

We may be ‘home working’ but we are not ‘lone working’!

Many of us have all had a drastic change to our working environment due to the coronavirus outbreak and the strict measures that have been put in place in order to protect the health and safety of each and every one of us.

Whilst home working may be possible for some, it's important that we recognise how vital it is to communicate with each other, to ensure we keep in touch on a daily basis so we can continue to be informed, engaged and motivated during these challenging times.

We recognise that some of you work effectively at home, but others prefer the direct interaction with colleagues in the office, which makes home working more challenging.

Start your day as you mean to go on

We encourage you all to start your day with a morning SKYPE team talk, so you can all connect, reflect on the situation, address any concerns and agree on any pending actions. It's really important you turn on the camera so you can physically see each other to increase visibility and presence.

Share humorous moments

Set-up a team Whatsapp group with close colleagues so you can share thoughts as you would normally do at your desk. Whatsapp can be really beneficial when you want to lighten people's burden by sharing something humorous with the team. This is a sad time for society but sharing some positive or fun comments to keep your team energised and motivated is a great thing.

Virtual lunch breaks

Where it is possible connect with your team or a colleague over lunch through video SKYPE or Facetime. Many of us are used to having lunches as a team in the office, so try to continue this where possible. Why not show off your culinary skills of what you have made for lunch!

Talk more and email less!

Use your mobile phones and online tools actively. Use email wisely and try to pick up the phone and speak directly with your colleagues, it's all about adapting your daily routine and making a more concerted effort to connect.

Follow good virtual meeting etiquette

Creating a virtual meeting culture has its clear benefits and it allows us to all connect wherever we are. Please refer to Avenue for some hints and tips, make sure if you

are leading a meeting you involve everyone. It is business as usual as it can be, so please use the tools that are available to us all to ensure we deliver on our short-term priorities.

Ensure your home working set-up is comfortable

We may not all have the ideal home office set-up, so please ensure you do a risk assessment and collect any equipment you may need from the office such as a monitor, wireless keyboard, headphones etc. Please do not work from your laptop screen for extensive periods, ensure you protect yourself from any strain and follow the workstation ergonomics that you would in the office. Please refer to the attached poster and risk assessment so you can set yourselves up appropriately. It's easy to stay seated all day when working from home, but please do take regular breaks, do some quick stretch exercises to reduce the fatigue and avoid any injury. Pain and discomfort are warnings that you need to make changes to your set-up, so please in the first instance, speak with your Line Manager and if necessary your health and safety representative, who can provide you with further advice.

Have faith that things will work out for the best

We are experiencing an unprecedented situation, which is only temporary, so we are confident things will work out for the best. Please remain focused to deliver on our business priorities, support each other through these challenging times, and stay connected, informed and most importantly motivated.