# Coronavirus (COVID-19) Working from home - Think Safe - Be Safe!

In line with national guidance the council is continuing to support social distancing and encourage as many people as possible to work from home. These are unprecedented times and we really value everyone's flexibility and commitment to adapt to new ways of working, staying connected to one another and continuing to provide the best possible services for the people of Cumbria. Many colleagues have now adapted to these new ways of working however as the weeks turn into months we thought it would be timely to remind you of some top tips, useful advice and guidance to help you get the best from working at home and help you stay safe and comfortable.

# How do I know I am set up properly to work from home safely?

For those people who are working at home on a temporary basis due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the Health and Safety Executive have indicated that there is no increased risk from Display Screen Equipment (DSE) and therefore no need for the employer to undertake home workstation assessments for the use of DSE. They do however still require that the risks that are present are controlled. They have however published a short information film, [Temporary working from home – Workstation setup](https://youtu.be/Af7q5j14muc) . In addition there is a [practical workplace checklist](https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ck1.pdf) to provide workers with best practice advice on completing their own basic assessment at home

It is important when using a laptop to be able to set this up safely when working for periods longer than an hour. See ‘Safe use of laptops and display screens’ below.

# ****Safe Use of laptops and display screens:****

* Where possible and already issued as part of your usual workplace equipment, attach a separate keyboard and mouse when using your laptop
* Work from a suitable work surface (desk or table) and use a comfortable supportive chair – Do not work with your laptop resting on your knees.
* Position your laptop so that your eyes are roughly at the same height as the top of your screen
* Regularly change position and take regular breaks away from the screen (suggested as around five minutes in every hour)
* Multiple screen (and repeater screens) may not be as practical to be regularly moved from usual workplaces to home environments, so please work flexibly given the challenging situation.

If you have access to the schools portal you can download the schools safety information note and the County Council Procedure

[Safety Advice Note DSE](https://schools.cumbria.gov.uk/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/Reference%20Library/Health%20and%20Safety/Safety%20Advice%20Notes%20Series%20(SAN)/display_screen.doc&action=default)

[County Council Safety Procedure DSE](https://schools.cumbria.gov.uk/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/Reference%20Library/Health%20and%20Safety/County%20Council%20Safety%20Procedures/16%20Display%20Screen%20Equipment.pdf&action=default)

Posturite, a UK based ergonomics company have produced some [handy tips](https://www.posturite.co.uk/blog/10-productivity-tips-homeworkers-coronavirus-lock) on their blog which you may find useful.

The HSE also produce a free to download booklet - [Working with display screen equipment (DSE)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg36.pdf)

The BBC have put together some [handy tips and advice to help you work well at home](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-51868894)

# Using your own equipment

If you're using your own equipment such as extension leads and charging devices at home, it is worth being aware of common hazards. Please visually check all electrical equipment to make sure it is fit for purpose and undamaged before use and make sure cables are hidden to avoid trip hazards.

Any damage, risks and defects to your work equipment should be reported to your line manager for discussion and investigation.

Stay connected

There are lots of ways to keep in touch with colleagues whilst you are away from one another. Many teams are setting up regular calls or Skype meetings to stay connected and check in with one another.

There is also the Skype option which allows face to face video and audio calls as well as the facility for wider meetings with your colleagues. ICT are progressing Microsoft Teams which will be introduced in the near future.

# Lone Working

Please continue to discuss with your Line Manager any agreed lone working measures so that you can keep in regular contact at suitable intervals. This may be at the beginning and end of a working day but will be dependent on your role.

**Find out more about Lone Working**:

If you have access to the schools portal you can download the schools safety information note and the County Council Procedure

[Schools Safety Advice Note - Lone Working](https://schools.cumbria.gov.uk/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/Reference%20Library/Health%20and%20Safety/Safety%20Advice%20Notes%20Series%20(SAN)/SAN(G)16%20-%20Lone%20working.doc&action=default)

[Corporate Safety Procedure No 24 – Lone working (PDF 493KB)](http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/eLibrary/Content/Internet/535/615/984/37708144839.pdf)

[Health and Safety Executive (HSE) – Lone working](https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/lone.htm)

[Latestinformation on the Coronavirus](https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/coronavirus/landingpage.asp)

We remain committed to ensure people work safely. Home working requires some adjustments and it is important that each of us carefully consider our own health safety and wellbeing and follow the appropriate guidance, especially given the time colleagues are now spending working remotely.

Please continue to take care and seek advice from your Manager, Health and Safety Team or Trade Union Representative where required.

If you have any specific queries in relation to this advice you can contact the Health and Safety Team:

E-mail: [healthandsafety@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:healthandsafety@cumbria.gov.uk) or [judith.chandler1@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:judith.chandler1@cumbria.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01228 221616 07584 534670

# Remote Education during Coronavirus

For further advice on remote learning the Department for Education has released the following guidance updated 5th May 2020.

[Remote education practice for schools during Coronavirus (COVID-19)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/remote-education-practice-for-schools-during-coronavirus-covid-19).