1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The NIGALA is committed to equality of opportunity and to the continued development of a working environment which encourages all employees to give their best within an arrangement which allows them to balance both work and personal commitments.

1.2 NIGALA is keen to support employees in balancing their work and home commitments, recognising that individuals have a wide range of varying circumstances which they have to manage. To this NIGALA will consider remote working as a part of flexible working arrangements, provided it does not adversely affect the organisational goals/objectives or the service provided and does not contravene any legislation, particularly in the areas of health and safety and Working Time Directive Regulations1.

2.0 DEFINITION OF REMOTE WORKING

2.1 Remote working is not home working. Remote working is being able to work to meet the business/professional needs of the NIGALA, away from office based premises on a regular basis.

2.2 Remote working is regarded as a mode of flexible working and is subject to the conditions set out in the NIGALA’s Remote Working Strategy and Policy2 document and which all designated employees must comply.

2.3 Terms and conditions for employees designated as remote workers will remain unchanged. Employees working remotely are subject to the same terms and conditions of employment as those office-based employees working at Centre House/Spencer House/Dobbin Centre.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for health and safety within NIGALA.

3.2 LINE MANAGERS

Review all aspects of remote working through supervision.


2 NIGALA Remote Working Strategy and Policy document available on NIGALA intranet
3.3 **Remote Working Employees**

- Employees have a responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves and to cooperate with their employer under health and safety legislation.
- Personal alarms are offered to all lone workers. If you have accepted a personal alarm please carry with you at all times.
- Be aware of personal protection at all times.
- Report all untoward incidents as soon as possible through the NIGALA’s reporting procedures as detailed in H&S Bulletin 3 Adverse Incidents.
- Share information that could have any impact on health and safety with line managers/case coordinators.
- Attend training as required.

3.4 **Risk Committee/Risk Managers**

Review each incident reported and evaluate the level of risk posed and any actions that must be taken.

3.5 **Risk Assessors**

Collate information from completed remote worker risk assessments forms, and forward forms with recommendations to Declan McAllister, Corporate Services Manager.

4.0 **Health & Safety Risks Associated with Remote Working**

4.1 While remote working has many benefits to the NIGALA and to employees, it also brings with it increased health and safety risk such as:

- Lone worker risk where remote workers spend more time away from the office.
- Increased risk of the remote worker’s work/life balance being impacted.
- Increased risk of remote workers becoming alienated within the office/organisation.

4.2 It is important remote workers are aware of the above and take reasonable steps to minimise same.

5.0 **Remote Worker Risk Assessment (Self-Assessment Questionnaire)**

5.1 Remote workers are to have a formal risk assessment conducted on an annual basis in accordance with the NIGALA’s Health Safety Policy Statement and the NIGALA Risk Assessment Programme.

5.2 All NIGALA employees are identified as being DSE users and the remote worker self-assessment questionnaire incorporates DSE risk assessment and assessment of work area at home.

5.3 Remote workers using computer environment for a large part of the day should be carried out in a suitable environment. Minimally this includes:
A desk on which a personal computer or laptop can be safely rested.
A chair that has a straight back and adjustable height if possible.
An appropriate level of lighting for the task.

5.4 Assistance will be provided in the completion of remote worker self-assessment questionnaire from NIGALA Risk Assessors James Lawne and Sinéad Casey, on request, as follows:

(i) Phone conversation between risk assessor and GAL to discuss the questionnaire and provide advice on how to complete questionnaire and best practice regarding work area/workstations.

(ii) Discussion between GAL and risk assessor, when GAL next in the office, to provide advice on how to complete questionnaire and demonstrate best practice regarding work area/workstations.

(iii) Arrange for risk assessor to visit GAL at home if felt this is required and for risk assessor carry out assessment on site.

5.5 Self-Assessment Questionnaires will be emailed to remote working employees, alongside DSE guidance for completion and return to James Lawne or Sinéad Casey (NIGALA Risk Assessors).

5.6 Issues/recommendations arising from risk assessments will be collated by risk assessors and forwarded to Declan McAllister (Chair of Health & Safety Committee) regarding actions required.

6.0 Working Time Regulations

6.1 Since employees will be out of direct contact with their line managers during periods of remote working, schedules should be kept up to date with information recorded on hours worked and breaks taken.

6.2 It is important that the working pattern and level of hours are not detrimental to health. The employee must keep his/her line manager informed of the number of hours worked and to ensure that the limits set by the Working Time Regulations are not exceeded. Employees should take regular breaks including a lunch break of at least 30 minutes.

7.0 Smoking

7.1 Under the Health Act 2006, if a part of a private dwelling is used solely as a place of work and other people who do not live in the building, for example clients or employees, attend that part of the house in connection with the work that is carried out there, the area is required to be smoke free.

8.0 CROSS-REFERENCE TO OTHER RELATED NIGALA DOCUMENTS:

BULLETIN 1  Risk Assessments
BULLETIN 6  Health & Wellbeing at Work

NIGALA Risk Assessment Programme
NIGALA Remote Working Strategy and Policy
NIGALA Lone Working Policy and Procedure