

Acas launches new guidance on mental health during coronavirus

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Workplace expert Acas has published [new guidance to help staff manage their mental health at work during coronavirus](#).

A new [Acas-commissioned YouGov survey](#) (DOCX, 83KB, 3 pages) conducted during coronavirus has found that nearly 2 out of 5 employees working from home felt stressed, anxious or experienced mental health difficulties due to their working situation.

The poll also found that:

- 1 in 2 people working from home felt isolated
- 7 out of 10 felt that they were missing social interactions with others at work.

Acas Chief Executive, Susan Clews, said:

"Many employees are working from home for the first time during this pandemic and it is clear from our poll that it is a very stressful or anxious experience for many people.

"The coronavirus lockdown has created lots of extra challenges such as a lack of social contact with work colleagues, feeling alone, trapped or struggling with childcare responsibilities. There's also a real anxiety around the impact of the virus itself, job security concerns whilst on furlough and genuine worries around whether it is safe to physically return back to their workplace.

"Our new coronavirus mental health advice covers all of these different workplace situations and offers practical advice on how workers, managers and bosses can support their colleagues during this difficult time."

During the coronavirus pandemic, many people may be working from home, leaving home to go to work or on temporary leave ('furloughed').

Acas's new advice is clear that in any of these situations, we all need to look after our mental wellbeing and offers some practical steps to take:

- stay in contact with people – talk to colleagues or friends about how you're feeling
- have a routine - so you plan in advance what you'll be doing each day
- keep active and exercise
- make time for activities you enjoy

People working from home may feel isolated. Acas's top suggestions on how to help include:

- talking to your manager about hours and when to take breaks

- discussing what kind of contact you'd like, possibly more video or phone calls
- mix up work so that it involves calls with other staff
- plan coffee breaks into your routine with other staff to keep in touch

There has been some initial easing of lockdown measures which has prompted some staff anxiety around safety and a physical return to work. Employers have a 'duty of care' towards their staff. This means they must do all they reasonably can to support employees' health, safety and wellbeing. This includes:

- making sure the working environment is safe
- protecting staff from discrimination
- carrying out risk assessments

Acas's full advice includes practical steps for employees, managers and employers to help everyone's mental health during this difficult time.

[See our coronavirus and mental health at work advice.](#)

Media enquiries

[Contact the Acas press office.](#)

Background notes

1. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2,002 employees. Fieldwork was undertaken between 26 March to 5 April 2020. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of British business size. [This document](#) contains the raw data for the statistics quoted.