

East Sussex  
'Working Well from Home'  
Project Report

## **Project Summary**

Homeworking is now a permanent feature of many people's lives across East Sussex, and is likely to continue for many even as we transition out of the pandemic. However, we do not yet know about the long-term impact of homeworking and we do not have long-term plans about how best to support people to effectively work at home. The East Sussex 'Working Well From Home' project was a collaboration between the University of Sussex, Team East Sussex, East Sussex County Council, Locate East Sussex and local business consultants. The WWFH project comprises three main research stages: 1) Survey of local need 2) Scoping Literature Review 3) Qualitative interviews. The findings from the three research activities were combined to produce Best Practice Guidelines for employers when navigating home-working procedures with their employees. These guidelines will be shared on a public platform, and animations and infographics will be utilised to disseminate the findings of the project.

## **Project Rationale**

Homeworking is now a permanent feature of many people's lives across East Sussex, and is likely to continue for many, even as we transition out of the pandemic. However, we do not yet know about the long-term impact of homeworking and we do not have long-term plans about how best to support people to effectively work at home. Whilst there is a range of online mental health support provisions, there is a need to support individuals and business owners with homeworking in the longer-term, with a specific focus on how employers can better support their employees.

In October 2020, an East Sussex Council Business and Wellbeing survey highlighted that the three most highly rated negative impacts of COVID-19 on the workforce were (i) mental health challenges, (ii) loneliness/isolation, and (iii) poorer communication. The three most highly rated areas for support were (i) physical health, (ii) mental health, and (iii)

managing health and safety. This survey highlighted local need and appetite for resources to help businesses better support homeworking.

### **Project Team**

The East Sussex 'Working Well From Home' project was a collaboration between the University of Sussex, Team East Sussex, East Sussex County Council, Locate East Sussex and local East Sussex business consultants.

### **Project Funding**

The Working Well From Home (WWFH) project was supported via funding from the University of Sussex Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) and the ESRC Impact Acceleration Account (ESRC IAA).

### **Project Outline**

The WWFH project comprises three main research stages:

- 1) Survey of local need
- 2) Scoping Literature Review
- 3) Qualitative interviews

The findings from each activity were amalgamated to produce guidelines for employers to help advise on best-practice policies for homeworking.

#### **Stage 1: Scoping Literature Review**

The scoping review was conducted by drawing on a systematic literature search methodology; the findings are described utilising a narrative synthesis. The aim of the review was to understand the evidence-base regarding employee support for homeworking (via examination of current evidence/guidance/legislation).

## *Methodology*

Initial searches were conducted using the Scopus research database for the years 2020-2021 in order to capture recent literature on homeworking. Search terms were "work\* from home" OR "remote work\*" OR remote-work\* OR home-work\*. A pragmatic search was also conducted by looking at the reference sections of recent research articles for other relevant literature published prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.

## *Key findings*

### Background

Homeworking is not a new phenomenon. In the UK homeworking was undertaken by 2.9 million people in 1998, and this had grown to 4.2 million in 2014 (Office for National Statistics, 2014). Furthermore, many companies and businesses have supported flexible working, whereby individuals have more autonomy over their work patterns, and the days on which they work from the office or at home. The examination of the effects of homeworking on personal health as well as work-place productivity and relationships has increased in the last decade. One review of the literature (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007) found associations between homeworking and a number of positive outcomes such as improved job satisfaction and performance, and reduced stress. However, time spent homeworking was an important mediating factor. For example, high-intensity homeworking (e.g. greater than 2.5 days per week) was beneficial for reducing work-family conflict, but had negative effects on relationships with co-workers. Some evidence indicates that voluntary homeworking is associated with positive benefits and mandatory homeworking with negative impacts (Kaduk et al., 2019).

### What can we learn about homeworking from the Covid-19 pandemic?

The Covid-19 pandemic pushed full-time homeworking to unprecedented levels and consequently there has been an explosion of research into the impacts of homeworking. Broadly, a number of both positive and negative outcomes of homeworking are highlighted in the literature. However, these outcomes are often context dependent, with a number of variables (e.g. gender, income, job type, and parenting responsibilities) impacting whether people have a positive or negative experience. It is also important to note that the majority

of literature on homeworking during the pandemic examines mandatory homeworking whereas literature pre-pandemic is more likely to examine flexible or elected homeworking. Indeed, at the time of writing, there is Government consultation<sup>1</sup> on the right of employees to request flexible working from the first day of a new job, indicating a broader shift to flexible working (where a job allows) being a norm rather than exception. We can draw on key findings from this research to help inform employers' decision-making as to whether homeworking is appropriate for their company in the longer-term. Key findings from the literature, including contextual factors that influence people's experience of homeworking broadly fall into three categories: health, environment, and organisational support/leadership.

### Health and environment

Examination of the recent homeworking literature and the effects of homeworking on physical health is couched within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic where the usual activities (gyms/sports clubs) that people undertake were unavailable. It is unsurprising that literature reports decreased physical activity and exercise, and a decrease in general physical and mental well-being, in those who worked in offices but had transitioned to homeworking because of Covid-19 (Xiao et al., 2021). A key theme is that the impact of homeworking on physical health is context dependent. Both income and gender are key factors shown to predict mental health and wellbeing when homeworking during the Covid-19 pandemic (Xiao et al. 2021). Similarly, looking at a systematic review of literature on homeworking pre-pandemic, women were found to be less likely to benefit from homeworking than men (Oakman et al., 2020).

Loneliness is highlighted as another key challenge in the context of homeworking. The nature of remote work means that spontaneous meetings do not occur and interactions with colleagues tend to be more task-focused (Wang et al., 2021). However, this research was also in the context of the pandemic when many were isolated from usual interactions. Pre-pandemic literature has also indicated that homeworking does not have a negative

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/making-flexible-working-the-default>

impact on workplace relationships – if homeworking is not more than 2.5 days per week (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Homeworking literature prior to the COVID-19 pandemic as reviewed by Oakman et al. (2020) reports mixed findings with some positive and negative impact of homeworking on physical health, but the authors also highlight that they found few studies in this area and thus these findings are unlikely to be reliable. Homeworking does provide some clear opportunities for both positive and negative health impact, but again they are context dependent. If homeworking means no lengthy commute, this time gained could be used for exercise. However, homeworking can mean that people move less (e.g. no cycling to work or walking between buildings) and is also associated with greater screen time (in place of face-to-face meetings), which has a range of negative health associations (Majumdar et al., 2020).

Those who worked at home prior to the Covid-19 pandemic are typically considered 'higher-income workers' (Desilver, 2020; e.g. white collar workers). Arguably those on higher incomes often had some prior experience of homeworking and thus the shift to full-time homeworking during the pandemic was less marked, due to having appropriate equipment and resources in place to work from home. An important factor impacting on physical and mental health is working environment (e.g. dedicated work-station set-up, lighting, noise, air quality). Unsurprisingly, individuals with a dedicated home-office who were able to adjust their desk, chair, and lighting, reported fewer negative physical and mental health difficulties when homeworking, compared to those who had no dedicated or adjustable space (Xiao et al., 2021).

#### Organisational support and leadership

A key factor that impacts how people experience homeworking (if working for an employer) is the type of management and support provided by their organisation. A surprise finding in a survey conducted by NordVPN Teams (published by Bloomberg, 2021) showed that during mandatory homeworking in the Covid-19 pandemic, people worked more (2.5 hours more on average in the UK), despite obvious challenges to effective working (such as children being at home, and lack of appropriate workspace or equipment). Whilst this may seem beneficial to employers, it may explain why a number of negative mental and physical health occurrences were reported by people homeworking during the pandemic. If

businesses are considering whether to adopt homeworking practices in the longer-term, having a healthy workforce is crucial.

A number of management and organisational factors have been highlighted in the literature as contributing to effective homeworking. Job autonomy is linked to greater satisfaction with homeworking (Wang et al., 2021) and consequently micromanagement has a negative impact. Flexibility (where possible) in when and how people were working was perceived positively. Although some find that having regular check-ins with managers or colleagues can help combat distractions or procrastination that can more likely occur when homeworking (Wang et al., 2021). Separating work and home life can be harder when homeworking and many reported struggling to 'switch-off' from work. Providing clear expectation about the importance of disconnecting from work is crucial. Furthermore, providing clear instructions about levels of expected communication and markers of productivity can help workers at home to know what is expected of them (Rysavy & Michalak, 2020).

## **Stage 2: Survey in East Sussex**

East Sussex is a county comprised of five local government districts, which are a mix of both rural (Lewes, Wealden, Rother) and urban (Hastings and Eastbourne) environments. Compared to England as a whole, East Sussex has higher percentages of workers in the wholesale, retail and motor trades, health, accommodation and food, and education sectors<sup>2</sup>. The 2021 East Sussex County Council Research and Information Economic Update also highlights the fact that East Sussex has few medium and large businesses (e.g. more than 50 people) and 86.4% of businesses in the county have fewer than 10 employees. Small businesses are less likely to have in-house human resources support, therefore it will be crucial to provide information about how to support their employees to work well at home as homeworking becomes the new norm.

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<sup>2</sup> Based on information from the East Sussex County Council Research and Information Economic Update February 2021: Accessed here: <https://www.southeastlep.com/app/uploads/2020/12/Item-8b-economic-update-Feb-2021.pdf>

A survey was carried out in May 2021 with employers, employees, and self-employed workers living and/or working in East Sussex. This included questions about their homeworking experiences and support needs in relation to a number of domains, including mental and physical health, technology, and working relationships. The survey consisted of both open and closed response questions, allowing for quantitative and qualitative data analysis.

There was a total of 296 survey respondents. 33 responses were excluded from analyses for a range of reasons, with the most common reason ( $n = 22$ ) being missing data regarding demographics, which was key for establishing working or living in East Sussex. This left a final sample of 263 participant responses.

## Sample Characteristics

### *Demographics*

#### **Age.**

Mean Age = 46.59 years; Standard Deviation = 10.593

Range = 46 (Min = 21; Max = 67)

#### **Gender.**

	<i>n</i>	%
Female	188	71.48
Male	70	26.62
Another gender	2	0.76
Prefer to self-describe: Gender non-conforming	1	0.38
Prefer not to say	2	0.76
	263	100

#### **Ethnic group.**

	<i>n</i>	%
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Another Asian or Asian British background	1	0.38
Another White background	15	5.70
Asian/Asian British -		
Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi	1	0.38
Mixed	2	0.76
White - British	238	90.49
White - Irish	3	1.14
Prefer not to say	2	0.76
No response	1	0.38
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	263	100

***Employment and Homeworking Characteristics***

**Employment status.**

	<i>n</i>	%
Employee	224	85.17
Employer	16	6.08
Self-employed	23	8.75
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	263	100

**Current occupation.**

	<i>n</i>	%
Administrative and secretarial occupations	54	20.53
Associate professional and technical occupations	59	22.43
Caring, leisure and other service occupations	8	3.04
Manager, director, senior official	71	27.00
Professional occupations	62	23.57
Sales and customer service occupations	3	1.14
Skilled trades occupations	4	1.52
No response	2	0.76



263	100
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### Working from home over the past 12 months?

	<i>n</i>	%
I have been conducting all of my work from home	188	71.48
I have been combining working from home with working from my usual workplace	68	25.86
I have not been working from home at all	3	1.14
No response	4	1.52
	<hr/> 263	<hr/> 100

### Main Survey Results

Questions for both employees, self-employed and employers were combined to present an overview of the impact on all individuals.

Survey respondents were asked about the extent to which their work from home experiences had influenced their productivity, mental health, physical health, health and safety, technology provision, and working relationships. They were also asked about current provision for these areas and suggestions for improvement.

Finally, respondents were asked about their preferences for future working arrangements as well as expectations on financial support for home working.

### ***Impacts on Productivity***

Data was taken from open text questions regarding the positive and negative impacts that working from home had on productivity. Responses are summarised below and reflect the range of responses which were given, as such there are contradictions in people's experiences of positive vs negative impacts.

#### **Positive impacts.**

- Increased concentration and fewer distractions

- Increased flexibility
- Less time spent commuting
- Better use of technology
- Increased efficiency

**Negative impacts.**

- Lack of engagement and barriers to communication
- Stifled innovation
- Increased distractions
- Poor motivation
- Zoom fatigue
- Technological limitations

***Mental health***

**Impact on Mental health.** Open text questions addressed positive and negative impacts on mental health.

***Positive impacts.***

- More flexible workday
- Less commuting stress
- More time at home
- More pleasant work environment
- More relaxed mornings
- Physical health improving mental health
- Less stressed about work
- Improved confidence

***Negative impacts.***

- Uncertainty with learning new job roles
- Social isolation and loneliness

- Difficulty maintaining work/life balance
- Struggles with work/family balance
- Decreased physical activity

**Current Mental Health Provision.** Survey respondents were asked about their current provision. Here, 70% reported that their organisation offered support that they could access at home. When asked whether respondents had accessed support, 12% reported that they felt like they needed support but didn't access any (see details below).

**Does your organisation currently offer any support for mental health that you can access from home?**

	<i>n</i>	%
No	23	8.75
Yes	185	70.34
Not sure	25	9.51
No response	30	11.41
	100.00	

**Have you ever accessed this support for yourself?**

	<i>n</i>	%
No, I haven't required this kind of support	125	47.53
No, I felt I might have required this kind of support but I didn't access it	32	12.17
Yes	27	10.27
No response	79	30.04
	100.0	

**Suggested Mental Health Provision.** Survey respondents were asked about what they would want mental health provision to include, and what the barriers were to accessing this.

The most common suggestions for mental health support were access to professional support, access to information and resources, and access to supportive activities.

Access to professional support included a desire to be provided with access to psychotherapy (e.g. Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy, counselling). A range of suggestions were provided regarding information and resources, including:

- General information and online assessments
- Self-care resources
- Breathing exercises
- Wellbeing toolkits and guides
- Links to recommended counsellors
- Subscriptions to apps (e.g. mindfulness apps, Headspace)
- Practical advice (e.g. how to 'switch off' when working from home)
- Videos to encourage help-seeking
- Tips and tools for coping with anxiety.
- General online information, resources and support links
- Reading materials, podcasts, webinars
- Tips for productivity
- Guidance around meditation
- Tools for managing anxiety and stress
- Surveys/questionnaires assessing how people are coping with working from home.

Similarly, a range of suggestions for activities were also given:

- Social opportunities and encouragement to meet up with colleagues
- Access to online fitness classes
- Mindfulness/meditation/wellbeing classes/days
- Creative activities
- Contributions towards health-related activities (e.g. discounted gym membership, vouchers for reflexology).
- Online social opportunities (e.g. quizzes, forums)
- Yoga
- Meditation/wellbeing/relaxation classes.

The remaining suggestions included: a working environment/culture that allows time for mental wellbeing activities; access to peer support; regular support from managers; mental health awareness training; and encouragement to take proper breaks.

**Barriers to Accessing Mental Health Support.** The most common barriers to mental health support that were described by participants were concerns about privacy and confidentiality, and stigma.

Concerns about privacy and confidentiality included concerns that managers would find out about the need for support, that access to support might be recorded on personnel records, or that colleagues might find out.

Concerns about stigma included shame and embarrassment, fear of judgment from others, and concern that accessing support would affect future opportunities and promotions.

A wide range of additional barriers were also outlined:

- Lack of time
- Psychological barriers (e.g. not recognising when help is needed)
- Concerns about who is offering support and if it is a colleague
- Format of support (e.g. preference for either face to face or virtual)
- Concerns that support may not be adequate
- Practicalities (e.g. time and location of support)
- Concerns about the potential cost of support

### ***Physical Health***

**Current Physical Health Provision.** Survey respondents were asked about their organisation's current provision. Only 28% reported that their organisation offered support that they could access at home.

**Suggested Physical Health Provision.** Survey respondents were asked about what they would want physical health provision to include, and what the barriers were to accessing this.

The most common suggestions for physical health support were:

1) Access to activities. Specific examples included online exercise classes, wellbeing classes, physical activity challenges, walking meetings and groups, and workplace sports teams

2) Discounted access to gym and leisure facilities, both as memberships and home equipment, and

3) Information and resources, such as guidance on food and nutrition, information about occupational health, access to exercise videos and apps, tips for staying active, and forums for connecting with colleagues with similar interests.

Additional suggestions included:

- A culture that supports investment in physical activity (e.g. explicit permission and encouragement to take breaks)
- Provision of workspace equipment
- Flexible working hours
- Display Screen Equipment (DSE) assessments
- Occupational health checks
- Access to professional support (e.g. osteopathy)
- Bicycle and bike repair schemes

**Barriers to Accessing Physical Health Support.** The most common barrier to physical health support that was described by participants was lack of time. Then a wide range of additional barriers were described, including: unsuitable scheduling, psychological barriers such as motivation and confidence, potential financial cost, location of support, concerns about confidentiality and stigma, format of support, and workload issues.

## ***Health and Safety***

Only 46% of respondents reported that their organisation had adapted workplace health and safety procedures to the homeworking context. Respondents were asked how health and safety procedures could be improved. The most common suggestions were provision of health and safety assessments, and provision of suitable workspace equipment.

In relation to health and safety assessments, specific suggestions included:

- Virtual workstation assessments or home visits
- Support from organisations to address issues raised in assessments
- Improvements to DSE forms
- Regular reviews

In relation to workspace equipment, respondents highlighted the need for suitable desks, chairs and IT equipment.

Additional suggestions included the need for more information and resources. Specifically, how to set up the workstation, tips on how to improve working from home practices, stretching exercises.

## ***Technology***

The majority of respondents (80%) reported that they had all the necessary technology to conduct their work from home.

With regards to challenges with technology, the following open choice responses were given

- Lack of equipment
- Poor internet connection
- Inadequate equipment
- Compatibility of work environment

- Lack of space
- GDPR
- Training with technology
- Security

### ***Working Relationships***

Respondents outlined positive impacts of homeworking on working relationships:

- Fewer negative interactions
- Wider network
- Greater trust
- Smooth introductions for new colleagues
- Greater privacy
- Higher meeting attendance

Negative impacts were also described:

- Difficulty building relationships
- Difficulty reading colleague emotions
- Affected spontaneous interactions
- Difficulty engaging

A wide range of suggestions were made for building a sense of community when colleagues are working from home. These could be loosely categorised into opportunities to connect socially, opportunities to connect for work activities, and effective communication strategies. Detailed suggestions are presented below:

#### *Opportunities to Connect Socially.*

- Regular group walks
- Online social events such as zoom quizzes, book clubs, after-work drinks, games events
- Encouraging informal discussions



- Coffee mornings or coffee breaks
- Occasional on-site activities
- Welfare calls

*Opportunities to Connect for Work.*

- Working together with open webex
- Regular meetings
- Walking meetings
- Short check-in's
- Regular 1:1s

**Effective Communication Strategies**

- Regular updates and briefings
- Social media
- Newsletters
- Virtual notice boards, sharing personal and professional good news
- Effective intranets

Other suggestions included team-building activities, local team bases to meet up, buddy systems, opportunities for home-workers to visit the workplace.

***Other***

Respondents were asked to outline any other impacts of homeworking, and the following suggestions emerged:

- Financial benefits
- More free time
- Positive and negative impacts on family
- Environmental benefits
- Increased utility bills

- Worries about re-entering society
- Increased recruitment range
- Loss or reduced income (for self-employed individuals)

### ***Future Preferences for Homeworking***

Respondents were asked what their preference for working practice would be going forwards. The majority (61%) reported that they would want a hybrid model of some homeworking and some usual workplace activity, a large proportion (23%) reported wanting to conduct all of their work from home, and the least common response was to conduct all work from the usual workspace (5%). 11% of respondents chose not to respond.

### ***Employer Contributions and Expectations***

Employers and employees were asked to whether they believe employers should contribute towards: the cost of broadband, and the cost of bills associated with homeworking (e.g. electricity), and the provision of office equipment.

**Employees.** 58% of employees agreed that employees should contribute to the cost of broadband, 63% agreed that they should contribute towards the cost of bills, and 83% agreed that they should provide office equipment.

**Employers.** 44% of employers agreed that organisations should contribute towards the cost of broadband, 50% agreed that they should contribute towards the cost of bills, and 69% agreed that they should contribute towards office equipment.

Employers were also asked about barriers towards providing these provisions. Barriers to implementation included cost, knowledge, supply-chain and time.

### **Stage 3: Qualitative interviews**

In-depth interviews were conducted with 5 individuals from East Sussex, including 4 employees and 1 employer. Broadly themes replicated the survey findings.

#### **Drawing on your own experience of working from home, what do you think are the key ingredients for good home working?**

Communication

Maintaining work/life balance

Good Technology

Support from managers

Good working Environment

#### **Have you had any really good experiences around working from home that you would be willing to share?**

Better work/life balance

Increased flexibility

Increased productivity

Saving money on travel etc.

Healthier lifestyle

#### **Have you had any really bad experiences around working from home?**

Physical health impaired due to lack of movement

Lack of communication/social opportunities

Decreased physical wellbeing

Technology Issues

#### **Do you have any top tips or helpful strategies you've used to manage working from home?**

Maintaining structure (regularity, consistency, etc)

Taking breaks

Separate workspace  
Managing work/home life  
Maintaining communication

**Have you encountered any barriers to working from home, or found anything particularly difficult in this context?**

Difficulties with communication  
Difficulties with technology  
Difficulties with career development  
Difficulties with mental wellbeing/social isolation

**Do you have any examples of things that your employer, or perhaps your line manager, has done that has really improved the home-working experience? This might be a specific tool they have provided you with, or it could be something much more general that has made you feel well-supported working from home.**

Effective online training/support  
Mental health support  
Organising socials online  
Providing adequate equipment/tech  
Monitoring work hours (no overtime!)

**Do you have any examples of things that your employer, or perhaps your line manager, has done that hasn't been quite so helpful in terms of the home-working experience?**

Lack of communication/random interactions  
Inaccessible mental health support  
Unrealistic expectations

**Assuming you were going to continue working from home for the foreseeable future, either on a full- or part-time basis, what would you like your employer or line manager to do differently, so that you have the best working from home experience possible?**

Encourage social interactions  
Providing hybrid option

More accessible mental health support

If your employer offered you co-working space locally, would that be of interest to you?

Could be useful for people who live far from workplace

Already have that sort of thing within the organisation.

**Do you have anything else you would like to say about working from home that we haven't already discussed?**

Effects on career development

Mindful of family commitments

More financial consideration (e.g. utility allowance)

Interest in hybrid working

Employer-specific themes mentioned

**1) Barriers:**

Restrictions on resources

**2) Employer responsibilities:**

Employers responsible for team connectedness

Learning and adapting

Better modelling of good work practice

Considering individual differences in working preferences

More personalised wellbeing monitoring

**3) Trust**

Less monitoring of employee hours (checking when they are online, etc.)

**4) Adapted processes for Zoom**

Keeping up professionalism

Encouraging equal contribution during meetings

**5) Valued resources**

Better mental health and wellbeing guidance and support

Online or face-to-face delivery

More structured procedures to implement.

## Summary of Research Findings

The majority of survey respondents reported that they either wanted to continue homeworking full-time or that they would want a flexible hybrid model of working. As such, it is critical that organisations consider the long-term model of homeworking which considers the practicalities, such as office equipment and health and safety, as well as physical and mental wellbeing. This piece of research identifies some key areas of practice that can be adapted by organisations to help provide this support. These suggestions are outlined in the 'Toolkit'.

It is important to note the limitations of the survey and interviews in reflecting a diverse range of opinions, for example, the participants were majority female, white British and employees rather than employers. However, this is somewhat alleviated by the examination of the research literature to fill in the gaps and back up findings from the research.

## Best Practice Guidelines (“Toolkit”)

Best practice guidelines have been generated drawing on the research conducted in East Sussex, the interviews and survey, as well as the wider national and international research literature. The Best Practice Guidelines are split into two sections: 'Take home messages' and 'Practical suggestions'.

Take home messages	Practical suggestions
<p><i>One size doesn't fit all</i></p> <p>Some people have thrived and some have struggled. This can be influenced by gender, family commitments, preference for work style, financial stability, home environment, existing physical and mental health needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employers may benefit from understanding the individual environment of each of their employees to provide personalised support and guidance</li> <li>• Make sure that policies are generated for workspace assessments and health and safety as part of homeworking</li> <li>• Ensure that all employees have the appropriate equipment and that it is set up correctly, including both technology and office furniture</li> </ul>
<p><i>Staff concerns about confidentiality of personal information</i></p> <p>Stigma and confidentiality with regards to physical and mental health are major concerns for staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide staff with reassurance that information regarding their mental and physical health will not be shared, and will not affect career prospects.</li> <li>• Support for physical and mental health should be varied and include both online support and face to face activities</li> </ul>



<p><i>Spotting the need for support at home</i></p> <p>It can be harder to spot when someone is struggling when people are working from home.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good line-management should include regular check-ins on how people are managing with work, workload and wellbeing</li> <li>• Particular support with cohesion is needed with the integration of newer staff members</li> </ul>
<p><i>Home-working shouldn't mean more working</i></p> <p>Access to technology which provides flexible home working should not encourage employees to work more / outside of 'hours'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure home-workers know what markers of productivity are e.g. set clear expectations for what is expected</li> <li>• Support and encourage employees to take regular breaks away from their work stations – this is important for both physical and mental health</li> <li>• Attempt to create some physical, temporal or psychological separation between work and home at some point every day (e.g. turn off notifications at certain times, silence phone, or pack work away when engaged in home/leisure/family activities)</li> </ul>
<p><i>Home-workers would like mental and physical health resources and opportunities for social activities with colleagues.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sign-post to resources that support both mental and physical health</li> <li>• Ask employees about their preferences for social activities (in person and online activities)</li> </ul>

## Supporting Information and Additional Resources

National resources for employers and employees on how to implement home-working effectively:

1. ACAS: *Homeworking - A guide for employers and employees*. Link to guide here <https://www.acas.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-03/homeworking-a-guide-for-employers-and-employees.pdf>
2. The Work Foundation: *Implementing an organisational right to disconnect policy: key considerations for employers*. Link to information <https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/work-foundation/news/blog/implementing-an-organisational-right-to-disconnect-policy-key-considerations-for-employers>
3. The Work Foundation: *Delivering day one flexibility: What will the latest changes mean for workers and employers?* Link to information: <https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/work-foundation/news/blog/delivering-day-one-flexibility-what-will-the-latest-changes-mean-for-workers-and-employers>
4. Health and Safety Executive: *Protect home workers*. Link to information: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/home.htm>

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