

Safe Working Practice Homeworking Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Managers Guidance

May 2020



HOMEWORKING – REDUCING RISKS TO EMPLOYEES

Government guidance continues to require employees to work from home. As the timeline for the initial phase of this advice was unknown, temporary arrangements for home working were implemented. At present, there is no indication on the timescale for re-setting office-based services and this means the authority is moving into a longer-term homeworking arrangement.

The Health and Safety Executive advice includes:

“For those people who are working at home on a long-term basis, the risks associated with [using display screen equipment \(DSE\)](#)^[2] must be controlled. This includes doing home workstation assessments.

However, there is no increased risk from DSE work for those working at home temporarily. So, in that situation employers do not need to do home workstation assessments”

Managers are responsible for their employees, including whilst working from home. This guidance should be used by managers to assist in making all appropriate measures and reasonable adjustments to reduce the risks to employees working from home.

Managers should:

1. Discuss with their employees their current work set-up at home; and keep a record of the equipment they have.
2. Inform the employee to complete the Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Self-Assessment E-Form;
3. Identify any risk areas / issues that require attention / action;
4. Refer to this guidance for assistance on what can be implemented to support the employee;
5. Document the discussion, additional measures or adjustments that may be required on the DSE E-Form;
6. Arrange suitable and appropriate timescales to keep in touch with their employees;
7. Monitor and review the working arrangement at regular intervals.
8. Contact health and safety for advice, if there are any concerns or issues that are not covered in this guidance CE Health and Safety CEHealthandSafety@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Please see below suggested measures or adjustments that can be referred to when considering risks or concerns raised during completion of the DSE E-Form.

The DSE E-Form can be found on the intranet and is accessible to all employees for completion [DSE E-Form](#).

Current working from home guidance can also be found on the [Intranet](#).

Additional guidance and support for employees on wellbeing can also be located on the [Intranet](#).

MANAGERS GUIDANCE – DISCUSSION POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION

Current Set-Up at Home:

- What is their current workstation set up at home?
- Do they have all the equipment they require to undertake their work safely?
- Are they experiencing any issues with their current set up?
- Would they benefit from any additional equipment or adjustments?

Category of employee’s risk:

Group 1: High Risk– Includes those employees who already have a known medical condition that may be affected by the set-up of their workstation/equipment at home and who have been assessed as requiring specialist equipment (e.g. desk chair) which they would usually use in their office.

Group 2: Medium Risk - homeworking is a new way of working and therefore employees may need support and guidance on workstation/equipment set up.

Group 3: Low Risk - Employees who regularly work in an agile manner without any issues but may require additional standard equipment to continue working safely in the longer term.

High Risk Employees:

- Do they normally use specialist equipment in the office?
- Do they have all the equipment at home they would normally require in the office?
- Would they benefit from any additional equipment or adjustments?

Medium Risk Employees:

- Did they take the required equipment with them to be used at home?
- Are they able to replicate the correct workstation set up at home?
- Do they require any information, instruction or training on homeworking or workstation set up?
- Would they benefit from any additional equipment or adjustments?

Low Risk Employees:

- Did they take the required equipment with them to be used at home?
- Are they able to replicate the correct workstation set up at home?
- Would they benefit from any additional equipment or adjustments?

Resolving Problems / Issues

- Employees are working from a laptop, causing them to stoop, consider:
 - Using a flat surface to keep the laptop stable.
 - Sitting at a table and raising the height of the screen.
 - Providing them with a screen, or laptop riser, keyboard and mouse.
- Employees are working from a portable device, causing them to stoop, consider:
 - Providing them with a screen, portable device riser, keyboard and mouse
- Employees working from the sofa, may adopt an incorrect posture so, consider:
 - Moving to a suitable chair e.g. kitchen table and chair; if this is not feasible, then;
 - Sit in the correct posture with back support (firm cushions or a portable back support) and feet flat on the ground.
 - Working for shorter lengths of time and taking frequent breaks to move around e.g. work for an hour, break for 5 minutes.

Wellbeing Considerations

- Encourage employees to take regular breaks away from the screen.
- Encourage employees to [stretch regularly](#).
- Encourage employees to manage their time effectively.
- Keep in touch with your employees, set up regular meetings in calendars.
- Encourage employees to stay connected with other team members and link in with their [Health and Wellbeing Champion](#).
- If employees are using portable devices, refer them to the best practice guide on the [intranet](#).

COVID-19 SAFE WORKING PROTOCOL

- Refer employees to the [wellbeing section on the intranet](#) where they can access practical wellbeing advice including mental health support and links where required.

Collection/Delivery of Equipment from Office Base

If additional equipment is required by the employee the following steps should be taken:

- Employee to complete online [DSE E-Form](#) and discuss outcome with line manager.
- Line manager and employee to explore home solutions, [watching the video](#) for tips and solutions and following [guidance on intranet](#).
- Seek advice from H&S via the CE Health and Safety CEHealthandSafety@carmarthenshire.gov.uk
- If medical advice is required a referral can be made to Occupational Health, where an Occupational Health Advisor may advise specialist equipment, if appropriate.
- If employee is unable to find home solution with existing equipment, line manager can arrange for the employee to collect their office equipment from their substantive base. If unsure of office opening times, e-mail COVID19HomeWorking@carmarthenshire.gov.uk for further assistance.
- Managers could also arrange for colleagues to collect equipment on behalf of team members.
- All employees must follow the Safe Working Practice during collection of equipment.
- If employee is unable to collect equipment and line manager is satisfied that every effort has been made to attempt collection, as a last resort a request for delivery can be made.
- Line manager issues Delivery of Equipment Request Form to employee for completion. Please e-mail COVID19HomeWorking@carmarthenshire.gov.uk for a copy.
- Line manager approves delivery request.
- Line manager submits delivery request form to COVID19HomeWorking@carmarthenshire.gov.uk
- Employee is provided with a delivery date.
- Equipment is delivered to front door, if disclaimer signed, ground floor only.
- Employee to ensure equipment is cleaned thoroughly prior to use.

Ordering of equipment

For the ordering of any general office equipment such as mouse, keyboard, screen usual procurement rules apply.

If further advice or guidance is required regarding your employees Display Screen Equipment, further to completion of the [DSE Self-Assessment E-Form](#), a referral to [Occupational Health](#) may be advised.