

## Health, Work and Wellbeing

### **Working from Home**

#### **Useful Tips....for employees**

1. Confine your work space to a specific area in your home so your job doesn't intrude into the lives of other household members and you can concentrate
2. Block the neighbour's barking dog etc, excess noise from household members or ambient traffic with noise cancelling head phones or ear buds,
3. Set water-tight physical boundaries around your designated work space that is off limits for partners/housemates
4. Go to the same designated place on a regular basis so your mind doesn't wander, and you can focus and increase your productivity.
5. Employ your video communications perhaps more than you normally would, now that you're more isolated. Make sure you have your company's telecommuting devices—such as Zoom—hooked up and ready to go so you can stay connected with team members,
6. Avoid cabin fever. Now that you're spending a disproportionate amount of time at home, get outside as much as possible with gardening or walking around the block.

#### Useful Tips for managers

*Out of sight, out of mind can be a real problem for remote workers— Sara Sutton*

1. Ensure that you do not forget your staff who are working from home.
2. Stay in regular contact
3. Ensure your employees are clear about what is required of them
4. Encourage them to join team meetings via Bluejeans, or even get them to call in
5. Remind them that most mobile phone companies are offering free data etc. for NHS staff
6. Simply ask them how they are....

7. Direct them to support if they need it

8 Set up a Whatsapp group for general conversations

## **Communication**

Ensure that you have a routine. Even if it's not necessarily the same routine that you would have at work (especially if you have children).

Coronavirus or not, the key to working from home is clear communication with your manager – and knowing exactly what's expected of you.

Most people spend their days in close proximity to their manager, meaning communication is easy and effortless. However that's all out the window with remote work, and communication breakdown is even more likely if your workplace isn't used to remote working.

Even for those accustomed to it, working from home can feel unstructured and isolating. Research has shown that people feel lonely and very often guilty.

## **Loneliness**

One of the feelings that millions of us are experiencing is loneliness.

In our combined efforts to stay safe and save lives, our usual ways of seeing family, friends or just familiar faces have been put on pause.

Many of us feel lonely from time to time and these short-term feelings shouldn't harm our mental health. However, the longer the pandemic goes on for, the more these feelings become long-term.

Long-term loneliness is associated with an increased risk of certain mental health problems, including depression, anxiety and increased stress. The impact of long-term loneliness on mental health can be very hard to manage.

The government is telling us to stay at home and only go outside for food, health reasons or essential work, to stay two metres (six feet) away from other people and wash our hands as soon as we get home.

That means we need to adapt how we connect with people and find new ways to stay in touch during this time. Now, more than ever, is the time to keep up those strong social networks that act like a buffer against poor mental health.

Staying in touch via video calls, WhatsApp or just regular phone calls, is vital. Keep up your routines where possible – for example if you play cards with your friends on a weeknight, try keeping this in the diary and playing a game on a video call instead. Or potentially join one of the many online quizzes hosted on Facebook or YouTube, playing as a team.

If you're not tech savvy, regular phone calls, messages or even writing letters are lovely ways to show someone that you're thinking of them

Remember, no one is exempt from feeling lonely at times. All of us, at some point or other during this coronavirus pandemic, will feel cut off from our loved ones. However, some of us will have greater access to technology than others, or more social connections.

By caring for each other, checking in on people who are more isolated, or even volunteering for a helpline, we can help prevent a loneliness epidemic.

## **Work Station Set Up**

It is important to get your seating correct if you are working from home The document below gives you tips on work station set up.



How COVID-19 Is  
Changing The Way W

Another document to have a look at is [DSE workstation assessment](#)

If you not happy with your seating at home ask your manager can you have your office chair.

## **Exercise**

When working from home it is easy to sit in the same position for hours.....you would not do this in the workplace as you would be going

to the photocopier, attending meetings etc so remember get up and move about.

## **Non Physical Health Support**

All NHS staff will have access to a range of support through one national point of contact:

- a free wellbeing support helpline: 0300 131 7000, available from 7.00 am – 11.00 pm seven days a week, providing confidential listening from trained professionals and specialist advice, including coaching, bereavement care, mental health and financial help
- a 24/7 text alternative to the above helpline - simply text FRONTLINE to 85258
- online peer to peer, team and personal resilience support including through Silver Cloud, and free mindfulness apps including [Unmind](#), [Headspace](#), [Sleepio](#) and [Daylight](#)

The Health Work and Well being Service are providing a package of psychological support.

**Mindfulness** The Service is offering regular Mindfulness sessions on Bluejeans check the intranet for when these are available.

If your team requires support following a difficult time, group support can be offered contact [Karen.brayley@sthk.nhs.uk](mailto:Karen.brayley@sthk.nhs.uk)

## **Burnout**

Burnout is a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress. It occurs when you feel overwhelmed, emotionally drained, and unable to meet constant demands. As the stress continues, you begin to lose the interest and motivation that led you to take on a certain role in the first place. Burnout reduces productivity and saps your energy, leaving you feeling increasingly helpless, hopeless, cynical, and resentful. Eventually, you may feel like you have nothing more to give.

The negative effects of burnout spill over into every area of life—including your home, work, and social life. Burnout can also cause long-term changes to your body that make you vulnerable to illnesses like

colds and flu. Because of its many consequences, it's important to deal with burnout right away

Dealing with burnout requires the "Three R" approach:

**Recognise** – Watch for the warning signs of burnout

**Reverse** – Undo the damage by seeking support and managing stress

**Resilience** – Build your resilience to stress by taking care of your physical and emotional health

## **Post Traumatic Stress**

**Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can develop after a very stressful, frightening or distressing event, or after a prolonged traumatic experience.**

The most effective therapeutic approach for long-term, severe PTSD appears to be talking treatments, such as cognitive behavioural therapy, during which people are encouraged to talk through their experiences in detail.<sup>7,8</sup> This may involve behavioural or cognitive therapeutic approaches