

Coronavirus and Working from Home

If your employees are able to carry out their job from anywhere, then given the current strict instructions on staying at home from the Government, you should allow them to work from home.

Working from home isn't something that employers normally like to approve, but in these difficult situations, it is essential that if your employees can work from home, they absolutely should.

Can people do this?

You need to start by checking that your employees can actually work from home.

- Do they have a dedicated space?
- Do they have the equipment needed?

If an employee doesn't have a dedicated space to work from, you're going to need to discuss this with them and see how you can work around this.

If they don't have a computer / laptop at home, this is an easier thing to fix as you can provide them with a computer / laptop.

Getting things in order

Get them to set their workspace up. They'll need room for their computer / laptop, keyboard, mouse, and other accessories.

Do they have an appropriate chair to sit on? Bear in mind that your employees are going to be using this chair all day. If they have one, then great! If not, are you able to get their office chair to their home address?

Ensure that they have access to all documents and systems they need to be able to do their job. Your IT provider should be able to sort this out for you.

Taking calls is a normal part of work, so you'll need to have a look at how you plan to get the calls through to your employees working from home. If you use a telephone answering service, such as Money Penny, they can transfer any calls through to your employees on their mobile phone or landline.

What do employees need to do?

Inform your employees to get in touch with their mortgage company / landlord as they may need to tell them that they are working from home.

They should also need to declare this to their home insurance provider too.

Employer responsibilities

You're still responsible for your employees Health and Safety and wellbeing while they are working from home. You are also responsible for maintenance of the equipment that you supply to them. There's a brief guide to employers on homeworking [here](#)

Give them some guidance on setting up their workstation and sitting comfortably. You can access more [here](#)

Employee responsibilities

These probably don't change much from when they are in the office. They are still responsible for completing the work they are supposed to, in the agreed deadlines or to certain standards etc.

The only difference will be that they will need to structure their day a bit more efficiently than when they are in the office. It's easy to get distracted by things in the house that need doing, so by planning their day, including their lunch break it will mean that things stay on track.

Data protection

Data protection still applies when someone is working from home.

If they are accessing information that is covered under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), they will need to ensure that they are still complying with the rules.

This could mean, locking their computer / laptop when they have to walk away from it, locking away documents so that other members of the household can't see it, and even having their own profile on a shared computer / laptop to ensure that other people in the house cannot access the work.

You can read more about GDPR [here](#).

Team working

Just because your employees work in a team doesn't mean they have to be working from the same location to work effectively.

Your team needs to know what's going on, who is responsible for what, and be able to discuss the work they are doing. There are so many ways that we can now all keep in touch, that this is an easy fix.

You can arrange daily / weekly calls – these can either be on the phone or via video calls (using things like Zoom, Skype etc.).

Supervision of work

One of the main pushbacks when homeworking has been suggested by an employee is "how will I monitor what they are doing?". In short, the same way you do now. You don't sit behind them and watch everything they do, you measure their performance based on targets, statistics, deadlines being hit etc.

It will be exactly the same if they are working from home – you just need to ensure that you're communicating regularly enough for them to be able to ask questions and talk to you about problems.

More information

There will be daily updates on the [NHS 111 online](#) service and the [Government website](#)

More information on home working can found using the links below


<https://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/experts/legal/impact-of-gdpr-on-remote-working>

<https://archive.acas.org.uk/media/3905/Homeworking---a-guide-for-employers-and-employees/pdf/Homeworking-a-guide-for-employers-and-employees.pdf>

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