Working from home guidance

Spring 2020

NHS England and NHS Improvement

Working from home

This guidance is designed to help support colleagues who are working from home, and to support line managers with a framework to successfully implement home working within their teams, to help make working from home seamless and productive.

You should read our Flexible Working policy alongside this guidance.

Our Code of Conduct must be adhered to, regardless of where the employee works.

Technology to help us work smarter

- Everyone has laptops and mobile phones which means we can access our network and desktop applications from anywhere.

- Microsoft Office 365 is there to help us work smarter and more flexibly.

- Our video and audio-conferencing solution, MS Teams, allows us to have team meetings remotely. If you need help on how to use Teams, videos and guides are available on The hub.

- We must all ensure we use technology in line with our information governance policies and procedures, most importantly in terms of managing access to personal and sensitive information and appropriate storage of corporate records. Please see our Corporate Records Management intranet pages, or contact the Corporate Records Management Team for further guidance.

Home working etiquette

Regardless of the frequency of remote and home working, colleagues should:

- ensure an appropriate working environment is available at home
- set aside suitable and sufficient time for work responsibilities and arrangements with minimal home related disturbance
- should be contactable when working remotely or at home, **only** during agreed working hours
- should ensure that they keep their work calendars accurate so that their whereabouts during working hours are clear. This is good working practice as well as essential for health, safety and wellbeing reasons
- not be working excessive hours
- ensure appropriate care is taken to ensure equipment supplied by NHS England and NHS Improvement is secure and used primarily for work related purposes in accordance with existing policies on private use
- ensure sufficient support is arranged for any caring responsibilities
- practice good meeting etiquette and ensure background home noise (e.g. pets, children, washing machines) don't interrupt MS Teams meetings. If possible, work from a separate room or mute your microphone when not speaking.

Considerations for working remotely

Health and Safety

NHS England and NHS Improvement and its employees are subject to the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974), regardless of where the work is carried out. NHS England and NHS Improvement must, as far as is reasonably practical, ensure their people's health, safety and welfare at work. If a work-related accident occurs whilst the colleague is working remotely or from home, this must be reported in accordance with the usual procedures.

Work location

The proposed work site needs to be both adequate and practical for working in terms of health and safety. Working from home may allow colleagues with caring responsibilities to have more flexible care arrangements. However, this is not a means for combining work with caring responsibilities and colleagues are expected to have proper care arrangements in place during their working day.

Personal Security

No face-to-face meetings should take place in an employee's home; instead use a virtual meeting, an office or external work location. We recommend meetings are held over MS Teams.

Considerations for working remotely

Contingency plans

If technical issues prevent you from working from home, please let your manager know so that contingency plans can be made.

Insurance

Items of equipment belonging to NHS England and NHS Improvement are covered by our insurance whilst they are in the employee's home and when in transit. Employees are advised to notify their home insurers of the nature and extent of the use of their home for work purposes. We will not ordinarily contribute towards home insurance as it is not anticipated there will be additional costs associated with home working.

Employer Liability Scheme

Colleagues working from home are covered by our Employer Liability Scheme. However, colleagues do have a duty to take reasonable care within their own working environment. Any personal equipment used by the colleague for work purposes will not be covered by our insurance.

Considerations for working remotely

- We'll provide colleagues with a laptop, work mobile phone and headset to enable them to do their work.

- Other costs such as additional energy costs and furniture will be met by the employee and not paid by NHS England and NHS Improvement.

- NHS England and NHS Improvement will not contribute towards the employee's broadband services. It is likely that most employees would already subscribe to broadband / internet access for personal use in their homes.

Confidentiality

- We all need to be mindful of confidentiality and data protection. This includes ensuring all documents are securely stored after use, computer screens are locked whilst the user is away from their laptop, and aware of what is on our computer screens when other people (friends, family or other members of the public) are nearby.

- Colleagues must familiarise themselves and work in line with the Confidentiality Policy and ensure they are compliant with all Information Governance policies and procedures (including Data Protection, Records management and Information Security).

- There are suitable security arrangements for storing confidential work-related information. Only encrypted USB devices approved and issued by Corporate IT and Smarter Working should be used as a means of data transfer.

- Paper records containing person-identifiable or confidential information should not be placed in domestic waste. All such paper records must be returned to NHS England and NHS Improvement sites and disposed of through secure disposal mechanisms.

- Security of information must be considered before using public Wi-Fi networks when working on NHS England and NHS Improvement business. The ICT Acceptable Use policy covers use of devices when in public places and states they must **not be connected to unsecured public Wi-Fi/hotspots** .

- All data and information produced, accessed or used in the course of performing the duties of the job is the property of NHS England and NHS Improvement and must be managed in line with data protection legislation.

Managing remote workers

Managing our people who are working outside of the office requires a flexible approach, good communication, organisation, cooperation and trust.

Setting clear expectations and outlining objectives

Agree in advance what work needs to be completed

Managers may wish to discuss and agree the scope of work to be undertaken, outlining the expectations and setting any deadlines where required, during the period of home working.

Agree accessibility and contact

Depending on the role, an employee may need to be available to colleagues during certain times of their normal working day. Agree in advance what these times will be and how an employee can be contacted.

Do they have all needed resources?

Give consideration to the type of work colleagues in your team normally do and what resources they require to carry out their duties.

👥 **Managing remote workers**

Maintaining communications

Regular one-to-ones/PDRs	It's important to continue regular one-to-ones with your people. Clear objectives/ targets/ deadlines and performance standards should be agreed.
Agree 'check-in' procedures	Managers may wish to agree in advance the frequency and method for checking in (telephone, email or face to face meetings) with colleagues, either individually or as a team. This can be best done over MS Teams.
Employees' Welfare	Continue to regularly remind your people not to work excessive hours and to take their lunch breaks. We have a duty of care to our people, so it's important to watch out for signs they may be de-motivated or feeling isolated.
Focus on outcomes	With a focus on outputs, colleagues can plan their work in the most effective way. For example, a colleague may be able to choose the hours worked across the day, as long as this fits in with the needs of the service. Without the need to travel into the usual place of work, an earlier start can be made, or the employee might choose to work later into the evening.
Performance management	It is important to provide specific feedback on areas or concerns and provide a colleague with an opportunity to discuss any issues they have whilst working from home, and to agree a way forward. Ideally any feedback should be given during a face-to-face discussion, or a virtual meeting if not possible, at a suitable time, with the agreement of the employee.