

MANAGER & STAFF BRIEFING

Interim Homeworking



Supporting Managers and Staff Working from Home

The health and safety of our patients, service users and staff has been a top priority in our decision making and service delivery arrangements to date in our HSCP's response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) health pandemic, and this continues.

One of the ways in which we supported staff and stopped the spread of the virus was to facilitate managers and staff to work from home on an interim basis where it was possible and meets business needs. The move to homeworking enabled business continuity across a number of functions and services where such working arrangements can be accommodated.

We realise that this was a big change for many people, and this briefing provides some advice on how managers and staff can effectively work from home, balance their home and work life and keep well. It also provides advice for managers on how best to support their staff teams.

Mindful of staff health and wellbeing, we carried out a staff survey with HSCP staff in May to 'check in' and find out more about how they were experiencing the workplace during the health crisis. The survey highlighted areas that were working well and how staff could be better supported. It also provided positive feedback on some of the experiences and practices of staff while working from home. This briefing provides some hints and tips for managers and staff to support one another based on some of the survey feedback.

Interim Homeworking Guidance

Glasgow City Council and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde have developed guidance and briefings for managers and staff to support them working from home on an interim basis during the COVID-19 health pandemic. They include a range information on:

- what is homeworking and staff who can be considered for homeworking
- homeworking options
- health and safety including homeworking and display screen equipment (DSE) assessments



- › information management and security guidelines
- › resources available to help managers and staff work from home and
- › manager and staff responsibilities.



Managers and staff must familiarise themselves with these, and discuss them within their team meetings where staff are working from home on an interim basis during COVID-19, whether on a part- or full-time basis. They must also complete any actions that are expected of them.

Homeworking guidance and briefings are available at the following web links:

- › Glasgow City Council

Working Well from Home – Managers’ Briefing

Interim Homeworking Guidance

Glasgow City Council are currently developing a pilot on Hybrid Working – this is a blend of both home and office working - that works for both the services we provide and staff who deliver these. You can find more information on the pilot, including Frequently Asked Questions, on the **Glasgow website**.

- › NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde

COVID-19 Working at Home Advice and Guidance for Managers and Staff

Health & Safety while Temporarily Working at Home

For many managers and staff, working from home is new and was not planned in advance. This means that there was no time for any of the normal assessments that would have taken place to ensure that staff can work safely from home.

For all staff working at home on a temporary basis, there is now an assessment that staff should have completed and jointly discussed and actioned with their line manager. The assessment will look at things that can help staff to work safely at home – for example, their environment, their equipment etc. More information on these assessments can be found at the following web links:

- › **Council staff – Homeworking DSE Assessment**
- › **NHSGGC staff – Homeworking Risk Assessment**

All staff should ensure that they have completed these as soon as possible or speak to their line manager about completing one.

If the assessment identified any extra equipment that staff may need to work safely and successfully from home then they should discuss this with their line manager in the first instance. Line managers should then contact their local Resource Manager or Office Manager to discuss accessing the extra equipment. If any equipment is taken from the office for staff, managers must do this in agreement with the local Resource Manager or Office Manager and record what is taken.

Health and Wellbeing

While working from home may help stop the spread of the virus and have other positive benefits such as work-life balance, it could have a negative impact on the physical and mental health and wellbeing of staff. Working from home may mean that staff may not be as active as they would normally be or they may feel isolated and cut off from colleagues and friends. All this can affect their health and wellbeing.

As staff's health and wellbeing is important to us, we have pulled together some web links to supports and resources, as well as some hints and tips, that can help keep staff healthy and well while working from home.

Useful Web Links

Below are a number of health and wellbeing supports and resources, which also give advice on keeping active, whatever your level of fitness.

- [GCHSCP's You Tube Channel](#) – here you will find videos on self-care in a crisis and how to cope with stress and anxiety
- [Partnership website – Staff Health and Wellbeing](#)
- [Glasgow City Council – Tips for Health and Wellbeing](#)
- [Glasgow City Council – Your Mental Health and Wellbeing](#)
- [NHSGGC - Staff Support and Wellbeing](#)
- [NHSGGC - Staff Health](#)
- [Mental Health Check In](#)
- [National Wellbeing Hub – Coping and Self Care](#)
- [National Wellbeing Hub – Resources for Managers](#)



Hints and Tips

These hints and tips are based on the feedback received from staff on what worked best for them in our 'Checking-In' survey.

- Try and establish a new routine for working from home – this will help bring a sense of 'normality' to the working day.
- Don't sit in front of your laptop / screen all day – take regular short breaks.
- IT problems are to be expected – don't let them overwhelm you. Follow the usual process for reporting problems.
- Ensure you take a regular lunch-break by marking it in your diary.
- Take time to check-in with the other members of your team, even just to ask if they are doing okay. Remember that your line manager is also a colleague and may appreciate a check-in as well. Sometime a friendly word can make all the difference to people.
- Be mindful that you are unaware of people's home circumstances. They may be juggling a family or caring responsibilities as well as working from home. Despite all this, they will be doing their best to balance these and work effectively.
- Set up an informal group, for example, WhatsApp group, where you can chat informally to colleagues. Ensure that you follow your parent organisation guidelines on the acceptable use of ICT.
- Use Microsoft Teams to set up a regular coffee break for you and your colleagues / work friends where you can catch up about non-work related topics.
- Don't forget to acknowledge a colleague if they have helped you out. Sometimes just saying 'thanks' can make someone feel appreciated.



Managers' Checklist for Keeping Staff Well

If a staff team is now working from home then managers should ensure they have adapted their management skills to enable teams to be effectively managed and supported. Managers need to find a balance between the welfare of their staff who are working in a different (and perhaps difficult) environment and managing the performance of their team.

Below are some key things that managers can do to keep their staff teams well.

- Communication is key to manage your staff working from home. Ensure that you have a daily check-in system that works for each staff member. Some may prefer a quick phone call, while some may prefer a Microsoft Teams check-in. If their preferred method is a phone call then you should also ensure that you see them on a Teams meeting once a week to ensure they are well. You should ensure that you regularly:
 - ask them how they are coping while working from home and if there is anything you, as their manager, can do to support them
 - ask them how they are coping generally during the restrictions
 - encourage them to use the tools and resources available to them; everyone needs extra support at some time
 - update them on any Partnership information that they need to know, for example new guidance or a new process, etc. and
 - encourage them to keep in contact with each other.
- Listen and Engage. When checking in with your staff, ensure that you listen to what they say and take it on board. Working from home means we do not always have access to the tools and software that we did in the office, so we may need to work differently. Ask your staff for ideas on how we can work differently; discuss these ideas as a team and explore if this is possible.
- Inform. Keep your staff up to date on your team's priorities and workload.
- Set Goals. When staff are working from home, with all the distractions that brings, they can sometimes lose focus. Ensure every member of your team know what tasks they need to work on and timescales. Let them know what their team members are working on. This can help them feel connected again, and it can also encourage team members to contact each other for advice and support (if they know they are working on a similar task).
- Be Flexible and Trust. Staff working from home may have other demands on their time – for example caring responsibilities. They may not be able to do a full shift in one go. As long as you have identified their goals and timescales, then trust them to get it done on time.

Those who are working from home should all check-in with each other and support each other. It is only by working together that we can create a safe working environment for all.