

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



1. Introduction

The COVID-19 outbreak has necessitated a rapid switch for a number of NHS Golden Jubilee employees to home working, on a temporary basis, so as to support the government's strategy to delay the spread of the virus. The move to home working is enabling business continuity across a significant number of functions where such working arrangements can be accommodated.

Further guidance will be developed to support new ways of working that include remote working and working from home. This guidance focuses specifically on arrangements for managing the workplace and staff health and safety during COVID-19 precautions.

For home working to be effective there are a number of approaches which both managers and staff can follow to ensure that individuals continue to be effectively supported whilst undertaking their roles from a different location and that vital work continues through to be undertaken.

This Guide has been developed in Partnership to support those staff who are working at home due to COVID-19.

2. What is Home Working?

During the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak, employers and individuals have been advised by the Government, to implement social distancing measures, to reduce social interaction between people, to reduce the transmission of the virus and to work from home where they can.

NHS Golden Jubilee are therefore extending the use of home working arrangements to an increased number of staff (where it is a viable option for their role/circumstances) to enable and assist with the home working advice from the government and to ensure social distancing measures are adhered to.

3. Preparing for Homeworking

There are a number of useful guides and support tools to help you work safely at home which are outlined and linked below for reference.

ACAS have produced a comprehensive schedule of advice and guidance [Working from Home for Employers and Employees](#). The advice covers areas which need to be considered and addressed such as Health & Safety, Equipment and Technology, setting clear expectations and wider employment matters such as terms and conditions.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) have also published a series of tips ([Getting the most from remote working](#)) to help individuals and organisations make the most of remote working. The tips cover; online meetings, managing remote teams and Working remotely.

NHS Golden Jubilee has pulled together a number of wellbeing resources and tools: <http://jubileestaffnet/index.php/departments/infection-control/covid-19/health-and-wellbeing-resources/>

We want to encourage everyone to keep healthy during this unprecedented disruption to our daily life. This resource is to help with taking care of both your physical and mental health. This resource is intended to be organic and the content will be adapted as the situation changes and all staff are encouraged to visit the site and explore its content.

4. Which staff should be considered for home working?

The Scottish Government will continue to update guidance in response to the rate of infection and transmission of COVID-19.

Working from home is a precaution that can be used to enable staff to continue working whilst also enabling:

- Reduce the risks to staff who are at greater risk due to COVID-19 and may be asked not to attend the workplace to reduce this risk.
- Reductions in the number of staff on site to support physical distancing and support the Scottish Government's approach to preventing infection and transmission of COVID-19.

Those at higher risk due to COVID-19

Overall Scottish Government Guidance relating to COVID-19 can be found here: <https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Further guidance can also be found here: <http://jubileestaffnet/index.php/departments/infection-control/covid-19>

This includes current guidance on completing risk assessments for staff at higher risk due to COVID-19 as result of underlying health conditions and other factors such as race, gender and age.

Risk assessment will determine if staff should work from home due to higher individual risk where it is possible for them to work from home. If not possible to work from home, then they would be offered special leave under current guidance.

If risk assessment guidance is changed in the future this guide will be updated and the information at the links above also updated and staff will be asked to complete further risk assessments to determine if they should work from home where it is possible for them to work from home

Reducing numbers of staff on site

There are a number of ways that can be used to reduce the numbers of staff on site whilst continuing to deliver services that have been prioritised for continued delivery.

The scope and volume of activity of different services may vary in response to further Scottish Government guidance and decisions made by the board. As a result, the volume of staff on site may also change and the volume of staff working from home may also change.

A number of factors should be considered when reviewing which employees should be asked to work from home to reduce numbers of staff on site are outlined below.

Managers should review roles across their departments in relation to operational and clinical priorities to identify roles which could wholly or partly be undertaken from home, without impacting delivery of essential services. This could include altering the normal pattern of the working week to consolidate activity so as to reduce the number of days which staff are required to be on site.

Managers will need to review what equipment and technology etc. is required and available to support staff in suitable roles to work from home and that the staff member has adequate facilities to work from home. If home working is not feasible then the staff member will be required to continue to attend work.

Staff who are identified as able to work from home will be permitted to work from home on a temporary basis. These staff may be required to provide skeleton staff cover in their workplace and / or be re-assigned to work outside their normal role and / or in an unfamiliar department within NHS Golden Jubilee in order to maintain essential services. Training, induction and risk assessments will be carried out with staff who are re-assigned to another area.

http://jubileestaffnet/files/3415/8618/5734/Staff_and_Manager_Reassignment_Guide_06.04.2020.docx

http://jubileestaffnet/files/7815/8618/5679/Staff_and_Manager_Reassignment_Guide_-_Appendix_1.docx

http://jubileestaffnet/files/5215/8506/1904/Risk_Assessment_-_Underlying_Health_Conditions.doc

5. What are the potential home working options for staff?

Managers will decide on the most appropriate home working model and arrangements for their staff working in non-critical roles and yet to be re-assigned to assist NHS Golden Jubilee to continue to provide essential services to our patients and service users.

Managers must wherever possible enable and ensure that staff can continue to maximise their contributions, to meet the needs of the service and ensure, as far as is reasonably possible and practicable, that the NHS Golden Jubilee can support robust workplace and home working arrangements during the COVID-19 outbreak.

6. Business Continuity

For business continuity, some staff may be required to work in smaller teams on a rotational basis (days, weeks - same working pattern and different location with the site). This model will reduce to the minimum the number of non-critical employees required in the workplace, at any one time and support the government's aim to maximise working from home and social distancing measures.

Managers should ensure that where support departments/ functions are required on site for the support and delivery of core NHS services during the COVID-19 outbreak, that they have the minimum number of staff required to maintain a service on-site who are essential and who are providing services which cannot be delivered

through off-site working. In these circumstances staff cover arrangements should be put in place.

The model will ensure that where it is essential for a department to remain open there will always be the number of employees, ensuring social distancing, required to be working on a rostered basis in the department / function (skeleton workforce). This could, if required, enable staff from the wider team be re-assigned at short notice, to support other essential services across NHS Golden Jubilee.

The model may help to reduce the feeling of social isolation that many employees may already be experiencing, at this time. It will also promote team working and the feeling of continuing to be part of a team at what is and will continue to be a very challenging time for our employees.

7. Manager's responsibilities

Managers have the following responsibilities when their staff are working from home during the COVID-19 outbreak:

- It is appreciated that working from home may lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness.
- Managers must keep in regular contact with teams (wherever possible daily) and individuals are encouraged to access online resources etc.
<http://jubileestaffnet/index.php/departments/infection-control/covid-19/health-and-wellbeing-resources/>
- Ensure that all staff who are working from home, complete a Home Working Employee Risk Self-Assessment Form and where possible, address any identified issues. If the issue(s) cannot be resolved the member of staff should raise and discuss this with their manager.
- Ensure the member of staff understands the agreed home working arrangement and whether they will be working alternate days/weeks at home.
- Ensure that the workload of member of staff is fair and equitable.
- Ensure so far as is possible that staff are provided with appropriate, safe and fit for purpose equipment and technology, to enable them to work productively from home e.g. a laptop (Microsoft Office365, VPN, office extender).
- Ensure home working staff are allocated on a regular basis, appropriate work to undertake.
- Ensure that they monitor and review the performance and outputs of home working staff, against work plans on a regular basis, to ensure that the process is working effectively. The manager must be aware that there may be periods when staff may not be able to work at home e.g. the NHS Golden Jubilee network goes down for a period of time etc.
- Inform your line manager when an identified home working member of staff has recovered from a COVID19 related period of sickness, if they have been working while self-isolating.

8. Staff responsibilities

Staff will have the following responsibilities should they be working from home during the COVID-19 outbreak:

- Inform their manager if they do not have access to home Broadband or their Broadband cannot support home working, due to download speed or data

allowance etc. The manager should consider what other types of work might be suitable, if IT systems are not accessible.

- Undertake their own COVID-19 Home Working Employee Risk Assessment (Appendix 1).
- Take care of their own health and safety and that of other people in their home environment, during agreed home working shifts, days etc. (Appendix 1, 2 and 3);
- To adhere to NHS Golden Jubilee IM&T, Data Protection and Information Governance policies and procedures.
- Ensure that all NHS Golden Jubilee equipment / technology and documents are used correctly and appropriately at all times.
- Ensure that equipment / technology and documents are properly secured in their home, at all times, to avoid theft, loss and damage.
- Ensure when transporting equipment / technology and documents from work to home or home to work that these items are not left unattended and / or and unsecured at any time.
- Ensure that any paper based data / information that is no longer required is appropriately destroyed e.g. using a cross-cut shredder or confidential waste disposal. If staff are not able to shred, the documents must be appropriately stored and brought into the workplace to be shredded or destroyed as confidential waste at a future date.
- Staff should be aware that NHS Golden Jubilee regularly monitors computer usage, to ensure that it is not being misused.
- To maintain regular two-way communication with their manager and team colleagues.
- To be contactable and available by telephone and / or email to their manager at all times within their agreed home working hours.
- To utilise their personal home Broad Band to access the NHS Golden Jubilee network.

9. Health and Wellbeing Tips for Home Working

- Break up long spells of Display Screen Equipment work with rest breaks (at least five minutes every hour) or changes in activity.
- Avoid awkward, static postures by regularly changing position.
- Try to get up regularly and move.
- Avoid eye fatigue by changing focus or blinking from time to time.
- Telephone your colleagues instead of emailing them or use video calls for social interaction.
- Leave your desk or working area at lunchtime.
- Drink water regularly.