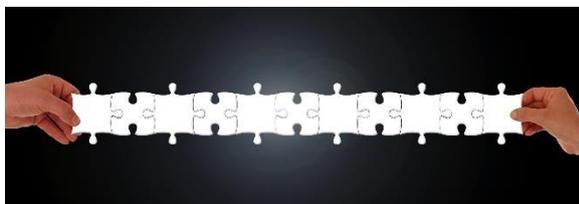


Homeworking Top Tips

With the increase in home working arising as a result of the spread of Coronavirus, we have produced this guidance for all, whether school leader or employee, to help maintain productivity whilst supporting everyone's wellbeing.

Keep in contact with school



Leaders should maintain regular contact with you, even when you are both working from home. For many of us, especially those new to homeworking, this is likely to be a daily phone call where the following may be discussed:

- How things are going and to provide guidance and direction if required
- Whether you have sufficient work and whether there are additional tasks to be allocated
- Any deadlines which are coming up and any issues with meeting these
- The need to ensure the security and confidentiality of information and papers that may be taken home
- Ensuring you are working safely and your workspace is not causing any musculoskeletal problems
- Updating you on what is happening, both within the school and in the team – it is important we maintain team morale and identity
- To check that you are okay – you will not be used to working alone and it is easy to feel isolated and become worried about the general situation

Keep in contact with your colleagues

As well as maintaining contact with managers, remember to keep in touch with your colleagues. The social aspects of work can have a positive impact on your wellbeing and the absence of this can leave us feeling isolated.

Maintaining morale, team cohesion and employee wellbeing is really important during this difficult time. Contact may take a range of forms and could be through email, Skype, phone calls, etc. For example, you could consider holding departmental meetings over Skype, Whatsapp or Google Hangout. You could also use these systems to do joint planning, or just for a catch up.



The document below provides some additional guidance for maintaining your wellbeing whilst homeworking.



Supporting your
mental health while w

Have a space to work in

We recommend you designate somewhere in your house where you can work comfortably. For most of us, this is unlikely to be a dedicated space and may well be the kitchen or dining room table. Whilst you may find working on the sofa comfortable at first, it is likely to be bad for your posture after only a short time if you are working on a laptop.



Think about how your work area is set up normally and aim to reflect this as much as possible when creating your workspace at home. Laptops and screens should be positioned to stop twisting and bending the neck, tables and desks should be at a suitable height and chairs should provide as much support as possible. Where you have adapted chairs at work, you should be allowed to take these home. Please also see [Health and Safety](#) below.

It is important that you get some separation from work at the end of the day. Ideally, and where space allows, working in a separate room will allow you to close the door on work at the end of the day. Where this is not possible, try to clear everything away when you have finished working so you can switch off.

Working at home with children present

Anyone with young children will recognise that you cannot both parent *and* work at the same time; you simply won't manage to get any work done. Most educational staff have been designated as key workers so they should continue to be able to access childcare for their own children. However, for any employees not so designated, this is likely to become a bigger problem for which there is not a single solution; the normal grandparent arrangements may not be appropriate due to social distancing guidance and older people being more vulnerable.

In these situations, all of us, whether leaders or employees, are encouraged to try and be flexible about working times and arrangements. For example, you may be more productive at times when a relative or partner is able to take over childcare responsibilities. Discuss and agree how this might work with your manager or with others in the team – communication is key and everyone needs to understand that this could alter as the days goes by.



Have time to work in

Aim to set a routine and designate when you are, and are not, working. This may reflect your normal work day or may need to be adjusted to reflect any home issues you face during the current situation, though significant changes should be discussed with your line manager.

The working day for most of us is clearly delineated by our commute to and from work but as this disappears when working from home, we have to put steps in place to mark when we are on-shift and when we are not.

Where you have shared systems, put appointments in your Outlook calendar to show your start and finish times and that you are working from home. Categorise these appointments as periods when you are free so that Skype and other systems show that you are available. This will allow all of us to contact one another as required whilst respecting our working hours.

At the end of the working day, we recommend you turn off your lap-top and devices so you can have a clear definition between working and not-working. Feeling that you have to be constantly available can grind you down and will impact on your wellbeing.

Remember to eat



Looking after all aspects of your health while you work from home is important and this includes eating properly. Some of us can forget to eat when absorbed in work and with no colleagues nearby heading out for a sandwich to remind us. Equally we can fall into the trap of grazing all day without the restraint of others nearby. Try to set times for meals and stick to them, aiming to eat healthily when you do.

There is lots of information and advice around healthy eating through [Health Assured](#), our employee assistance programme, and on the [NHS website](#).

And don't forget health and safety

Working from home can present a number of health and safety considerations, primarily around musculo-skeletal risks resulting from poor posture or badly set up work spaces.

Standing up regularly and getting some movement into your daily home-working routine will not only boost your mental well-being but also protect your physical health by releasing muscle tensions and giving your eyes a chance to adjust from staring at a screen.

Just because you are at home, you should still follow normal health and safety requirements. For example, if a power cable is damaged there is a risk of electrical shock so this should not be used and you should contact school to arrange a replacement.

We encourage you to undertake DSE assessments of your work space and guidance on how to do this is available on the [HSE website](#).

Did you know?

“In 1665, Isaac Newton had to work from home when the University of Cambridge temporarily closed due to the plague. It was the most productive period of his life and he used that time to develop his theories on calculus, optics and gravity.”