

HOME WORKING GUIDANCE DURING THE COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS) OUTBREAK

This document provides guidance for University Group employees who are working at home during the current COVID-19 outbreak.

1.0 SCOPE

Staff may be working at home due to one of the following reasons:

- a) On 12 March, the UK Government issued new advice for people with either a high temperature **or** a new, continuous cough, to stay at home for 7 days if they live alone, which will be extended to household members for 14 days. If staff are well enough to work during this period and their role is conducive to home working, they should work at home.
- b) On 16 March, the UK Government issued new advice for people aged 70 or over and pregnant women to avoid contact with others. If the roles of staff in these categories are conducive to home working, they should work at home
- c) Staff may be at home because they have other symptoms of illness (not a temperature and/or cough) and in line with the Manager Guidance (<https://share.coventry.ac.uk/staff/Pages/coronavirus-advice-and-support.aspx>), their symptoms are mild enough for them to continue working and their role is conducive to home working.
- d) A member of staff, or a member of their close family, has an underlying condition which means that they would normally be advised to have the flu vaccine (such as those with chronic diseases) and their role is conducive to home working. Further information here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults>
- e) A member of staff with a diagnosis of COVID-19, where symptoms are mild and they feel well enough to work and their role is conducive to home working.
- f) A member of staff who has had exposure to a confirmed case of COVID-19, they have not shown symptoms but have been instructed to self-isolate and their role is conducive to home working.
- g) Staff who are caring for dependents who are unwell or where arrangements have broken down, such as a school closure, the member of staff is still able to work and their role is conducive to home working. In these circumstances, flexible arrangements may be agreed in relation to *when* the work is carried out. There is further guidance in this document.
- h) A member of staff who has been instructed to self-isolate by the People Team or Virusinfo Team, they are well enough to work and their role is conducive to home working.
- i) The government has made a decision to stop all public transport and the member of staff relies on public transport to travel to work and their role is conducive to home working.
- j) The University Group has taken the decision for as many staff as possible to work at home.

2.0 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 All home working must be approved by the line manager. It is anticipated that working at home will be for a relatively short period. Although the exact timescale is not known, the length of time for which home working will be required will depend on either a) the individual case or b) decisions taken by the University Group for all staff.

- 2.2 Working at home does not fundamentally alter the terms and conditions of employment and this does not represent a permanent change of base. The purpose of working at home in this context is to protect the health of individuals, colleagues, students and the wider community.
- 2.3 All University Group policies and procedures are still applicable, to all staff, during a period of temporary home working and all staff are expected to continue to comply with these policies and procedures.
- 2.4 All staff are expected to cooperate with the general principles in this document and to demonstrate flexibility in how and where they work. Actions and behaviours demonstrated throughout the period of home working should continue to be in line with those in the Capability Framework (<https://gpod.orgdev.coventry.domains/capability-framework>) and those set out in the University's Code of Conduct for Employee Behaviour or the Company Code of Business Principles.
- 2.5 Staff should ensure that, when they are working at home, that they have a safe space in which to work. Staff should assess their workstation at home in advance of home working, or as soon as possible thereafter. Further information can be found here <https://share.coventry.ac.uk/staff/ps/estates/Pages/Computers.aspx>
- 2.6 The Group's Public Liability insurance and Professional Indemnity insurance will extend to cover those working from home (in the UK) for the purposes of Group business. Staff may be concerned that there may be implications for their mortgage, tax position, requiring planning permission, home insurance or paying business rates whilst working at home temporarily. It is not anticipated that staff will be affected by any of these issues, whilst working at home temporarily, however, if staff have any concerns they should contact the relevant service provider or government body for advice.
- 2.7 The University Group will not be responsible for any costs incurred by staff working at home temporarily, such as heating, internet costs and lighting. It is anticipated that such costs will be offset by the absence of commuting and parking costs. Staff may also benefit from a reduction in commuting time.
- 2.8 All staff should ensure that all University Group data and information remains secure. Any paper documents must not be removed from Group premises and should be viewed electronically wherever possible. If this is not possible or practicable, staff should ensure that any paper documents are stored securely at home in a locked area/cabinet that is not accessible by others. In advance of home working, or as soon as possible thereafter, staff must review the information on the following link (<https://share.coventry.ac.uk/staff/ps/IPU/Pages/Information-Security-Management.aspx>) and ensure the GDPR Coventry Essentials (<https://orgdev.coventry.domains/>) module has been completed and passed.
- 2.9 All staff should take reasonable care of any University Group equipment that they are using at home, such as a laptop. Staff should not allow others to use University Group equipment, this could be, for example, other members of their family or household. It should be noted that it is not possible for every member of staff whose role is deemed suitable to work at home, to be issued with a University Group laptop during the COVID outbreak; the expectation will be that a number of staff should use their own equipment to work at home, where available.

- 2.10 Home working will end when it is appropriate for the individual to return to work, or in the case of a situation where a large proportion of staff are working at home, at the point where the University Group takes the decision that it is now appropriate for staff to return to their normal place of work. This decision will be taken having considered UK Government and Public Health information and advice. All staff who are temporarily working at home, will be expected to return to their normal place of work when instructed to do so, in these circumstances. However, those staff with underlying conditions, or family members with underlying conditions will be considered on a case by case basis.
- 2.11 In the event that the University decides that as many staff as possible should work at home, it should be noted that University Campuses remain open, and there may be a requirement for individuals to attend the workplace on a rotational basis, rotating between working at home and providing cover to support the campuses remaining open. Those staff who have underlying conditions, or where their family members have underlying conditions, may be exempt from this requirement.

3.0 SUITABLE ROLES AND TASKS FOR HOME WORKING

- 3.1 A number of staff may already work in an agile manner in their roles hot-desking at various locations within the Group and therefore may already, on occasion, work at home in agreement with their line manager. For these staff, it will be clear that their role is conducive to home working, they have the necessary equipment and they will be able to carry out the majority of their role, at home, for a temporary period.
- 3.2 For those staff who do not normally operate in the manner described in 3.1 and who fall into any of the categories in section 1.0, it will be necessary for the line manager to carry out an assessment of the suitability of the role for home working, in advance of home working. Line managers should complete the following questionnaire for each of their direct reports <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=mqsYS2U3vkqsfA4NOYr9T1MrHeKB yL1ArVabmm2EGWBUQlo3RDVZRVJTNkZJNDBWUzg5SUxVMIAzSC4u>
- 3.3 Where the assessment indicates that home working is not suitable, the line manager should seek advice from their People Partner or People Advisor.

4.0 EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

- 4.1 Staff defined in section 3.1 above will already have the required equipment to work at home. Staff defined in section 3.2 should use their own personal PC/laptop at home if they have one. A mobile phone is not necessary for staff working at home as verbal communication can take place using Office 365, specifically the Teams application or through Skype for Business.
- 4.2 Guidance will be provided by IT Services which will outline how home workers can access applications from home such as VPN, Office 365 and Remote Anywhere to enable home working. Some applications, such as GFS, can be accessed via the web.
- 4.3 The IT Service Desk (02477 657777) can be contacted by staff working at home who are experiencing any technical difficulties.

5.0 MAINTAINING CONTACT/AVAILABILITY

- 5.1 During the home working period there should be a clear understanding between the staff member and line manager in relation to maintaining daily contact between them and with colleagues in the immediate team. Colleagues should ensure that Outlook calendars are up to date and accessible. Short-term work priorities should be recorded through CORE in the Clear Review system with at least fortnightly check-ins set up to ensure staff are supported and not isolated.
- 5.2 It is expected that staff working at home will be available and will work during their normal hours in line with their terms and conditions of employment, unless other flexible arrangements are agreed in line with section 5.3 below.
- 5.3 For those staff who are caring for others e.g. a child due to a school closure and where the staff member is well enough and the role is conducive to home working, flexible working arrangements can be arranged temporarily so that work can be undertaken from home around caring responsibilities. For example, the staff member may prefer to work during the evenings. In these circumstances, the line manager and member of staff should agree when the work will be undertaken and the line manager should ensure that arrangements are in place in relation to section 5.1 and 6.1.

Annual Leave/Sickness

- 5.4 Reporting sickness absence and booking/taking annual leave should continue in the normal way.

6.0 MANAGEMENT OF STAFF

- 6.1 Line managers should ensure that they continue to provide supervision, guidance, support and advice to staff working at home and continue to monitor performance and objectives. Line managers should discuss and agree in advance with the staff member, how this will work and the method that will be used. At least two Check-Ins per quarter should take place as normal in line with CORE processes. This could take place, for example, using the Teams application in Office 365.

7.0 QUERIES AND CONCERNS

Any general queries in relation to this guidance should be directed to your People Partner or People Advisor. Any IT related queries should be directed to the ITS Service Desk on 02477 657777.