

**Practical advice for working from home safely**

**Introduction**

This guidance provides practical advice on steps to take, to ensure work at home is carried out in a healthy and safe way and that relevant hazards are considered.

**Risk assessment**

There is a duty to carry out a risk assessment in relation to work activities for all staff, whether working in Council premises or at home. In Council premises the work environment and equipment are more easily assessed and controlled. When working at home, however, working conditions may be less than ideal.

**Roles and responsibilities of line managers and supervisors**

* Ensure there is adequate contact and communication with home workers.
* Ensure risks associated with home working are discussed with employees.
* Ensure all relevant staff complete a DSE self-assessment.

**Display Screen Equipment (DSE)**

Setting up your workstation correctly at home is equally as important as when you are in the office, and the same principles apply. Your workstation includes your desk or table, chair, and PC, laptop or tablet.

The [Display Screen Equipment (DSE) online module](https://tracking.brightwave.co.uk/LNT/Highland/MyLearning.aspx?ts=139319400&ts=637407059155243219) is **mandatory for all staff** and should be completedprior to carrying out a [Self-assessment](https://www.highland.gov.uk/staffsite/info/8/health_and_safety/53/display_screen_equipment).

**Tips for working on a PC or laptop remotely**

**Raise your screen:** Make sure your screen is raised so that the top of the screen is at eye level. This can be done using an adjustable laptop stand, a box or some books if necessary.

* Use a separate keyboard and mouse as this enables the laptop screen to be positioned correctly.
* Report pain or discomfort, if you feel discomfort, report it to your line manager as soon as you notice it. Further advice may be sought through Occupational Health
* Adjust your chair height, your arms should be at right angles, with forearms lightly supported by the work surface. You may need a footrest if your feet are not firmly on the floor. This could simply be a box.
* Make sure the lower back is well supported, Support for your lower back will help encourage good posture. You could consider a back-support cushion if needed.
* Take regular, short breaks, move around for five or ten minutes every hour, aiming for frequent, short breaks. Consider taking microbreaks to stretch, move around, change activity by taking a phone call, do some reading or get a drink to avoid prolonged static postures.
* Take more frequent breaks if your DSE setup is not optimal or if you are experiencing discomfort.

Try to avoid:

* using phones or tablets for long periods. If this is required re-assess the workload and DSE requirements.
* sitting on unsupportive seating such as a sofa, or other chair that doesn’t offer the necessary support
* static postures.
* Noise: the noise level in your home / work environment should not prevent you from being able to concentrate and carry out your work.

**Safe working environment**

Use the home working checklist at the end of this guidance to assess your home working environment. It covers items such as:

* + the working environment
  + display screen equipment (DSE)
  + emergencies
  + electrical safety

**First Aid**

Most homes will have an appropriate level of domestic first aid stock so it would be prudent for those working from home for longer periods to check the contents to ensure they meet their own needs and are in date.

First Aid modules are now available to all staff via [My On-line Learning](https://tracking.brightwave.co.uk/LNT/Highland/MyLearning.aspx?ts=139319400&ts=637407059155243219) Health, Safety and Wellbeing > First Aid

**Emergency actions and contacts**

Ensure that you are familiar with the actions required to summon assistance if you require it, specifically when working at home alone. Ensure that you have a mobile device/house phone (if installed) charged and available and have emergency contact numbers programmed into the phone for easy access.

**Home Working Checklist**

Use this checklist whilst undertaking a risk assessment of your homeworking area. Share the findings with your line manager once complete.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Employee:** |  |
| **Home workplace location:** |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Working area** | **or x** | **Comments** |
| 1. Is the workplace segregated from the rest of your home and  away from distractions? |  |  |
| 2. Is equipment positioned safely so that no cables are left  hanging that could lead to the equipment being pulled over? |  |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Emergency actions** | **or x** | **Comments** |
| 3. Have you access to basic first aid provisions and are they in date? |  |  |
| 4. Are you familiar with the Council procedures for  accident and incident reporting? |  |  |
| **Electrical Safety** | **or x** | **Comments** |
| 5. Have Council owned portable electrical appliances been PAT  tested and a sticker applied? |  |  |
| 6. Are there enough sockets? |  |  |
| 7. Do you carry out frequent visual checks on plugs, wiring  and casings of electrical equipment? |  |  |
| 8. If you need to use an extension lead, are you using only one? |  |  |
| **Miscellaneous** |  **or x** | **Comments** |
| 9. Are there any concerns about managing working hours, workload or work–life balance? |  |  |
| 10. Are you aware of arrangements for lone working? |  |  |
| 11. Are you aware of how to get help on using ICT or other equipment? |  |  |
| 12. Have you any security or GDPR concerns? |  |  |
| 13. Are there any other concerns? (Please specify below) |  |  |
|  | | |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Employee signature** |  | **Date:** |
| **Line managers signature** |  | **Date:** |