

**Guidance for staff when working from home under the exceptional arrangements agreed in response to the Coronavirus**

This guidance has been compiled for colleagues who have agreed a working from home arrangement with their line manager on a short-term or temporary basis in response to the exceptional arrangements agreed in response to the Coronavirus. It covers the safeguards that need to be put in place and the practical arrangements that make homeworking a success. This agreement and these arrangements will be reviewed on a regular basis.

The University recognises that home working is a different way of working for some colleagues and these guidelines will provide some practical assistance for you to manage this situation, recognising the unusual current circumstances.

The sources for this guidance include the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS), the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Elements of the 5 Ways to Wellbeing model from the New Economics Foundation have also been incorporated. <https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-yourself/five-ways-to-wellbeing/>. Good practice from other organisations where working from home is well established has also been included.

**Physical conditions for working from home**

You should do your best to:

* Create a suitable, clear space/area for home working.
* Check the ergonomics of the work area – posture, chair, desk, screen

<https://www2.worc.ac.uk/facilities-staff/documents/DSE_Health_and_Safety_Arrangements_Guidance_2017.pdf>

* Take regular breaks from screen-based working – once in every hour do something different to give your eyes a break
* Be active – exercise your body at intervals by stretching, moving and/or going out for a walk if not self- isolating, there are many excellent exercise videos available and the NHS offers a selection here

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WtSPnLR_Gks>

**Work organisation**

* Identify in discussion with your line manager which aspects of your work are suitable for homeworking and what access to University systems is required and available. If needed, the University may be able to loan equipment on a short-term basis to support homeworking.
* Your line manager must agree your usual start and finish times. You will be expected to attend virtual meetings, events and any training arranged by your line manager and, for example, your team or course leader.
* To help colleagues keep in touch with you, you must provide a contact email (your usual work email address in most cases) and telephone number. You are expected to be available by telephone and email during your working hours. In addition, you should use your outlook calendar to provide information on your working arrangements and share this with your line manager.
* You are expected to be available during working hours. If there are times when you will not be available, or you need quiet time to concentrate without being disturbed, please let your colleagues know and advise when you will be contactable.
* Working from home might require being more aware of the need for confidentiality and GDPR requirements. Please refer to the University’s guidelines on safe practice, data protection and information security.
* The University’s insurance policy for employer’s liability and personal accident will operate in the same way as office based employees for approved occasional home working. However you should also consider whether you need to advise a landlord, mortgage provider and/or insurer (contents and/or buildings) that you will be working from home occasionally.
* In certain circumstances the University may ask you to carry out work at home that is outside your normal duties but commensurate with your role to help maintain essential services.
* There may be occasions when you will be required to attend the workplace to support the work of your School or Department and/or the wider University.

**Keep in contact**

* Working for home, for some people, might give rise to feelings of being isolated especially if the normal work setting is as part of a close team; you may find it helpful to book regular contact with colleagues and line managers
* Forms of contact might include email, telephone, and Skype. Having a visual contact session may be preferable to using email or phone alone.

**Mental wellbeing**

* Keep in touch with colleagues and set up regular contact times to help maintain a connection with work.
* Use the Employee Assistance Programme – Care First- <https://www2.worc.ac.uk/personnel/658.htm>

The EAP provides staff with easy access to 24/7 counselling support and specialist advice on wide range of practical issues that may have an impact on an employee’s health and wellbeing. **All services are provided on a confidential basis and free of charge to University staff.**

**You may also find it helpful to access these resources:**

Mindfulness - techniques that can help with managing stress, anxiety and depression <https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/be-mindful/>

Relaxation advice - learning some relaxation techniques might help you

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/mental-wellbeing/stress/breathing-and-relaxation-exercises-for-stress#more-breathing-and-relaxation-videos>

**Invest time in your own development**

* + - Refresh your awareness of some of the core programmes in the University’s learning management system – LearnUpon – this can be reached from the staff log-in page.
    - If you have booked to attend a staff development workshop during the period of working from home, you will be provided with details of alternative dates and any on-line resources that might be helpful in the interim.