### **Introduction**

LGEC supports a policy of staff working from home when appropriate e.g. when writing reports and funding applications. This policy also fits in with LGEC's green house keeping policy to minimise our carbon footprint by avoiding unnecessary journeys to work.

It is however recognised that problems may arise from staff working from home. This policy aims to prevent problems arising such that staff can continue to work from home to the mutual benefit of LGEC, individual staff members and the environment.

### **Procedures to be followed when working from home:**

1. Staff wishing to work from home should seek the approval of their line manager and update the computer diary system.
2. The health and safety of LGEC staff whilst working from home is a joint responsibility between the employee and organisation. A risk assessment form should be conducted by the staff member and approved by the employee's line manager before working from home is undertaken.
3. Consideration should be given towards ensuring that at least one staff member is available in the centre if at all possible, during normal working hours in the week. However, it is recognised that this may not always be possible.
4. Staff working at home should be available to other LGEC staff (and other callers as appropriate) by telephone during the hours 9.30 am to 5pm, unless they indicate alternative working hours on the LGEC computer diary. Staff do not have to make their home telephone number available to others outside the organisation. If it is not acceptable to give their number out to other people they should let administration staff

know. In the event of external calls reception staff will ring you so that you can return the call as appropriate.

5. If your arrangements change so you are not available at home during the hours designated or the default hours of 9.30 – 5.00 then you should ring the centre to let the office know your lack of availability.
6. All work undertaken on your home computer must be copied to a memory stick on a daily basis and copied to the appropriate place on an LGEC computer at least weekly. LGEC will provide a memory stick for those members of staff that require one. Files may also be accessed remotely using an internet connection through the secure VPN system. Speak your line-manager for further information.
7. You must endeavour to keep your home computer virus free and take care not to transfer any virus to LGEC computers. Home computers must have a suitable anti virus programme installed such as AVG.
8. Details of any LGEC equipment taken home (eg. laptop) must be entered in the equipment log.
9. The staff member's line manager will need to be satisfied that appropriate facilities are available to enable the work to be carried out satisfactorily.