

Working from home

Employers and employees should be practical, flexible and sensitive to each other's situation when working from home because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Employers should:

- talk to their employees and workers about how they might improve working from home arrangements
- continue to consider which roles and tasks can be done from home – this might involve doing things differently and not assuming a role cannot be based at home
- support employees to adjust to remote working
- consider individual employees' needs, for example anyone with childcare responsibilities, a long-term health condition or a disability
- write down the arrangements that have been agreed so everyone's clear

Employers can:

- [use the preparing for homeworking questionnaire from CIPD](#)
- [join free Acas webinars on coronavirus workplace advice](#)

Health and safety

By law, employers are responsible for the health and safety of all employees, including those working from home.

Employer responsibilities

During the coronavirus pandemic, it's very unlikely that employers can carry out usual health and safety risk assessments at an employee's home.

However, an employer should still check that:

- each employee feels the work they're being asked to do at home can be done safely
- employees have the right equipment to work safely
- managers keep in regular contact with their employees, including making sure they do not feel isolated
- [reasonable adjustments](#) are made for an employee who has a disability

If changes are needed, employers are responsible for making sure they happen.

Employee responsibilities

Employees also have a responsibility to take reasonable care of their own health and safety.

Anyone working from home should keep in regular contact with their manager. They should also tell their manager about:

- any health and safety risks
- any homeworking arrangements that need to change

Looking after mental and physical health

It's likely that employers and employees are experiencing a high level of stress and anxiety at the moment. Find out more about [supporting mental health in the workplace](#).

It's important for employees to take regular breaks, for example to avoid sitting at a computer for too long.

They should also try to do other things to stay mentally and physically active outside of their working hours. This might include things like cooking, exercise, watching favourite TV programmes or other hobbies. It's a good idea for employers to remind staff about this.

Find out more about [looking after your mental health from the Mental Health Foundation](#).

Equipment and technology

Employers are responsible for the equipment and technology they give employees so they can work from home.

The employer should:

- discuss equipment and technology with the employee
- agree what's needed
- support the employee to set up any new equipment or technology

If an employee also has some work tasks that can be done safely away from their home, they should make sure they have access to the right equipment for those duties.

For example, this might include having your work laptop with you.

Checking how systems are working

Employers should regularly assess how their systems and temporary arrangements are working and make any improvements.

This might include looking at:

- if IT systems can handle the number of staff working from home
- the level of IT support for homeworkers
- extra equipment that could be posted or collected, for example headsets or stationery

Setting clear expectations

Changing to homeworking may be a challenge for many managers and employees, particularly if they're used to working together face-to-face.

It's important to build up a healthy relationship of trust and confidence.

Employers and managers should make sure that everyone working from home knows what's expected of them.

This includes agreeing:

- when employees will be available to work
- how they will keep in touch
- how work-life balance will be managed, for example taking regular breaks and switching off from work at the end of the day
- rules around storing information and data protection
- how performance will be managed and measured - taking into account people's circumstances where necessary
- who employees should contact if they have any problems or their circumstances change

It's important to recognise that some employees may find it hard to motivate and organise themselves when working from home.

If this happens, the manager and employee should talk about practical steps that might help.

Keeping in touch

Employers and employees should keep in touch regularly. This should include regular communication between:

- individual employees and their managers
- employees who need to work together
- team members

This might involve new ways of working, for example using video or conference calling technology.

Pay and terms and conditions of employment

Employees who are working from home must get the same pay, if they are working their usual hours.

Their usual terms and conditions still apply, apart from having to work from home on a temporary basis.

Employers need to make sure staff working from home follow [the law on working hours](#).

Working from home and childcare

Employees who are looking after children should talk to their employer. The employer should be sensitive and flexible towards the employee's situation.

Employers and employees may be able to agree a more flexible homeworking arrangement.

Examples of this could include:

- working different hours
- agreeing that the employee may not be able to work a full day or a full week
- reducing work targets
- being flexible about deadlines where possible

The same approach may be needed if an employer is caring for someone else, for example an older relative or someone who's ill.

An employee's circumstances may change so they're no longer able to work from home. [Find out more coronavirus advice for employers and employees.](#)

Expenses

Employees may want to talk to their employer if they run up costs through having to work from home. Employers may have their own policy on this.

[Find out more about homeworking expenses on GOV.UK.](#)

Insurance, mortgage or rent agreements

Employers should check the details of their insurance to make sure they're covered for an employee working from home if they're using business equipment. It also needs to cover them against a claim by a third party.

Employees should check there are no issues with them working from home, with their:

- home insurer
- mortgage provider or landlord

It's a good idea for employers to remind their staff to check this.

More advice

- [Coronavirus: advice for employers and employees](#)
- [When homeworking is not because of an emergency](#)