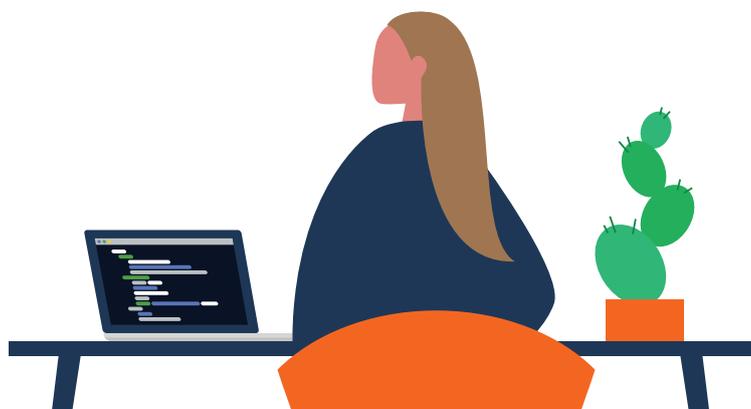


Working from home guide



Introduction

The Coronavirus pandemic has resulted in significant changes to how we work as a council, with our home and working lives changed significantly and almost overnight.

It's been a real team effort and a great example of teams and individuals from across the council coming together to provide a vital service to the community. Everyone has played their part. Whether you have continued to work throughout the pandemic in your current role delivering essential services to those who rely on us, or whether you volunteered to be at the forefront of our response during the crisis.

Home working has also played a crucial role in not only helping us to suppress the virus, but also ensuring we were able to continue to deliver services to individuals and communities across Renfrewshire and keep the council operating.

Current Scottish Government guidance states that working from home should continue, where at all possible. We know from our recent staff survey that most people have adjusted well, however we want to formalise some of our arrangements and make sure that everyone is able to access the resources, support and development that they need to work from home for a bit longer and remain connected.

Your health and wellbeing is our main priority and while we cannot replicate your office environment at home, we want to make homeworking more comfortable for everyone and are committed to providing you with the appropriate support to help you to adjust to the new homeworking arrangements.

Our Commitment

It is important to be practical, flexible and sensitive to each other's situation when working from home or at a workplace during the coronavirus outbreak. To support those working from home we pledge to:

Support flexibility for personal needs—

To help balance work and personal commitments in the home, it is ok to block time in your diary to manage family and care responsibilities. Just make sure it is discussed with your line manager, is in your diary and meetings can be planned around it. This flexibility will also be extended to those in the workplace.

Be family sensitive—It is ok to put a call on hold temporarily to handle a household issue. Video calls are absolutely encouraged so we all feel connected but if this is not possible due to home circumstances then hearing a staff members voice is the next best thing, so simply turning the video off is acceptable.

Frequently check-in on people—checking in on family, friends and colleagues is important for everyone at this time. We must all take care of our physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Be connected—By taking a break to virtually touch base and socialise with colleagues, just as we do when we are in the workplace.

Be kind—meetings are taking place in your own home so no comments should be made about the surroundings and other family members popping into the room and making an appearance on camera.



DSE guidance and access to Office equipment

Many of you were able to take office equipment home before or during the lockdown, however we appreciate for some this was not an option so to help make working from home more comfortable for everyone we have introduced a safe process for requesting and collecting appropriate ICT and office equipment.

While we can't commit to replicating your office environment at home, we will explore all available options to make working from home more comfortable.

Existing equipment should be used where at all possible, however if after exploring all available options new equipment is required then managers should follow the usual procurement process and are reminded that the cost of any new equipment must be covered by each directorate.

To begin with all staff must complete the mandatory [Display Screen Equipment \(DSE\) awareness course in iLearn](#) to assess your current working environment. You can find this under the Health and Safety section in iLearn.

Once you have successfully completed the course, you should complete your DSE self-assessment on Business World. This form will be available in Business World from Monday 10 August and will help to identify any improvements you can make and how we can help to support you. More information on how to complete the assessment is available on the [DSE Self Assessment page](#).

Additional advice and guidance on [how to set-up your work station and other good practice can be found on our website](#).

If you have any questions about the process, please speak to your line manager for more information. ICT will continue to provide support to staff who are working from home, and if you experience hardware, software or network issues you should report the fault or make a request in the usual way by contacting the [ICT self-service portal](#).



What do I do if I have coronavirus symptoms?

If you have a continuous cough, high temperature, or loss or change in taste or smell, self-isolate, let your line manager know and request a coronavirus test right away. You can do this online at www.nhsinform.scot/test-and-protect or by calling **0800 028 2816** if you cannot get online.

Managers must in turn inform HR via the COVID helpline—**0141 618 7323, 0141 618 4031** or **0141 618 6676**, or by emailing HR Systems when all phonelines are busy.

If you develop symptoms, you should self-isolate immediately and stay home for 10 days. Others in your household should stay home for 14 days in case they also develop symptoms.

If symptoms worsen or last for more than 7 days, call 111. If you have a fever for more than 10 days, continue isolating for 48 hours after it ends.

NHS Scotland's Test & Protect service is the next step in tackling coronavirus. It works by identifying who has the virus and who they have had close, recent contact with to break chains of infection and stop the spread.

FACTS key messaging

To prevent the spread of the virus we should all follow the **FACTS**. It is the sum of our individual actions, our collective endeavour, that is helping to suppress the virus.

Wear a face covering on transport and in shops and crowded spaces



Avoid crowded spaces

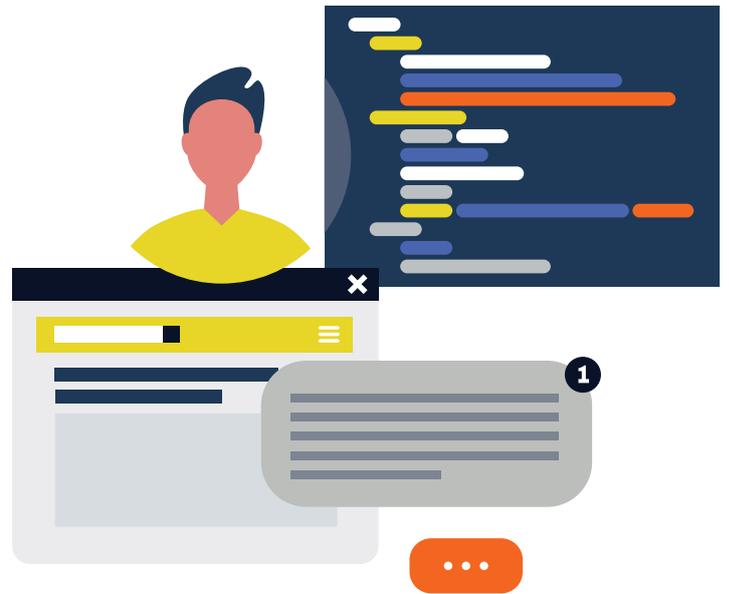
Clean hands and surfaces regularly



Two metre distance.



Self isolate and book a test if you have symptoms.



Learning and Development

Learning and development is just as important while working from home. A range of e-learning and online learning is accessible through iLearn and is complemented by online learning interactive guides that support managers and their teams to adapt to home working, maximise the benefits of home working and enhance digital skills.

New online learning programmes will be shared through the normal channels and learning and development requirements should be discussed between you and your manager regularly.

iLearn contains hundreds of e-learning courses and other resources to help you develop your skills. This means that you can get access to the learning you need when you need it, at a pace and place that is most convenient for you.

Further advice and support on [online learning and development opportunities](#) while working from home is available on our website. This includes an interactive [online learning guide for Microsoft 365](#) that provides you with links to short videos to the different products within the Microsoft suite and also links to the guidance produced by ICT on using Teams and Skype.

If you have any questions or feedback, or if you need advice and guidance on accessing any of the online learning resources and iLearn you can contact the team at hrpolicy@renfrewshire.gov.uk



Shielding

With the decision by Scottish Government to pause shielding from August 1, the guidance for people who were asked to stay at home and isolate because they were at a higher risk from Covid-19 is now the same as the rest of the country.

As working from home, where at all possible, remains the current Scottish Government guidance, this will be explored in the first instance and your manager will be in touch with you to discuss your return to work.

The same applies for staff who were previously identified as being 'At Risk', and your manager will have already been in touch to discuss a safe return to work.

We understand that returning to work may present some concerns and you may have questions about how you will be supported. Please discuss this fully with your manager and be assured that your health and wellbeing is our priority. We are following the latest Government guidance on [Shielding](#) and you will undertake a risk assessment before you return.

What next and changes to guidance

The infection rate in Scotland may rise as well as fall in the coming months. Small changes will not affect this advice and Scottish Government will keep their advice under constant review.

If the infection rate in Scotland changes and causes concern, you may be asked to take extra steps to stay safe once again. We will alert you immediately to this if the situation changes and you will receive notification from Scottish Government and the SMS Shielding Service.

If you have not already, you should send your Community Health Index (CHI) number to the SMS Shielding Service—both your CHI number and the mobile number for the SMS Shielding Service are in the letters you've received from Scottish Government.

Annual Leave/Special Leave

Although holiday plans may be restricted due to the coronavirus outbreak and quarantine arrangements, it is still important to take your annual leave. Scheduling time off away from work to relax and recharge is essential for your wellbeing.

You should try to take your annual leave before the end of December 2020, but given the exceptional circumstances, you will be able to carry over unused leave into 2021/22.

Staff who have purchased additional annual leave under the Buying Additional Annual Leave Scheme 2020 should use this leave first, before their normal annual leave entitlement.

To provide additional flexibility, regardless of workplace, staff can also access a range of Special Leave and other leave provisions that can be agreed with their service/line manager and HR & OD to better balance work and personal commitments where appropriate.

If you have booked any trips abroad, please follow [UK Government foreign travel](#) advice to find out if you need to quarantine on your return and advise your line manager as soon as possible.

You can read more about our [advice and guidance on annual leave and foreign travel](#) on the council website.

Health and Wellbeing

Many of you have adjusted well to working from home, but it is important to remember that for some people it can be a difficult or isolating experience, especially during a public health emergency.

Everyone is adjusting to a new and changing situation and we want to do everything possible to safeguard our health and wellbeing.

It's okay not to be okay and to need some support or someone to talk to especially about balancing your home and work life.

Your line manager should be the first port of call, so if you can share how you are feeling with your line manager, please ask for help and support. Alternatively you can contact [Douglas Blair in Health and Safety](#) or contact him on **0141 618 7630** or **07770398143**.

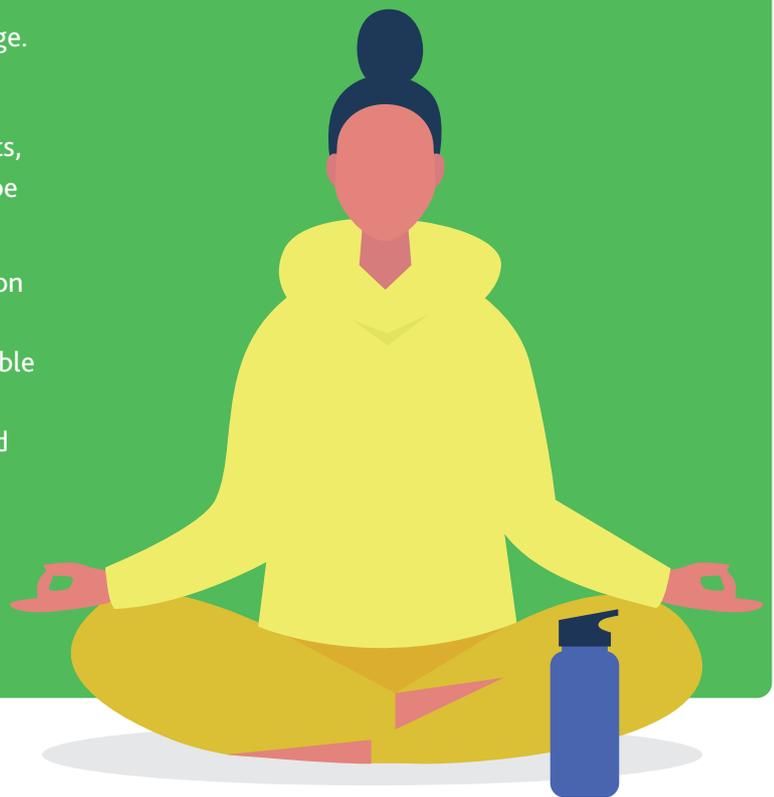
To help support staff working from home we've developed a special health, safety and wellbeing package.

This includes:

- Advice and guidance on homeworking risk assessments, which should be conducted regularly and should not be a 'one off'
- Advice and guidance on how to set-up your workstation at home safely, including [Display Screen Equipment \(DSE\) Guidance](#) and the [DSE Assessment Form](#) (available on Business World). Where an employee requires an eye test this should be arranged and time off to attend provided through the special leave policy provision
- A dedicated [Health, Safety and Wellbeing](#) section on the website, hosting a range of health and wellbeing resources, information and interactive guidance is available for staff and managers to access

- The '[Healthy Habits for Homeworkers](#)' guide is specifically geared towards providing staff working from home with practical advice and tips to support health and mental wellbeing
- Information about the council's employee assistance programme. Managers must ensure that where appropriate referrals and signposting are still made to [Occupational Health](#) and [Time for Talking Employee Counselling](#). These services are currently being provided via telephone and video conferencing
- For ideas on exercising, healthy diet, maintaining a social life and staying emotionally centred visit [Scottish Government Clear Your Head](#) campaign page.

Further information on the package and DSE virtual support is available from the Health and Safety Team, HR & OD.



Useful information and support

Scot Gov guidance

www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/

NHS inform

www.nhsinform.scot/

Staff information

www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/staff

www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/staff