

# COVID 19 - Working from Home: Leading and Managing Remote Workers

By Eric Linn for South East COVID-19 Health and Wellbeing

## 1. Ensure your remote workers are properly set up and prepared by encouraging them to:

- Create a proper workspace, free from clutter and unnecessary interruptions.
- Have clearly defined working hours and make sure you respect those hours yourself.
- Take regular breaks – coffee, lunch, and get some fresh air and exercise even if only in the garden.
- Use the technology that is available (and ensure that they understand how to use it)
- Maintain a work routine and understand the need to maintain a professional appearance if using videoconferencing

## 2. Set up strong communication links across the whole team

- Stay connected - Remote workers can feel lonely and isolated, so communicate with your team regularly.
- Use smart technology, such as video conferencing, instant messaging, collaboration tools.
- Use conferencing tools to relay important information and Instant Messaging for quick check-ins
- Understand that home workers have other responsibilities too, such as childcare and shopping, and will not necessarily be instantly available.
- Be ready to support remote workers if they encounter technology issues, particularly with broadband under pressure

## 3. Set out clear expectations

- Accept that some objectives may no longer be achievable so review and agree what is feasible.
- Agree daily or weekly short-term goals and check in regularly to review progress against them.

## 4. Keep the motivation strong

- Support and encourage team members to interact as they would if in a physical office environment by setting up a virtual coffee room or WhatsApp group.
- Acknowledge this is a stressful situation – get to know your team and what motivates them as individuals. If a new team has been created ask them what they need to stay motivated.
- Set up virtual lunches or pizza parties using conference tools

We are in unprecedented times and no one knows for sure what will work and what won't. If something doesn't work, learn from it and try something else - just remember everyone is in the same boat and learning every day.

As a leader your role is to ensure that you support and motivate your team by encouraging, communicating and managing their performance just as you would if they were in the same building as you.