

Coronavirus and working from home

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As a result of Government [guidelines](#) following the increasing spread of COVID-19, the UK is now effectively on lockdown.

What does this mean for employers?

Working from home has been a long-established practice for some businesses, including our own, however there is still a stigma attached to a request to work from home. With all the technology in place, working from home is a flexible approach that allows businesses to continue to run without any impact on the level of service that clients or customers receive.

With technology at its peak, remote working has never been easier; and may prove to be a lifesaver for many businesses in these unprecedented times. Where the nature of the business permits, working from home may soon become the norm for the time being. Of course, it may not be practical for all industries, but for the moment, those that can, should.

With many working practices changing for the first time towards this shift, it is important for employers to keep the health and mental well-being of their employees in mind, as well as balancing the needs of the business.

Some DO's and DON'Ts for employees working from home

- **DO create a designated area in your home to work from.** Where possible, keep it as a separate area so that you can switch off at the end of the day. If space means that is not possible, shutdown your laptop and move your work items out of sight.
- **DO get dressed.** There is a misconception that working from home is an excuse to stay in your

loungewear or PJs all day! This may well have a negative impact on your mental well-being.

- **DO take regular breaks**, as you would at work. It is easy to get stuck into work and when you are working from home it is easy to fall into a rhythm as there are none of the usual working office interruptions.
- **DO leave home.** Taking the daily exercise prescribed by the Government, maintaining social-distancing measures, must be encouraged.
- **DON'T over schedule your diary** so that you are taking back-to-back conference calls without taking a break.
- **DO set boundaries with your family**, whilst you're working from home, they need to know that you cannot be distracted whilst you are working, so far as is possible, and particularly if you are now juggling home-learning with children.
- **DO stick to your usual working pattern.** Make sure you switch-off and avoid the temptation to work well into the night.
- **DO keep in regular contact with your line manager and colleagues.** Connect via a video link and chat over coffee. It is important to retain communication and a good working rapport.
- **DO speak to someone every day**, whether that is a work colleague or a friend. It is important to keep connected. Ensure that your work doesn't only mean communication by email. **DON'T** just type and text.
- **DON'T get distracted** by household chores, continue to work as normal. Treat the environment as you would

when you're in the office, you will be more productive in the long run.

Employers should use technology to keep up office morale and schedule in socials where possible. Be mindful that, with social distancing in force, employees (and perhaps particularly those who live alone) are at risk of isolation, loneliness and disconnection.

Working from home, especially when employees have been used to an office environment, can be difficult and takes self-discipline and time to adapt.

If you're concerned about an employee's productivity when working from home, speak to [Karen Cole](#) as this could give rise to disciplinary action.

For more information on working from home policies and guidelines, call [Karen Cole](#) today.

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Note: This is not legal advice; it is intended to provide information of general interest about current legal issues.

