

## Guidance for Temporary Home Working

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In the event of having to temporarily work at home, the University recognises that, as your employer, we still have the same general health and safety responsibility as would apply to your usual place of work:

- To ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, your health, safety and welfare whilst at work

However, it is recognised that the full requirements of all workplace legislation will not apply, as we do not have control over your home environment. This guide has therefore been developed to help you to set yourself up well, at the start of your home working session.

Where possible, please follow these steps to improve your home workstation set up and remember to take frequent rest breaks and maintain your wellbeing, as you usually would in the office, including:

- Ensure any equipment you use is in good condition
- Ensure lighting level are suitable for the task (Natural lighting is always best, if possible)
- Ensure there is adequate ventilation in your workplace (again, natural ventilation is best, if possible)
- Keep the temperature reasonable (for most people this is between 18°C and 21°C)
- Try to make sure you have enough space to work and move around without being cramped.
- Take regular [micro- breaks](#), away from your workstation e.g. make a drink or walk around the room.
- Avoid awkward, static postures by regularly changing position, getting up and moving, or doing [simple workstation stretches](#)
- Keep hydrated
- Enjoy healthy snacks and avoid sugary or fatty foods
- Avoid eye fatigue by changing focus or blinking from time to time
- Stay connected and maintain social connections with your team, family, friends and community
- Consider setting yourself a calendar reminder or using the alarm on your phone to prompt you to take a break.

### Display Screen Equipment (DSE)

Employers are not required to undertake workstation assessments for those working at home on a temporary basis. However, the University encourages you to set up your home workspace safely and comfortably, for each working session, as follows:

1. Adjust your seat height so that, when typing, your arms are roughly at right angles and your forearms horizontal. Choose your most suitable chair and, if it is not height-adjustable, try using a folded towel or cushion for extra height.
2. Use a footrest if your feet are not flat on floor after adjusting your seat height. Non-slippery items such as a box file, a thick book, etc., can make useful temporary footrest.

3. Make sure your lower back is supported. If you need more support, try using a folded towel or cushion between your back and the backrest of the chair.
4. Keep your wrists in a neutral position, not excessively flexed up or down.
5. If using a laptop, it is best to link it to a separate keyboard and mouse.
6. Adjust your monitor height so that the top of the screen is roughly at eye level. You can use a box or books if you don't have a laptop stand.
7. Refresh your memory of DSE good practice: <https://www.posturite.co.uk/help-advice/useful-resources/learning-guides/ergonomic-workstation-setup>
8. Taking regular breaks is endorsed; The 20:20:20:20 practice is encouraged. Please take at least a 20-second break every 20 minutes to walk 20 or more paces and to focus on an object at least 20 metres away. This practice rests the eyes and stops them getting overtired whilst also encouraging blood-flow in the legs and relaxation of the muscles of the upper body/arms.
9. Consider ways to build movement into your day, tasks like conference calls, reading documents, thinking and making notes could be done on a sofa, easy chair or even lying on the floor.
10. Embrace the new technology we now have available through Microsoft 365 to cut down on keyboard work. The [Dictate](#) function is available in Outlook, Word, OneNote and PowerPoint. You can even take it a step further by using [Windows Speech Recognition](#) to control your PC.

In addition to these points, the following short guidance videos and infographic give good practical tips on ways you can improve your temporary home workstation:

- [Remote Working by Antony Hylton, Ergonomist and Physiotherapist](#)
- [HSE's Temporary Working at Home](#)
- [Healthy Use of Laptops](#)
- [Working from Home Short Term – helpful hints](#)

## **Lone Working and Mental Health**

The University recognises that workers may feel disconnected or isolated if they have no direct supervision or anyone to help them if things go wrong. This can affect people's mental health.

Therefore, we encourage you to keep in direct contact with your line manager / co-workers, on a regular basis. We also encourage you to identify an emergency point of contact and to share this with your line manager or key colleague, to make sure we all remain healthy and safe.

More information about ways to improve your wellbeing whilst at home can be found on our [wellbeing hub](#).

If you have any concerns or would like to access our support services, please contact your line manager or [Employee Assistance Program](#) for free and confidential help.