

Title	Lone Worker and Home Worker Policy
Cross References	Internal: 🍷 Teacher Contract 🍷 Apricot Online Ltd Statement of Main Terms 🍷 Health and Safety Policy 🍷 GDPR Clear Desk and Screen Policy 🍷 Data Protection and Privacy Policy 🍷 Data Breach Policy 🍷 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
Date	October 2026

1. Introduction

Apricot Online is committed to providing high standards of service through a skilled, flexible and well-supported workforce. Home working is an established part of Apricot Online's operating model and can support effective service delivery, recruitment, retention and work-life balance.

This policy sets out the arrangements for employees who work from home or otherwise work alone without close or direct supervision. It should be read alongside the employee's contract and Apricot Online's Health and Safety, data protection, safeguarding and information-security policies.

2. Scope and Definition

For the purposes of this policy, a home worker is an employee who works from home on a permanent, regular or agreed basis. A lone worker is a person who works by themselves without close or direct supervision. Home workers may therefore also be lone workers.

This policy applies to employees working from home, from another agreed remote location, or alone while undertaking Apricot Online duties away from the usual workplace.

3. Health and Safety

Apricot Online's health and safety responsibilities continue to apply to employees working from home. Employees also have a responsibility to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their work, and to co-operate with Apricot Online's health and safety arrangements.

Home-working risks will be managed using a proportionate approach. Employees may be required to complete a home-working and/or display screen equipment (DSE) self-assessment. Apricot Online will review identified concerns and take reasonably practicable action where necessary.

A routine annual home visit is not required. A visit or further assessment may be considered where a significant concern or individual requirement cannot adequately be assessed or resolved through self-assessment, discussion, photographs or video.

Employees must report health and safety concerns, accidents, incidents, equipment defects or significant changes to their working arrangements promptly.

4. Workstation and DSE

Employees who are DSE users must maintain a suitable working arrangement and complete any required DSE assessment or training.

- The assessment should consider:
- the chair, desk or work surface, screen, keyboard and mouse;
- comfortable and sustainable posture;
- lighting, glare and reflections;
- adequate space and avoidance of trailing cables;
- breaks or changes of activity;
- any aches, pains, discomfort or visual fatigue; and
- whether additional equipment or adjustments are required.

Where an assessment identifies action that Apricot Online is required to take, appropriate measures will be considered and employees will not be charged for equipment or measures that the employer is required to provide.

5. Safe Home-Working Environment

Employees are expected to maintain a reasonably safe area for work and should:

- keep the immediate work area reasonably tidy and free from avoidable slip or trip hazards;
- check plugs, leads and cables used for work for obvious damage;
- avoid overloading sockets or extension leads;
- use Apricot Online-provided equipment in accordance with instructions;
- ensure adequate lighting and ventilation for the work being undertaken; and
- tell their manager if the home environment becomes unsuitable for safe or effective working.

Where reasonably practicable measures cannot make the home environment suitable, Apricot Online may discuss alternative working arrangements with the employee.

6. Lone Working

Lone working is not inherently unsafe, but the absence of immediate supervision or assistance can increase risk if something goes wrong. Apricot Online will consider lone-working risks as part of its risk-assessment arrangements.

Depending on the activity and level of risk, arrangements may include:

- regular contact with a manager or colleagues;
- clear working and reporting arrangements;
- emergency contact information;
- limits on activities that may be undertaken alone;
- additional training, information or supervision; and
- agreed check-in arrangements where an employee is undertaking work away from home or another normal work location.

Employees must not undertake an activity alone where a risk assessment or reasonable instruction requires another person to be present.

7. Wellbeing, Communication and Supervision

Apricot Online recognises that home and lone working can affect communication, social contact and wellbeing. Managers should maintain appropriate contact with home workers and employees should raise concerns about workload, isolation, stress or other work-related difficulties at an early stage.

Employees are expected to remain reasonably contactable during their agreed working hours, attend required meetings, training and supervision, and maintain appropriate communication with their Head of Department or manager.

Management and reporting arrangements, including operational updates, course materials, telephone and email contact, supervision and attendance at relevant events, will be agreed within the employee's role and working arrangements.

8. Confidentiality, Data Protection and Safeguarding

Employees must protect the confidentiality and security of all information accessed or handled while working from home or remotely.

Personal, safeguarding, commercially sensitive or confidential information must not be accessible to family members, visitors or other unauthorised people.

Employees must:

- use approved Apricot Online systems, accounts and storage arrangements;
- lock devices whenever they are left unattended;
- follow the GDPR Clear Desk and Screen Policy and relevant data protection and information-security requirements;
- avoid leaving confidential paperwork or screens visible in shared areas;
- ensure confidential calls, meetings and online lessons cannot reasonably be overheard by unauthorised people;
- take particular care when screen sharing so that unrelated confidential information is not displayed; and
- report any actual or suspected loss, unauthorised disclosure or personal data breach promptly in accordance with the Data Breach Policy.

Safeguarding expectations apply equally to staff working from home. Online teaching, contact with students and the use of cameras, microphones, messaging or other communication tools must follow Apricot Online's safeguarding and approved working practices.

9. IT Equipment and Security

Work equipment supplied by Apricot Online must be used appropriately and kept secure. Employees must not allow family members or other unauthorised people to use Apricot Online equipment or accounts.

Devices used for Apricot Online work must have appropriate security controls and software updates. Work information should be stored and backed up through approved organisational systems rather than informal or personal storage arrangements.

Equipment faults, loss or theft must be reported promptly.

10. Insurance, Mortgage and Tenancy Arrangements

Employees should check whether regular home working affects their home insurance or any relevant mortgage, tenancy, lease or other property restrictions and should notify the appropriate provider or landlord where required by their arrangements.

Apricot Online does not require employees as a general condition of home working to obtain their own employer's liability insurance. Any unusual insurance requirement connected with a particular work activity will be considered separately.

11. Working from Other Locations

Employees must obtain appropriate agreement before routinely working from a location other than their agreed home or workplace where this affects contractual, operational, safeguarding, information-security or health and safety arrangements.

Confidential work should only be undertaken in public or shared places where privacy and security can be maintained. Staff must consider whether screens can be overlooked or conversations overheard and should postpone confidential or safeguarding-sensitive work where suitable privacy is not available.

12. Travel and Expenses

Apricot Online will reimburse authorised business travel expenses for external training, meetings or attendance at Apricot Online or other agreed premises in accordance with the organisation's applicable expenses arrangements.

Ordinary commuting and other expenses will be treated in accordance with the employee's contractual terms and Apricot Online's expenses arrangements.

13. Amount and Location of Home Working

The amount and pattern of home working will be determined by the employee's contract and any agreed working arrangements.

Any permanent or significant change to the agreed pattern or location of home working must be discussed and agreed in advance with the appropriate manager or Apricot Online management.

14. Accidents, Incidents and Emergencies

Employees must know how to obtain emergency assistance from their location and how to contact Apricot Online where a work-related emergency or incident occurs.

Work-related accidents and incidents must be reported promptly. An accident occurring at home is not automatically a work-related or reportable accident; Apricot Online will consider the circumstances, including the work activity and any equipment involved, and determine any further action required.

15. Responsibilities

Apricot Online

- will assess and manage reasonably foreseeable risks associated with home and lone working;
- will provide appropriate information, instruction, training and support;
- will consider DSE and equipment needs in accordance with applicable requirements;
- will maintain suitable management, communication and reporting arrangements; and
- will review home or lone-working arrangements where concerns or significant changes arise.

Employees

- must follow this policy and relevant health and safety, safeguarding and data-protection procedures;
- must complete required assessments and training;
- must maintain a reasonably safe and secure working environment;
- must use work equipment appropriately;
- must remain in appropriate contact with their manager and colleagues; and
- must promptly report risks, incidents, concerns, equipment problems or changes that may affect safe and effective home working.

16. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner where changes to legislation, guidance, technology, working practices or identified risks make this necessary.

Authorised by: Jodie Phillips, Operations Director

Date: October 2026

Review Date: October 2027