

Working from Home

Q I am having a room in my house converted into a treatment room. I know from an earnings point of view that I will have to inform HM Revenue and Customs when I start my practice. Who else do I need to inform?

Rosemary French, CEO Business Link Surrey, says:

Working from home can have many advantages, which include avoiding long tenancy agreements, the ability to arrange work around family commitments, avoiding noise and distractions of the workplace, and saving time and money spent on travel.

However if you are thinking of using your home as a workplace, it is a good idea to check with the following:

- Your mortgage lender or landlord/freeholder, as your mortgage or tenancy agreement may prevent you from using your home to run a business.
- Your home and contents insurance provider, to see if you need to take out extra insurance cover.
- Your local branch of the Valuation Office Agency (VOA), to see if you will be charged business rates. The Valuation Office helpline is 0845 602 1507.
- HM Revenue & Customs and an accountant, to see what your income, VAT and capital gains tax position is. On the bright side, your business will be able to claim tax relief on domestic bills for the areas of the house used for your business. HM Revenue & Customs: 0845 010 9000.
- A solicitor, to check legal aspects.
- Your local Health & Safety Executive (HSE) or local authority, to find out the health and safety aspects of running a business from home and how to do a risk assessment. HSE info line: 0845 345 0055.
- The planning department of your local authority if you intend to make any structural changes to your home, as you may need planning permission. You must also make sure you comply with building regulations.
- Your local council as you may need a licence to practise, depending on where you live and the treatments you offer.
- Your neighbours, to make sure they have no objection to you running business from home.

All of these areas to consider may seem quite daunting at first. However, the Business Link website can provide support and advice on this subject as well as other practical business advice.

Visit www.businesslink.go.uk or tel: 0845 600 9006 for your local adviser.

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