



### **Introduction**

This guidance has been prepared to cover the current situation (March 2020) with Coronavirus (COVID-19). There is an increasing demand for employees to work from home where possible. This guidance indicates the minimum health and safety requirements to ensure employees can safely work from home.

### **Legal Duties**

An employer's legal duty to protect and monitor the health, safety and welfare of workers extends to employees working from home. Consequently the same health and safety requirements apply to home workers as to office based staff. In summary the employer must do what is reasonably practicable to ensure the health and safety of their workforce whilst at work and of others who might be affected by the work activity.

### **Recognised Control measures**

Before an employee begins to work from home, you should carry out an initial assessment of their proposed working area to determine the specific hazards and risks posed to each individual home worker. Form **HWVC-Short Term**, attached, can be used to guide this initial assessment. If the situation dictates that the employee must work from home to care for dependents or due to self-isolation, temporary measures should be put into place. Employers should periodically check that the working conditions continue to meet the legal standards. The temporary working arrangements will need review after two weeks to ensure the conditions are suitable. A structured discussion with the employee will be sufficient, provided that action is taken where issues are identified. Keep a record of the discussion and any actions taken. Further formal review should take place at monthly intervals should temporary home working continue for more than 4 weeks.

Employees should designate an area of their home as their workstation e.g. a desk, home office, dining table or 'foldaway' desk that will be well lit and is ergonomically sound for their use; see Guidance Note 5-11. They should be advised not work from places such as an arm chair, sofa or bed where the viewing angle of a laptop would not

be correct, where their wrist would not be supported and they will be at increased risks of work-related upper-limb disorders and eye strain.

The use of a ‘display screen equipment self-assessment’ questionnaire (see Guidance Note 5-11 – Display Screen Equipment) which should be completed by the employee may be helpful in ensuring the workstation is right for them and will present no physical hazards. Due to the developing COVID-19 situation long-term measures may not be immediately available and if temporary home working becomes prolonged the working conditions must be reviewed from time to time.

The employee should ensure their home working area is free from hazards that could be a foreseeable cause of slips and trips, for example trailing power supply and computer cables. Cables should be safely routed, fitted with a cable cover or taped down.

For temporary home working, laptops are a convenient IT provision due to their size and convenience. They do, however, present hazards beyond those associated with desktop computers. It is not advisable to work all day on a laptop because the size of the keyboard and the size and position of the screen are more restricted than those associated with desktop computers. Employers should advise employees to take regular breaks and ensure they maintain the correct posture, see appendix 2.

The electrical components in a home worker’s house are not subject to the same testing requirements as an office building. This can be easily dealt with during the home assessment by ensuring that plugs are correctly wired, that cables are covered and undamaged, and, if not already part of the home installation, by providing circuit breakers for connecting work equipment to the domestic power supply. Work equipment should be shut down and switched off at the end of the working day. The home worker should be instructed to carry out basic visual checks on their electrical equipment to ensure it remains in good condition.

The company’s accident and dangerous occurrences reporting procedure should be explained to home workers, and they should report to their Managers any accident that occurs during their working time.

Home workers need to have suitable communication devices, telephones or e-mail facilities and arrangements made so that in the event of emergency, they can call for

help. Supervisors should be able to contact the employee at all times during working hours.

Home workers should have regular meetings with Managers and colleagues, via individual or conference calls, so that they can interface with the rest of their team, share problems, issues and concerns about their work, and keep abreast of developments in the business. This will help avoid issues relating to stress.

Employers need also to ensure that their Employer's Liability Insurance will cover home workers and give the home worker sight of the policy certificate. They must also provide statutory health and safety information to the worker. This may be an electronic copy of your employee safety handbook.

With these measures in place, an employee's health and safety during home working can be effectively monitored and the employer can be assured that the employee has adequate safety systems in their place of work.

Remember to keep records of home working assessments and the actions you take to monitor the working conditions of your home working employees. Keep these with Safety Records or in personnel files.

Should the situation change or become longer term then additional controls should be applied to provide suitable conditions for long term working.

Further advice and guidance on any of the issues associated with home working or the advice contained in this guidance note is available from our 24-Hour Advice Service.

- In Great Britain call 0844 892 2785 or 0844 892 2772 option 2;
- In Northern Ireland call 0844 892 2786 option 2; or
- In the Republic of Ireland call 01 855 5050 option 2.

Our Guidance Notes are regularly revised and updated to reflect current best practice and take account of revised standards or legislation. The latest version of every Guidance Note is always available to you at [www.peninsula-online.com](http://www.peninsula-online.com).

## SHORT-TERM HOME WORKING VIABILITY CHECKLIST

Form HWVC-ST

Use this form to assess the viability of short-term working from home and the suitability of the home workplace..

### PART 1. Business viability of home working.

Person being assessed for working at home. ....

	CONSIDERATIONS	Check box if YES	COMMENTS, REQUIRED	ACTIONS
1	Will service needs or customer demands be affected?	<input type="checkbox"/>		
2	Will home working have? Has the employee been required to self-isolate or temporarily care for a dependent?	<input type="checkbox"/>		
3	Is it possible for the individual's work to be done in the home environment and without a significant impact on business efficiency?	<input type="checkbox"/>		
4	Are there implications for the supervision and monitoring of the employee's work and is the individual self-disciplined and able to work without close supervision?	<input type="checkbox"/>		
5	Does the employee have suitable accommodation at home, i.e. a workstation free from distraction?	<input type="checkbox"/>		
6	Does the Company need to supply suitable IT and other equipment for the employee?	<input type="checkbox"/>		
7	Can the IT equipment be connected to a broadband link?	<input type="checkbox"/>		
8	Does the employee need access to files that should not be taken home?	<input type="checkbox"/>		
9	Is working closely with the team or colleagues in other Departments a key element of the individual's work?	<input type="checkbox"/>		
10	Are there any safety implications for work colleagues?	<input type="checkbox"/>		
11	Will the individual's work activities have to be reviewed or changed in order to accommodate home working?	<input type="checkbox"/>		
12	Will special arrangements be required to contact the employee?	<input type="checkbox"/>		
13	Will H&S hazards and risks be properly controlled?	<input type="checkbox"/>		
14	Is the employee a suitable candidate for working at home?	<input type="checkbox"/>		
15	Have you set up suitable terms and conditions for short term working at home?	<input type="checkbox"/>		
16	Does your Employers' Liability Insurance cover include employees working from home?	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>DECISION</b>		Home working is viable <input type="checkbox"/>		
		Home working is not viable <input type="checkbox"/>		
<b>COMMENTS</b>				
<b>Signed</b>		<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	
Where short-term home working is approved use Part 2 to complete an assessment of the health and safety risks to the worker whilst working at home.				

**PART 2. Use this checklist to assess health and safety risks to the worker when working at home short-term.**

<b>CHECKLIST FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR HOME WORKING</b>			
	<b>CONSIDERATIONS</b>	<b>Check box if YES</b>	<b>COMMENTS, ACTIONS</b>
1	Employee briefed on suitable temporary workspace setup arrangements – See guidance note 1-18ST	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	Is there suitable furniture, ICT equipment and materials for the job to be carried out satisfactorily and safely?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	Have you ensured that suitable space for working, storage, security and confidentiality of information is in place?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	Have you taken reasonable care to ensure that the employee has a safe working environment in a comfortable ergonomic position, that suitable breaks will be taken and that they will not work beyond their contractual hours?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5	Does your accident procedure include arrangements for home workers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6	Has the employee been briefed on the arrangements for routine management contact and emergency contact?		
<b>ELECTRICAL AND OTHER EQUIPMENT</b>			
7	If required, have you provided suitable electrical equipment that is in good order and regularly maintained?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8	Has any electrical equipment been subject to Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) by a competent person?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9	If you have provided computer equipment, has it been set up as a Company computer with broadband access to company networks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10	Are arrangements in place to ensure compliance with your company's information management, security and data protection policies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>GENERAL</b>			
11	Are arrangements in place to ensure that home workers receive any necessary health and safety training?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
12	Have you arranged suitable public liability and extra equipment insurance cover on company equipment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>COMMENTS</b>			
Name of Person completing this checklist		Date	
Signed			



# DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT

## Set Up Guide

### 1. Arms

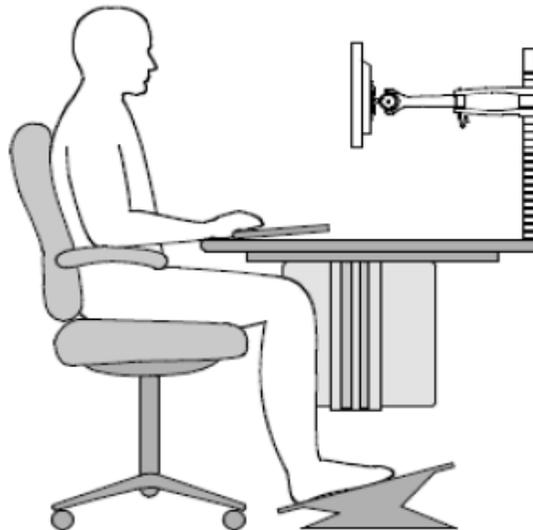
Ensure your elbows are level with the keyboard when sitting at your desk. This will position your wrists at the correct angle.

### 2. Getting Comfortable

Ensure your feet are flat on the floor with your knees at a minimum angle of 90 degrees. If you cannot place both feet flat on the floor whilst sitting right back in your chair, you need a footrest. Adjust your chair to support your back.

### 3. Head and Neck

The very top of the screen should be level with your eyes, in your line of sight. The screen should be directly in front of you; it should be an arm's distance away when you are sitting in an upright position.



### 4. Keying In

Leave sufficient space in front of the keyboard for hands and wrists. Your keyboard should be positioned towards the front of your desk to avoid overreaching and your mouse should be on the same platform (at the same level - next to your keyboard).

### 5. Reviewing Documentation

Any documents being used in the course of your work should be at the same level as the screen, on the same side as your dominant eye.

### 6. Overreaching

Items in frequent use, such as telephone, stapler, pens, etc. should be placed within easy reach.

**Ensure that the equipment, the contrast, brightness and colour, is correctly set. Alternate your tasks to avoid stressors such as eye strain and fatigue.**