

## Flexible working patterns at the Audit Commission

### Problems with homeworking



Homeworking clearly involves an element of trust. The challenge is to keep everybody informed about what is happening within the business. The intranet has a key role in doing this.

There are several problems associated with homeworking but the Audit Commission has worked hard at minimising the effects of these on its staff. The main ones are:

- i. Not mixing with colleagues. Individuals may lose the office culture because the reliance on technology means that relationships become impersonal. To overcome this, the Audit Commission arranges training events and awaydays, as well as networking opportunities and staff conferences.
- ii. Homeworkers become dependent upon the technologies. If there is a power cut or a computer problem, then this could affect the work.
- iii. Health & safety risks and keeping confidential files at home.



The Audit Commission sets out clear guidelines as part of its homeworking policy. These guidelines refer to employers' liability insurance which covers employees while they are working from home. The guidelines also refer to confidential files that may be kept for a temporary period within the home.

*Homeworkers have to balance both their work and their domestic responsibilities.*

The arguments for and against homeworking depend upon a high degree of trust. This is because an employee is working independently outside the office. In a team-based environment, each individual needs to be available to other members of the team as and when they are needed. Being able to set their own goals and identify their priorities is important for homeworkers.