



assessments

**Hybrid &
Flexible Working
Policy**

Hybrid, Flexible Working Policy

Policy purpose and scope

We believe that flexible working can increase staff motivation, promote work-life balance, enrich employee wellbeing, and improve performance and productivity.

This policy sets out our approach to flexible working requests under the statutory procedure. Employees may also request an informal flexible working arrangement and agreement may be reached informally without the need for a formal process.

This policy provides a framework for working from home where this is both feasible and desirable. Working from home, by its very nature, is often individual to the job and the employee concerned. Any arrangement for working from home should be voluntary on the part of the employee and at the discretion of the manager. It is critical that any arrangement does not impact detrimentally on the quality and continuity of service provision in all of the functions and activities of the company. The key to success is mutual understanding and trust, leading towards mutual benefit.

This policy is also intended to provide guidance to enable employees to work from home effectively and safely, assisting both managers and employees by highlighting areas for consideration and providing practical advice and information.

Hybrid and Home Working

Employees may undertake some of their duties away from one of the company's workplaces or away from their normal place of work, for several reasons and with varying degrees of frequency. Inspiring Learning recognises that homeworking can be beneficial for individuals and can be a convenient way for employees to balance the demands of work, commuting and family commitments, and, to this end, will seek to accommodate it wherever possible.

After successful completion of the probationary period, employees can make an application for homeworking which will be considered on its merits. However, please note that not all roles and not all jobs are suitable for homeworking.

The prospect of working from home may be raised by managers or employees, either individuals or groups. Employees who consider that working from home is an option should follow the flexible working procedures laid out in this policy.

Homeworking is understood to mean working from home on an occasional, temporary or permanent basis. It simply means that employees conduct their job from home with the same contractual obligations, such as core working hours.

Hybrid working can be classed as any one of the following:

- Flexible homeworking with time split between home and the office.
- Mobile working with a base at home to travel to the employer's different premises and customers.
- The office as the main place of work with working from home occasionally.

There are two main categories of homeworking:

- Occasional/ad hoc homeworking: this arises in relation to specific pieces of

work or for specific periods. It does not follow a regular pattern, is combined with working from the employee's normal Company workplace and is subject to the prior approval of a line manager. It may be granted as part of a phased return to work after maternity or sickness absence or be a temporary arrangement due to family commitments or domestic circumstances.

- Regular homeworking: this is an agreement between the Company and the employee to work the working week from home, or a combination of homeworking and attendance at a Company workplace, on a regular and on-going basis.

A request for homeworking is unlikely to be approved, on either an occasional or permanent basis if:

- (a) you need to be present on our premises to perform your job (for example, because it involves a high degree of personal interaction with colleagues, clients or other third parties or involves equipment that is only available on our premises);
- (b) your most recent appraisal identifies any aspect of your performance as unsatisfactory; (c) your manager has advised you that your current standard of work or work production is unsatisfactory;
- (d) you have an unexpired warning, whether relating to conduct or performance; or (e) you need supervision to deliver an acceptable quality and/or quantity of work.

If you wish to apply to work from home, you will need to be able to show that you can:

- (a) work independently, motivate yourself and use your own initiative;
- (b) manage your workload effectively and complete work to set deadlines;
- (c) identify and resolve any new pressures created by working at home; and
- (d) adapt to new working practices including maintaining contact with your manager and colleagues at work.

Please note that this policy should not be taken as forming an employment contract and may be updated at any time.

Flexible Working

In addition to Hybrid working, examples of flexible working include:

- The hours you are required to work, i.e., Part-time/full-time
- The times when you are required to work, i.e., flexitime, staggered hours, compressed hours, annualised hours, term-time only, shifts
- Job-sharing
- Where you are required to work

Therefore, there are 2 ways to ask for flexible working:

- A statutory request
- A non-statutory request

The Company acknowledges the importance for employees in achieving a balance between work and personal commitments and will endeavor to grant requests where possible.

The Company will however place restrictions on the operation of flexible working if it deems it necessary for the proper conduct of its business and in accordance with the permitted statutory grounds for refusal. The Company reserves the right not to agree to the request where one or more of these criteria indicate that, in the current circumstances, the job can only be carried out effectively under current arrangements.

Statutory flexible working request

Eligible employees have the legal right to submit a formal request for flexible working and the Company will deal reasonably with such requests.

Employees are advised to think through the details of their request and discuss it with their line manager before applying formally. This is to help highlight any areas of concern and ensure that the business is not impacted negatively. You should have an open and honest discussion to explore the feasibility.

The statutory procedure requires that requests for flexible working (including any appeal process) are dealt with within three months of the written application, although this timescale may be extended by agreement. Where possible, the Company will ensure that decisions are made well within this timescale.

Eligibility

To be eligible to request flexible working you must:

- Be an employee of the Company (not an agency worker or contractor);
- Have at least 26 weeks' continuous employment with the Company at the date the application is made;
- Not have made a formal request under the statutory procedure for at least 12 months.

You have the right to have the request dealt with reasonably, but this does not give you an automatic right to a contract variation.

Procedure

If you decide to make a formal flexible working request, you must follow this procedure. However, before making an application, you should think about:

- What working pattern will help you best achieve your aims;
- The financial implications a change might have on you;
- What effects, if any, the change will have on the Company's business and how these might be accommodated.

Your application must be submitted to your line manager and must include:

- The date of the application;
- The changes that you are seeking and the date on which it is proposed that the change should become effective;
- A statement that it is an application under the statutory right to apply for flexible working arrangements;
- Whether a previous application has been made by you to the Company and, if so, when;
- What effect, if any, you think making the change applied for would have

on the Company and how, in your opinion, any such effect might be dealt with.

You can use the [Flexible working form](#) to make your application.

Your line manager, in consultation with the relevant head of department, may agree to the formal request without discussing it with you (for example, if the details of your request have already been discussed informally). In most cases, your line manager will arrange to meet with you after receiving the application. This meeting could be face-to-face or via video or telephone conferencing and will be within 28 days of receiving the request.

All requests must be agreed by the Head of Department.

Meeting

The time and place of the meeting will be convenient to both you and your manager. A work colleague or trade union representative may accompany you at the meeting. That person will be permitted to confer with you during the meeting and to address the meeting, but not to answer questions on your behalf.

If your chosen companion is not available at the time proposed for the meeting and you propose an alternative, mutually convenient time, the manager will postpone the meeting to the time proposed by you. Alternatively, you should consider choosing another companion.

At the meeting, the requested variation to your working arrangements will be discussed fully. The impact of the change, and your ideas for how any adverse impact could be minimised, will be considered. The meeting also provides the opportunity to discuss any alternative variations which would be acceptable. Your manager will confirm review dates for the new arrangements.

Agreement

If the Company agrees to the application, you will receive written confirmation, within 14 days of the meeting which will specify the contractual variation agreed to and state the date on which the variation is to take effect.

As the business environment and individual circumstances are continually changing, working arrangements should be reviewed regularly and any issues that arise are best dealt with as soon as possible.

Working arrangements must be reviewed after an initial trial period to ensure they are meeting the needs of the individual and the business. It is recommended that there are reviews after 6 and 12 months but different review dates may be considered if appropriate to the circumstances. Review dates will be agreed in advance with the employee.

Once the Company has agreed to the changes requested in your application, and the arrangements have been reviewed following a period of 12 months, a permanent variation of your contract will result, unless your manager agrees otherwise. Once a change has been made, you cannot revert to the previous terms and conditions of your employment.

If a temporary variation has been agreed, the written confirmation will specify the contractual variation agreed to, stating the date on which the variation is to take effect and the date it is due to end.

You may make further applications for variations (whether your first application was successful or not) provided they are made at least 12 months after the previous application.

Refusal

If your request is refused, you will receive written confirmation within 14 days which will identify on which of the permitted grounds (listed below) the application was refused. The letter will also provide an explanation as to why those grounds apply and set out the appeal procedure.

The application may be refused on one or more of several grounds, these being that the proposed changes will result in:

- A burden of additional cost
- A detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand
- An inability to re-organise work among existing staff
- An inability to recruit additional staff
- A detrimental effect on quality
- A detrimental effect on performance
- An insufficiency of work during the periods you propose to work
- A planned structural change
- Any other ground allowed by regulations

In deciding whether the above grounds are met, a wide range of criteria will be considered, including (by way of example only) the following:

- The Company's business needs
- The suitability of the job for the flexible arrangements proposed, e.g., the nature of the work, the hours needed and the need for continuity and consistency
- The current balance of full-time and part-time employees and other flexible working arrangements within the department or team
- The feasibility of covering the remaining hours

Withdrawal of Application

The Company can treat an application as withdrawn under the statutory provisions where you have:

- Notified your manager, orally or in writing, that the application is withdrawn
- Without reasonable cause, failed more than once to attend a meeting or appeal meeting
- Without reasonable cause, refused to provide your manager with information required to assess whether the contract variation should be agreed to

Your manager will confirm the withdrawal of the application to you in writing unless you have already provided written notice of the withdrawal. You will not be entitled to make another formal application until 12 months after your original request.

Appeal

It is the Company's policy to allow an appeal against a decision to refuse an application for flexible working. If you wish to appeal, you should do so within 14 days of the date on which you were notified of the decision. The notice of appeal must be addressed to the Head of HR in writing, setting out the grounds for appeal. A meeting will then be arranged, normally within 14 days, to discuss the appeal at a time and place convenient to both you and the Company. You have the same right to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative, as at the initial meeting.

After the appeal meeting you will be advised of the decision in writing, within 14 days. If the Company upholds the appeal, the letter will specify the contract variation agreed to and state the date on which it is to take effect. If the Company dismisses the appeal, the letter will state the grounds for the decision and an explanation as to why those grounds apply.

Discrimination & flexible working requests

It's usually against the law to turn down an employee's flexible working request because of their:

- age
- disability
- race
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

If a flexible working request cannot be agreed, we will explore other possible ways to support this. For example, if an employee makes a flexible working request because of a disability they have, this might be able to be treated as a reasonable adjustment request instead. This means we will look at the employee's request in context of their disability and agree how this can best be supported.

Informal request for flexible working

If you're not entitled to make a statutory request for flexible working, you can make a non-statutory request. This is one which isn't made under the law on flexible working.

Even if you are eligible to make a statutory request, you might want to make a non-statutory request instead if, for example, the change you're asking for is minor or temporary.

You may, request an informal variation of your employment contract in respect of, for example:

- the hours you are required to work
- the times when you are required to work
- where you are required to work (as between your home and places of business of the Company)
- hybrid working (splitting your time between attending the workplace/office and working remotely)

If you wish to request hybrid/home working, please complete the form found on Appendix 1 of this policy.

The Company will deal reasonably with all such requests. All requests must be agreed by the Head of Department in conjunction with an HR representative.

If the Company agrees to the application, you will receive written confirmation, of the informal arrangement and will be asked to sign to agree to the terms of this policy. Unless expressly confirmed otherwise, any informal agreement for flexible working does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and the Company and employee may amend it at any time.

If the company does not agree to the application, the reasons will be explained to you in writing.

Arrangements while working remotely

Roles and responsibilities of line managers and supervisors;

Consideration should be given to different approaches to managing employees who are working from home, such as managing outputs and deliverables. This relies on collaborative working between the employee and the line manager and regular review of performance targets, workload levels and objectives on the My Development Journey, which could be altered for the change in circumstances.

Consideration should also be given to the guidance within this policy to ensure that everything is in place. Particular attention is drawn to matters relating to health and safety, IT, confidentiality, contact, training and support and the contract of employment.

Managers and supervisors must ensure there is adequate contact and communication with home workers and that all risks associated with home working are identified and mitigated.

Health and safety

The Company's health and safety policy applies to homeworkers. Homeworkers are required to comply with several health and safety considerations in respect of the space utilised as their workplace in their home environment. Appendix 2 provides a checklist for those working from home to make sure workstation and environment are safe and suitable.

Employees should refer to the separate Health and Safety policy for more details. Setting up your workstation correctly at home is equally as important as when you are in the office, and the same principles apply. Your workstation includes your desk or table, chair, and PC or laptop.

You should liaise with your line manager to ensure that your remote working set-up is appropriate and that you are working in a safe manner. However, you must also take responsibility for your own health and safety and that of anyone else who is affected by your work (for example others in your household when you are working from home). Please take the time to complete the DSE Assessment module available on FLOW.

Whilst it may seem easier to simply open the laptop and start working without making any adjustments, this can lead to poor posture, which can cause pain and discomfort over time. It is well worth taking a couple of minutes to set up your workstation correctly each time you sit down to work.

You must notify your line manager if:

- You feel any discomfort due to working remotely (such as back pain); or
- You believe that there are any work-related health and safety hazards;
- Any work-related accidents occur in your home.

Tips for working on a PC or laptop at home:

- **Raise your screen:** Make sure your screen is raised so that the top of the screen is at eye level. This can be done using an adjustable laptop stand, a box or some books if necessary.
- **Use a separate keyboard and mouse;** This allows the laptop screen to be positioned correctly.
- **Report pain or discomfort:** If you feel discomfort, report it to your line manager as soon as you notice it.
- **Adjust your chair height:** Your arms should be at right angles, with forearms horizontal and lightly supported by the work surface. You may need a footrest if your feet are not firmly on the floor.
- **Make sure the lower back is well supported:** Support for your lower back will help encourage good posture. You can use a folded towel to give you more support or consider a back-support cushion if needed.
- **Take regular, short breaks:** Move around for five or ten minutes every hour, aiming for frequent, short breaks. Consider taking microbreaks to stretch, move around, change activity by taking a phone call, do some reading or get a drink to avoid prolonged static postures. Take more frequent breaks if your DSE setup is not optimal or if you are experiencing discomfort.

Try to avoid:

- Using phones or tablets for a long time
- Sitting on unsupportive seating such as a sofa
- Static postures.

Safe working environment

Fire and electrical safety:

- Make sure you have smoke alarms fitted and check these regularly.
- Do not overload sockets adaptors.
- Carry out regular visual checks on plugs, cables and electrical equipment. Do not use items which have damaged casing, cables, plugs, scorch marks or other signs of damage.
- Make sure you have access to basic first aid provisions.
- Have an emergency plan including what to do if there is a fire.
- Report work related accidents and incidents
- General working environment:
 - Give yourself enough space to work comfortably and move around.
 - Ensure your work area is free from trip hazards like trailing cables, bags or other items etc.
- Make sure there is adequate lighting, temperature, and ventilation.

Wellbeing

We ask you to be mindful that you are not overworking - "downtime" from work is essential. To help maintain your wellbeing, please make sure that you take adequate rest breaks:

- Even if you are busy, it is essential that you find the time to take a break of at least 20 minutes during each working day that lasts more than six hours.
- Ensure the time period between stopping work one day and beginning the next is not less than 11 hours.

If you have any concerns relating to your wellbeing at work please discuss this with your line manager. A variety of Wellbeing resources are available to all employees on Perkbox, including a 24 hour Employee Assistance Programme provided through Health Assured.

Working hours

While working remotely, you must be available and working during your normal hours of work, as set out in your contract of employment.

Please be as clear as possible with your line manager about your hours of work for days on which you are working remotely. Making use of tools such as shared calendars and out-of-office messaging can help colleagues to be aware of your availability on these days.

Sickness

When working remotely, you should not work if you are unwell. If you are sick and unable to work, the company's sickness absence policy applies.

Technology and equipment

To assist you to work remotely, you are provided with the necessary equipment. You must take care of any equipment we provide you with and notify your line manager and the IT department of any faults with the equipment.

If you need any equipment, you should notify your line manager.

You must ensure you notify your home insurance company that you are working from home. In the case of administrative work, there is usually no difference to premiums however if the Company have provided a laptop, employees must ensure this is covered.

Having access to the online learning platform, FLOW, allows for a more flexible learning approach and removes the necessity for face-to-face training where it would be difficult to carry out.

Tax relief

You may be able to claim tax relief for any household expenses incurred because of working from home, provided the expenses are solely work related. If you wish to benefit from this tax relief, see the Government's guide on claiming tax relief for your job expenses at www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/working-at-home.

Data protection

Employees who are working remotely are responsible for keeping information associated with our organisation secure at all times. Specifically, remote workers are under a duty to:

- Practise good computer security, including using a unique password for your work laptop and any other devices you use for work;
- Keep all hard copies of work-related documentation secure, including keeping documents always locked away except when in use; and
- Ensure that work-related information is safeguarded when working in public spaces, for example by:
 - Positioning your laptop so that others cannot see the screen;
 - Not leaving your laptop unattended; and
 - Not having confidential/business-sensitive conversations in public spaces.

In addition, all equipment provided by the company must be used for work-related purposes only and must not be used by any other member of your household or third party at any time or for any purpose.

Other commitments

For employees who are responsible for dependants, the ability to work from home will depend on age and capability of the children. If necessary, there will be expectation that employees will have alternative childcare arrangements in place.

Office space

If an agreement has been reached for you to split your time between the office and working remotely, you may be asked to agree to share your workspace at the office.

Employees working from home agree that:

- They must be available during normal working hours
- They should attend meetings and other office-based events as and when required by their line manager
- They are responsible for ensuring they take their rest breaks as defined in their employment contract
- They will continue to comply with company policies including annual leave, sickness reporting and accident reporting
- The equipment supplied by the company remains the property of the company
- The cost of home utilities including broadband will remain the individual's responsibility
- They will extend their home and contents insurance to provide cover for work related equipment at no additional cost to the company
- If their conduct or performance working from home becomes unsuitable, they may be asked to revert to working at a company office or employer and no longer be permitted to work from home

Appendix A

Hybrid / Home-Working Request Form (Informal)

You can use this form to make an application to work from home on a regular basis. This arrangement will not mean a contractual change to your contract and can be terminated by either party. Once completed this form should be sent directly to HR.

Personal Details:

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Employee Name | |
| Manager: | |
| Department: | |

Please lay out your request (i.e. number of days you wish to work from home)?

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Please describe how working from home will be of benefit and when you would look to utilise this working arrangement?

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Please describe, if any, what IT support you would require, allowing this to happen?

| |
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| |
|--|

To be completed by the employee:

I have read and understood the Hybrid and Flexible Working Policy and agree to the principles contained within it:

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Employee Signature: | |
| Date: | |

To be completed by the Manager: I Agree/Disagree to the above request for the following reason:

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| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Manager Signature: | |
| Date: | |

To be completed by HR:

| | |
|---------------|--|
| HR Signature: | |
| Date: | |

To be completed and sent to the HR department.

Appendix B

Working from home safely

Working from home, whether on a full, part-time, or temporary basis can be a convenient way for team members to balance the demands of work, commuting and family commitments. Inspiring Learning is here to support you in making homeworking a successful experience, including making sure you are safe.

As well as obvious things like your workstation and working environment, the effect on your mental health and wellbeing that working on your own may have must also be considered. It's important that you do not feel isolated and remain well connected to your colleagues, manager, and the wider Inspiring Learning family.

Please use this checklist, notes and infographic to consider your own homeworking situation. You **MUST** raise with your manager any areas of concern you have so we can help you make your homeworking as safe as we can.

Full name:

Job title:

Your workstation

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| Computer screen | The screen is clean, free of flicker and letters and images are clear. The screen can be tilted and swivelled, the top of the screen should be at eye-level and about an arm's length away. Reflections and glare from lights, windows, shiny surfaces, etc. is avoided or can be controlled. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Computer keyboard | Ideally a separate keyboard is available that tilts and has clear keys with a matt finish. There is enough space to use the keyboard without over-reaching or making awkward movements. Pressure on the wrists is avoided. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Computer mouse | The mouse moves smoothly and is positioned close to the keyboard. There is enough space to use the mouse without over-reaching or making awkward movements. Pressure on the wrists is avoided. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Desk or work surface | The work surface should be large enough for the equipment needed; computer, mouse, telephone, note pad, reading materials, etc. There should be enough space to organise things and easily reach those that are used the most. The surface should be free from glare and reflections. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Chair | Ideally the chair should be adjustable but as a minimum it must be possible to sit with the lower back supported, feet flat on the floor and forearms horizontal. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Software and work tasks | The software is suitable for the required tasks and training in its use has been provided. Expectations on work type, quantity and quality are clear. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| DSE training | The Display Screen Equipment training has been completed (<i>Check with your manager or on your personal online training site how to access this</i>) | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |

Working from home safely

Your working environment

| | | |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Lighting | Do not work in darkness or dim conditions. There should be light sufficient to easily read the keyboard, documents, etc. If artificial lights are needed, such as a desk lamp, these should illuminate the work surface rather than the screen. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Heating | A comfortable temperature is needed to work effectively. Consider ventilation from windows, portable fans, or portable heaters if the ambient air temperature is too hot or too cold. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Space | There must be enough space to get to and from the workstation and to change position when using it. There must be circulation space around the work area, and it must not become an obstacle to the normal use of the house as a home. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Noise | If work equipment is noisy report this to a manager. If outside sources of noise, such as a school playground or busy road are distracting it may be possible to move the workstation to another part of the house, or to counter these with music played at low volume. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Security | Information accessible on company systems may be subject to data protections and must not be shared with others such as family members or visitors to the home. Ensure sensitive data is not visible when the workstation is unattended and computer systems are secured. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Breaks | Don't forget to take a break. Look away from the screen and focus your eyes on something else for 20 seconds every 20 minutes. Get up 2 or 3 times each hour and take a short break away from work every 1 or two hours. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Safety | Your homeworking environment may be a danger to others, particularly young children, and pets. Consider whether the corners of tables, the positions of computers, trailing power cables, etc. could be bumped into, tripped over, accidentally pulled or have things spilled on them. | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |

Staying in touch. This is how I will connect...

| | |
|---|--|
| ...personally with my team mates | |
| ...formally with my team | |
| ...with my manager | |

Signature:

Date:

Return this form to your manager when you have completed it. Don't forget to raise with them any problems you may have with your homeworking, both now and in the future. (Managers: please act on any concerns your team member has. Forward a copy of this form to HR to save into their file)

Home working and staying healthy

Setting up your workspace

Look **STRAIGHT AHEAD**, monitor at eye level or just below and an arm's length away. If using multiple monitors, angle them inwards to reduce neck rotation.

Give your **EYES** a break. Every 20 minutes, look 20 feet away for 20 seconds. 20-20-20.

ELBOWS and **FOREARMS** level with the desk surface, shoulders are down and relaxed. Adjust chair height or prop yourself up with additional cushions.

FEET planted on the floor. A footrest is ideal; alternatively, use a box.



Keyboard and mouse positioned close to the edge of the desk to avoid unnecessary stretching. Don't shrug **SHOULDERS** when typing and mousing; lower the work surface or adjust your chair height to avoid this.

Sit **BACK** taking full backrest support. Adjustable chairs are ideal. For more lumbar support, place a cushion or rolled up towel behind you.

Keep **THIGHS** parallel to the floor, knees slightly lower than the hips.

Regular **MOVEMENT** is key. Get up from your chair 2-3 times an hour for 30-60 seconds or 5-10 minutes every hour. Add dynamic stretches to daily routines as well as walking.

Creating the right environment



We spend 90% of our time indoors so consider air quality. Let fresh air in, clean **WINDOWS** regularly to avoid dust build up and consider the cleaning products you are using. Air purifiers should be considered.

Observe the **TEMPERATURE** in your work area. When too cold, you may feel more distracted and lose some dexterity in your hands and fingers. If you are feeling cold, you may not be moving regularly enough. When you're too warm, you can be uncomfortable and tire more quickly. Aim for between 21 and 24°C (ideally 22°C).



ADD A LAMP to your desk to increase light levels if required. Illuminate the work area and documents as opposed to the screen as the screen already emits light.

Try to create a workspace away from your living space to reduce noise distraction. If you can't, wear earphones or headphones to take calls. Make sure these are fitted well. Adding **MUSIC** to the background or white noise can also help keep you productive.

CREATE A GOOD ATMOSPHERE around your work area including natural light, plants, flowers and artwork. Increasing the connection to nature around your work area improves productivity.

Navigating your home

WORKING FROM A SOFA: Plant feet firmly on the floor and sit back in the seat. Put your laptop on a book / magazine on a cushion to raise the screen slightly and improve neck posture. Place a cushion behind you for better lower back support. Keep shoulders down and relaxed, elbows by your side and wrists straight. Take a break every 15-20 minutes.



INTERRUPT SITTING: Stand occasionally to work. An adjustable height ironing board is ideal. Alternatively, put the laptop on any flat surface at a standing height. A good regime could be 20 minutes sitting, eight minutes standing, two minutes moving.



WORKING AT A DINING TABLE: Plant feet firmly on the floor and sit back in the seat. Add a cushion to the backrest if needed. Move the chair close to the table and bring the laptop near to the edge. Try to lift the laptop to eye level and connect a separate keyboard and mouse to encourage a more neutral posture.



... These tips are offered on a temporary basis, when you do not have the means to set yourself up in an ideal ergonomic position.

Staying mentally fit

DON'T BE TOO HARD ON YOURSELF: You may be trying to work around childcare, home schooling, and other commitments. If you are struggling, talk to your line manager or HR department. If you are feeling anxious or low, there are a number of free apps that help support mental health wellbeing, e.g. Headspace, Moodfit. If you are finding everyday activities a struggle, contact your GP - many are now doing teleph1one or video consultations.

IF YOU ARE MISSING COLLEAGUES: Try to organise some regular 'get togethers' via conference call/apps. You may be 'seeing' each other during online work meetings but sometimes it's nice to have a chat over a cuppa, as you would during a coffee break in the office.



MAKE SURE YOU ARE GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP: You may be working different hours to fit in other commitments, but make sure you don't end up 'running on empty'. Set yourself boundaries and stick to them, e.g. no looking at emails between certain times of day/night, no working on weekends, etc., as applicable to your role.

MAKE SURE YOU HAVE SOME 'DOWN TIME': The lines between home and work are very blurred at the moment. Try to get outside for a period each day; the benefits of fresh air and being in nature are well documented in terms of mental health and wellbeing.

www.ergonomics.org.uk