



Complete I.T. Homeworkers Toolkit

This document details important information regarding working remotely.

Introduction

This toolkit has been designed to assist you with some of the questions and challenges which homeworking presents.

We are in uncharted territory and we recognise that working from home is not necessarily an ideal scenario for everyone, but it is important to us, that we not only continue to support our clients, but that we also look after the team by taking the current action recommended by our government and ensuring that we all work from home where possible.

Purpose

Homeworking means performing your role activities from the home location. The flexibility and productivity outcomes available from homeworking can be attractive but an understanding of where to go to for support when required is essential and hopefully this toolkit will answer some of these queries.

This guide should be read in conjunction with the existing policies in our Employee Handbook, such as Homeworking, Managing Stress, Health & Safety, and IT Policy. A copy of our Employee Handbook is available in the area called "Workspace" on Cezanne, as are the factsheets mentioned in this document – Homeworking and Working Alone – Personal Safety.

Scope

This toolkit can be applied to those who voluntarily request homeworking and those who are required to work from home due to external circumstances.

Health and safety considerations

Any employee who is home based should read and understand our Homeworking factsheet. You should also ensure you understand the Working Alone – Personal Safety factsheet.

Homeworker's may also wish to undertake a Display Screen self-assessment to ensure their IT equipment is set up adequately. Please ask Rebecca Kolb for a copy of this should you wish to carry out your own assessment.



Key information

Equipment and Technology

You will be already have been provided with the IT equipment that you need to facilitate working from home. If you have any issues with connectivity/accessing systems, please contact the internal support team.

Office equipment/working environment

We are obviously hoping that this will be a temporary arrangement, but would ask that where possible, you set up a suitable working space in your home to allow you to work comfortably and with minimal interruption.

It is important that you feel like you are at work whilst working from home, so ensure that you are suitably dressed and presentable in the same as you would if you were going into the office on a Friday – you don't have to wear a suit and tie!

Stationery

If you need any stationery, please visit your local office to ensure that you have any stationery that you need.

Keeping business information confidential

Please try to keep any information relating to clients or colleagues confidential and take all necessary steps to ensure that information is filed away when you are not working and stored as securely as possible. Any documentation not required should be stored and taken to your local office for confidential shredding at the earliest opportunity.

Communication

Good communication is an essential part of any successful home working arrangement. Arrangements for contact should be agreed with your manager and should be regular to ensure you feel integrated and up to date with business/team updates. We recommend regular Teams video calls to ensure that you keep in touch with the team.

Wellbeing

It is important to CIT that there are channels in place for employees to raise concerns and an understanding that positive action is taken when employees seek help form part of this.

We have both informal and formal processes in place to allow employees to raise concerns and these are followed up accordingly, once they are known about – early intervention is key.

We already know how staff satisfaction and culture has an impact on your wellbeing. CIT trusts all employees to carry out their role effectively and as such measures performance based on outcome and achievement.

Line managers will be supported by HR in order to understand potential issues that may be faced by home workers to ensure communication is two way and effective, this is one way that management can understand some of the issues/questions raised by their teams.

CIT are supporting this by encouraging regular communication and feedback giving the opportunity for specific questions to be raised. If you have a concern you can raise it by speaking to you line manager or sending an email to your manager or Rebecca Kolb.

How to not feel isolated when working from home

This does take some effort and is especially difficult when we are all being told to avoid contact with others.

Include regular breaks in your schedule, just going out for a walk can be rejuvenating or carry out an errand during your lunch break (ideally one that does not involve contact with others).

Balancing the working day against finishing that last task!

As a homemaker you risk overworking, as when your personal life and your work are both under the same roof, it is sometimes harder to "switch off".

You can forget to take breaks, stop working at a reasonable time and even understanding when it is a reasonable time to stop. You can also be tempted to go back to your laptop after the day has ended to check on just one email or finish one small thing.

How to avoid overworking

- As a homemaker CIT trust you to manage your own time and working pattern in line with your terms of employment. However, to avoid getting into bad habits of not taking breaks you may need initially to trick yourself into taking breaks and setting clear start and end times. A few things that may help:
 - Set appointments on your calendar for the end of the day to get yourself out of your home office. Maybe it's an "appointment" just take a walk around the block. Maybe it's an appointment to read the next chapter of the book you're currently reading.
 - Set up reminders to take breaks. Go for a walk at lunchtime or have lunch in a different room.
 - Set a reminder that will remind you to stretch/refill your water each hour, for example.
 - Create physical boundaries between you and your workspace. As a homemaker you should have a dedicated office space so you can shut the office door – If you don't have a dedicated office, even something as simple as putting your laptop out of sight when work has ended can help you avoid the temptation to log back on.
 - Turn off notifications on your phone and computer so you're not pulled back into work after hours.

Homeworking + children

Now that schools have closed their doors, we recognise that some of you will be working at home with children of various ages. It may not be possible for some of you to work your normal working hours depending on who else is in the house and how much attention your children require. Depending on your role and individual circumstances, we are happy for you to work flexibly to cover your working hours outside of your normal hours to ensure that your children are looked after and entertained – this will help your well being as well as your children's!

If you need to focus on looking after young children, please speak to your line manager to see what we can do to help. There are various options available, including using annual leave, temporarily reducing your hours, taking unpaid dependents or parental leave. We are here to provide you with the help and support that you need to continue to work or to lessen the

impact of this situation, so please speak to us if your individual circumstances mean you are unable to continue to work as normal at home.

Our wellbeing programme

As a reminder as part of our wellbeing programme we provide:

- Access to confidential external counselling services (EAP) and internal support via our mental health first aiders, HR. To access the free EAP service call 0800 389 0285 or access on line at www.healthassuredeap.co.uk (username: Wellbeing Password: Hub).
- Regular discussions with your line manager to support wellbeing.
- Training for managers

Think – healthy living

You may find it easier while working at home to opt for convenience snacks and energy drinks to help you continue to work through the day but try to create habits where you have healthy snacks and drinks. As mentioned above, take regular breaks, including a structured lunch break to help with your physical and mental wellbeing.

Go outside - By virtue of having to commute and conduct personal business at lunchtime, most office workers tend to spend at least a little bit of their day outdoors. Make a point of going out to stand in the sun/fresh air once or twice a day, even if it's just for a few minutes.

Training

We have very recently introduced a new training platform called Mi-Crow. Every team member has access to this training platform – all you need to do is register using your CIT email address. This platform gives you access not only to some technical training, but also mental health awareness training and Office suite training.

Responsibilities

Line Manager's Responsibilities

It is important that managers keep regular contact with any members of their team who work remotely or are based at home to prevent them feeling isolated. If efforts are not made to extend communication and contact in the right way team members could suffer stress that might not be noticed by line managers.

Managers should define the importance of regular contact/video calls.

Managers will also be encouraged to put wellbeing on management team meeting agendas, and you will have the opportunity to raise any issues via this route. Managers should also educate team members in engaging with one another and encourage colleagues to work together.

Ways to ensure homeworkers feel included

Keep connected!

Encourage team working on projects, and make sure that you use the communication tools that we have available can assist with this, i.e.:

- Teams video calls
- Regular phone calls
- Teams instant messaging

As a homeworker - your responsibilities

You are encouraged to have regular catch ups with your team and your line manager to share issues/ideas. From this you will also be involved/updated in any activities that are being planned and share their and your experiences (good and bad).

You are also encouraged to talk through an idea/query for example with colleagues in your local office as you would do in the normal manner.

Any work-related accidents or incidents must be reported in accordance with CIT's reporting guidelines.

From a GDPR/security perspective there are a few guidelines you should adopt:

- You should lock your devices as they would in the office. Children could easily get on a laptop and accidentally make changes without you knowing
- If you are sending information to each other, by email for example, you need to be really careful about what you send and to whom in case you accidentally send it to the wrong email address.
- If sending, still follow best practice; such as password protecting the document and sending the password separately, such as by a text message
- When saving documents, make sure they are saved to the server and not to your PC/laptop as this could lead to the data being lost if their device breaks.

HR support

HR will ensure that they offer advice to employees and managers with any issues that are identified.

HR will also follow up on any issues faced by homeworkers that are not easily resolved with their manager.

Other relevant information

Homeworkers must comply with CIT's sickness absence policy and ensure they report their sickness absence to the line manager in the normal way when they are sick and unable to work.

We welcome your guidance and input to improve your experience and support your homeworking environment/experience.

Mental Health First Aider Information

Your Mental Health First Aiders are:



Ashley Goor
Helpdesk Manager
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Swindon/Bristol



Nick Brown
Sales Consultant
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Swindon/Bristol



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Sales Consultant
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Mental Health First Aiders are a point of contact if you, or someone you are concerned about, are experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress. They are not therapists or psychiatrists, but they can give you initial support and signpost you to appropriate help if required.

If you have any questions about Mental Health First Aid, please contact any of your first aid team.



If your Mental Health First Aider does not have a mobile number, then please email them in the first instance.