Working from Home
Guidance for Managers and Staff

During this unprecedented time of COVID19, we recommend that where your role allows you to work effectively from home you should plan to do so.

In the first instance, you should discuss with your line manager the practicalities and any priorities or processes that may need to be put in place to enable you to do this comfortably.

Managers are continuing to look at a range of ways to help you, these include:

- Looking at home working as a way of supporting you to continue to work **and** care for your family
- Considering different working patterns within your team to support each other
- Ensuring a safe and healthy workplace, with the right resources in place
- Providing support where people need to make arrangements for caring responsibilities
- Keeping you updated on the latest guidance as it is issued through Scottish Government

If you need support with any of these, please speak to your line manager and remember that all the latest advice relating to Coronavirus is on nhsinform.scot/coronavirus and there is regularly updated information on our intranet.

Working from Home- What are the Issues

The number of staff working from home has increased significantly and will impact on individuals in different ways and at different times. This can include risks to physical and emotional wellbeing which impact on our mental health including uncertainty, isolation and limiting access to things that can keep us well. Some of the things to watch out for

- Depression/anxiety
- Musculoskeletal strain
- Sedentary working
- Poor diet
- Poor sleep

- Increased alcohol intake
- Feelings of isolation

While guidance would say to create a workplace separate from personal space we need to acknowledge that this is not always possible. We need to be open and talk about the issues we are facing and not to hesitate to seek advice and support. This includes a risk assessment if required. For further information is available through this link.

As a Manager of Staff Working from Home what should I be doing?

As a manager, here are a number of suggestions for supporting your staff:

- Maintain regular contact through 1:1s and team meetings- ask the question 'how are you'
- When running virtual team meetings take the time to check in at the beginning- how is the team and allow that time for casual sharing and conversation that often happens at the beginning of meetings
- Encourage self –care – ensure members of staff know it is OK to take breaks and to invest the time in taking care of your physical and emotional wellbeing
- If you are uncertain about how to spot the early warning signs of mental ill health, speak to your HR Business Partner who can help you

Tips for Working from Home

We have put together some Health & Wellbeing Tips for you whilst you are working from home.

- **Plan**
  Planning your day and creating as far as possible a routine is a good way to develop a healthy working mind-set. Make a habit of going for a daily lunchtime walk, schedule time in your diary for breaks to stretch, move around, and set yourself goals such as having a specific task completed by the end of the working day.

- **Set-up**
  Make sure your equipment set up at home is right for you. Thinking about your posture and the position of your hands and feet will help prevent back pain and other problems. The NHS have some excellent advice on this.

- **Stretch**
  Take regular active breaks from your desk or table and enjoy a stretch when you do. Why not try out some Kettlecise while the kettle boils or try our Strength and Balance exercises? Alternatively, find some desk-based stretching routines.

- **Nourish**
  Eating well and staying hydrated throughout the day is important no matter where you work, but don't make your lunch hour all about lunch. A lunchtime walk is a perfect way to get your daily exercise and rejuvenate your body and mind for the

afternoon ahead. If your route has some green-space, which can reduce stress, even better. If it's a nice day, pack a lunch and eat al fresco.

- **Connect**
  Not just to the WiFi but with each other. Stay in touch with your colleagues and wider team using email, phone or online messaging Whatsapp is a great way of keeping in touch with your colleagues, or you could try holding a Teams meeting. There's no need to sit; encourage colleagues to stand while video conferencing. Share pictures of your standing desks or lunchtime walking adventures to inspire others.

- **Move**
  Think about the opportunities there are to move while working. Go for a walk around your home or garden while taking a work call, move between different rooms of your house if you have a laptop, and schedule regular active breaks. Make use of the stairs at home if you have them by taking a few trips up and down.

- **Smile**
  Join other colleagues working remotely to have a virtual coffee break or get involved in motivational and fun team times.

- **Block**
  Avoid unnecessary distractions by keeping home and work separate if practically possible and avoid working in noisy rooms such as the kitchen or living room if you can.

- **Focus**
  Working smart and taking advantage of technology that has homeworkers in mind makes collaboration with others easy.

- **Join in**
  Join the Step Count Challenge and the Walk At Work Award which are designed to help Scotland's workforce get moving. Have fun and a little healthy competition with colleagues by taking part in the Step Count Challenge, or, celebrate the walking culture you've created in your workplace by registering for the Walk At Work Award.

There is plenty of additional information available to assist you in making your working from home for a prolonged period of time a positive experience.

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.

Mind have produced a range of resources and tips on their website under the heading Coronavirus and your wellbeing, (https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/) which include how to plan and prepare for working from home or staying indoors:

Musculo-Skeletal Disorder

Most home working will be undertaken using either a table or desk (if the employee already has one set up at home). It is important that home working work does not increase your risk of developing some kind of MSD. It is therefore very important that you assess your workstation before you start work, on a daily basis, to ensure that any adjustments required are made, to ensure you are comfortable, correctly and safely. Further information can be found at https://www.nhsinform.scot

Looking after yourself

We know everyone needs to look after themselves and their loved ones and we will do all we can to support you with this.

You can reduce your chances of being infected or spreading COVID-19 by:

- avoiding direct hand contact with your eyes, nose and mouth
- maintaining good hand hygiene
- avoiding direct contact with people that have a respiratory illness and avoiding using their personal items such as their mobile phone
- covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing with disposable tissues and disposing of them in the nearest waste bin after use

Thank you for your continued commitment to NHS 24.