

Colleague Guide

Working from Home

We'd like to thank all colleagues who are working hard to deliver Council services on the front line and also those colleagues working from their own homes. This guide is for those of us working from home. Most of us will never have worked at home for such a single prolonged period before. It's important to think about our health, safety and wellbeing and what we can all do to continue to stay safe and well.

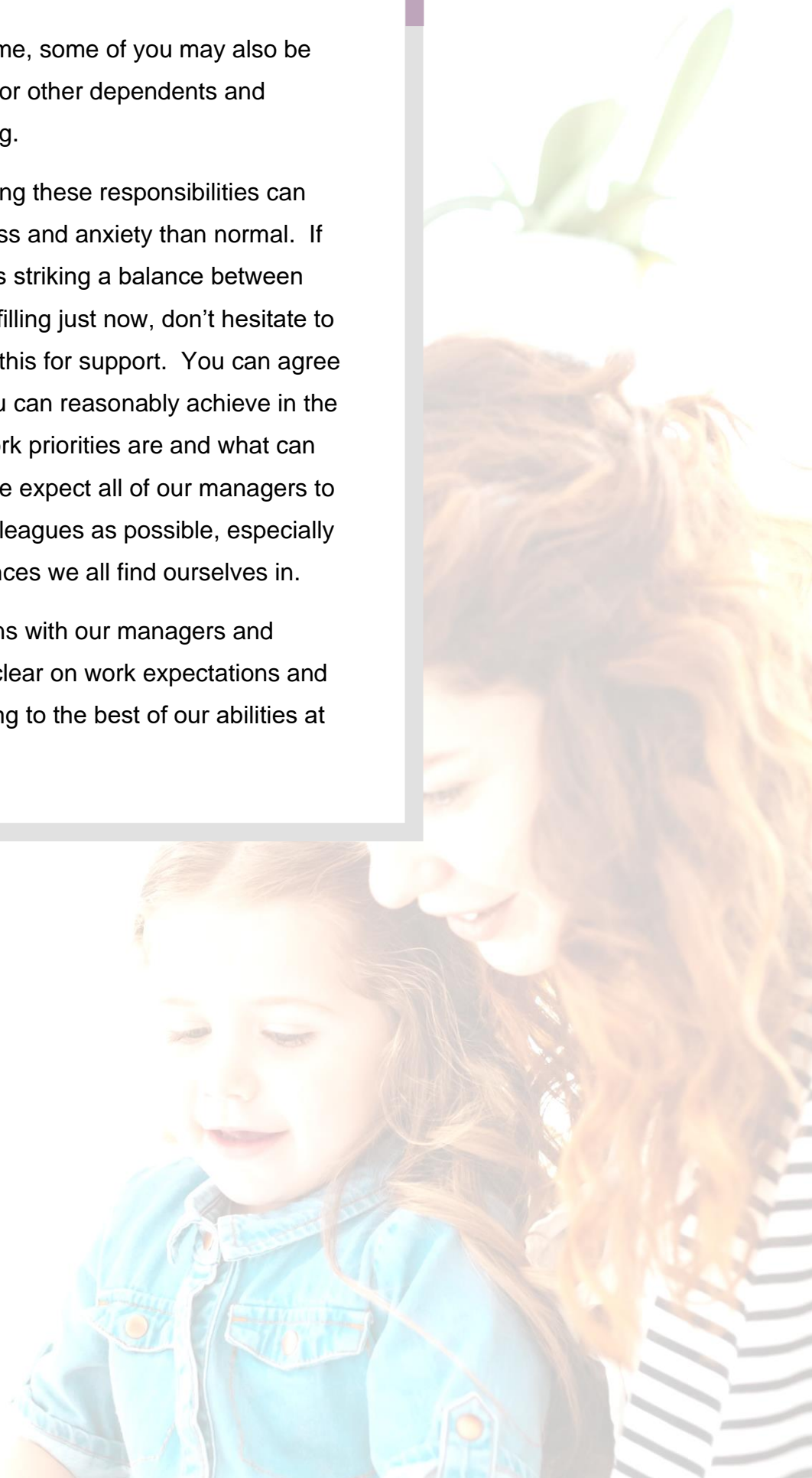


Great Expectations

As well as working from home, some of you may also be providing childcare, caring for other dependents and maybe even home schooling.

We understand that balancing these responsibilities can potentially create more stress and anxiety than normal. If you're having any difficulties striking a balance between the different roles you're fulfilling just now, don't hesitate to talk to your manager about this for support. You can agree with your manager what you can reasonably achieve in the circumstances, what the work priorities are and what can wait until things change. We expect all of our managers to give as much support to colleagues as possible, especially given these new circumstances we all find ourselves in.

Having regular conversations with our managers and colleagues helps us to get clear on work expectations and make sure that we're working to the best of our abilities at home.



DSE Guidance and Assessment

To keep you safe whilst working from home, you must read the Council's [Display Screen Equipment \(DSE\) Guidance](#) and complete the [DSE Assessment Checklist](#). Once you've done this, if necessary, please discuss this with your line manager who can support you with any questions you may have. Please determine what steps you need to follow using the [Workstation Assessment at Home flowchart](#).

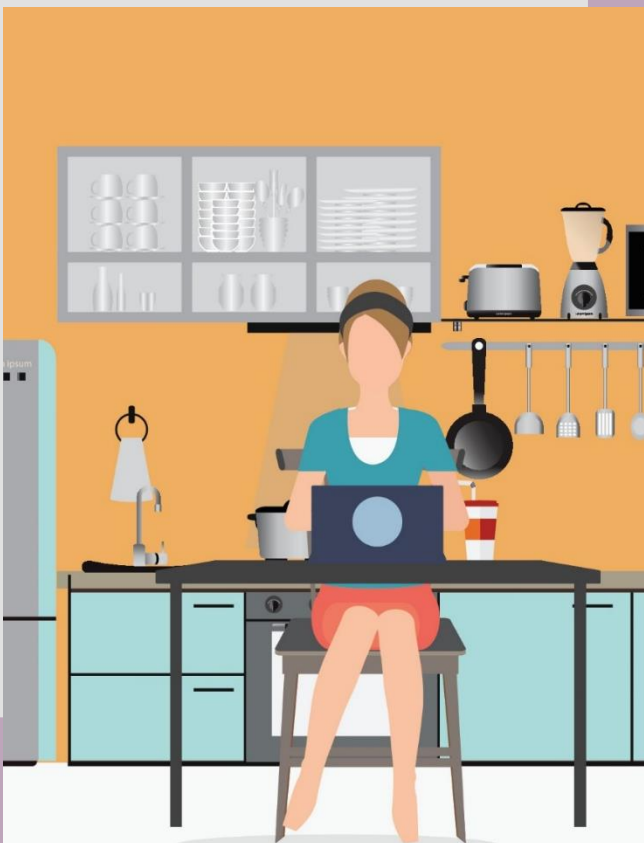
Are you sitting comfortably?

When you worked in the office, you would have been able to adjust your chair to suit you, so that you can work comfortably. Now you're at home, you may not have an adjustable chair, so you need to make sure you're sitting in a way that doesn't cause postural problems that could lead to aches and strains. There's a handy infographic by Posturite at the end of this guidance.

Following completion of a Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Assessment, if you feel that you need an office chair, please speak to your line manager about this.

key points to bear in mind:

- Sit approximately an arm's length away from your screen;
- Make sure the top of your screen is roughly at eye level;
- Sit with your feet flat on the ground or on a foot rest;
- Make sure there's some space between the back of your knee and the chair you're sitting on;
- Sit back in the chair, making sure your back is supported.



Screen Test

If you're working from home, it's likely you'll be using a laptop or using a screen of some sort. To make sure you're using it in a way that minimizes the risk of injury while you're working from home, please bear the following points in mind:

- Sit with your screen face-on, central and not in direct glare;
- Don't work for too long in front of a screen – make sure you are taking breaks away from your screen for at least 5 minutes every hour;
- If you've got other work that doesn't involve using your screen, use that to break up the time you're on your screen;
- Make sure that you change position every 15 minutes or so to avoid bad posture, which can lead to aches and strains;
- Get up and move around or do stretching exercises;
- If your eyes are getting tired, change focus for a while to give them a rest;
- If your eyes are getting dry, make sure you're blinking regularly. Consider using eye drops, if that doesn't help.

Your office equipment at home

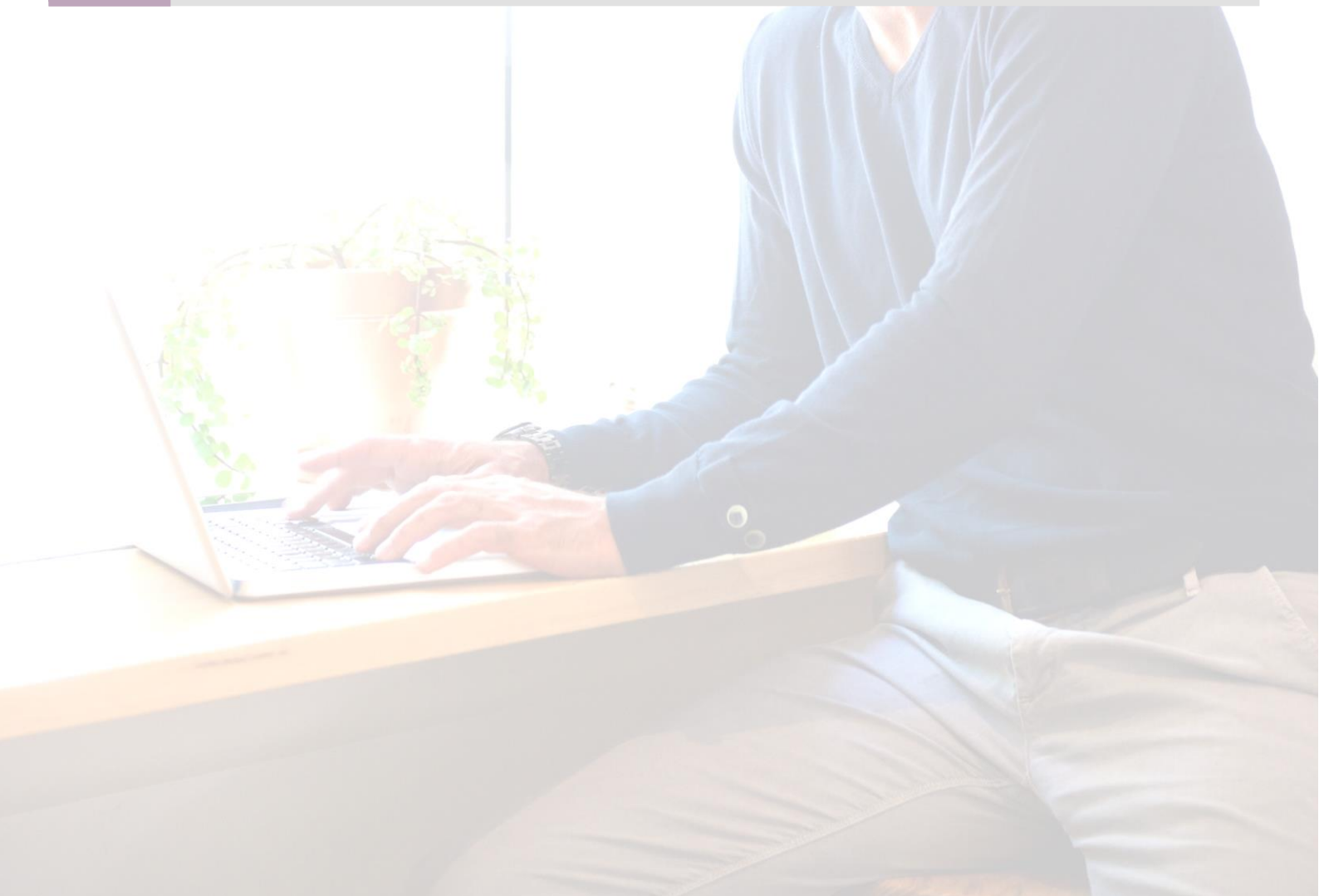
Our main focus is keeping you safe. You may have been able to take things like your keyboard or mouse home with you before the lock down. If you weren't able to do that before you started working from home, your manager will speak to you to determine what equipment you may need.



CECiL Digital Learning

If you are working from home, there's an online e learning course on CECiL called Display Screen Equipment, which goes through all of the above in a bit more detail. You can log in to [CECiL](#) from home on any PC or laptop. If you can't remember your CECiL password, send an email to [Learning and Development](#) and a colleague will reset your password for you.

myLearning



Work/Life Balance

Now that you're working from home, it's more important than ever that you differentiate between work time and personal time. Here are a few tips to help you with this:

- try to stick to a routine when it comes to the time you start and end work. We totally appreciate that this might not always be possible if you're also having to teach your children as well as do your own work at home, but research tells us this can help;
- if you have the space, set aside a specific, separate area in your home where you can work;
- switch your computer off at the end of your working day and tidy all the papers away;
- try to get outside at least once a day, if you're not shielding or self-isolating.

Good mental health

Taking care of your mind, as well as your body, is really important when you're working at home. You may feel bored, frustrated or lonely. You may also be feeling low, worried, anxious, or concerned about your health or the health of those close to you.

It's important to remember that it is OK to feel this way and that everyone reacts differently. Please remember that the current situation is temporary and, for most of us, these difficult feelings will pass.

Further guidance, [Staying Psychologically Well: A guide to help staff whilst home working](#) is available on the Council's Orb.

Further help is also available through [PAM Assist](#) (the Council's Employee Assistance Provider - **Username: CEC Password: CEC1**) If you just need a listening ear you can email letstalk@edinburgh.gov.uk and you'll be contacted by one of our internally qualified coaches who can support you. You can also contact the Council's Chaplain for support [A listening and caring ear for anyone](#). You can access these and other useful resources on the [Employee Wellbeing](#) section of the Orb or on the Council's website.

Taxing Times

If you don't normally work from home, you can claim an allowance back from HMRC, to help cover the extra costs you might incur. You can do this online if you have a Government Gateway account by filling in a P87 form. You can also get print a copy of the form off and post it to them, if you prefer.

[Claim tax relief for your job expenses](#)

You'll be asked for your employer's name and PAYE reference. You can find these on your P60, which you can find on MyHR, if you don't have a paper copy. You'll also need your job title.

For postal P87s, you'll also need your national insurance number and you'll find that on your P60, too.

Example P60:

P60 End of Year Certificate	This is a printed copy of an eP60		
Tax year to 5 April	2020	Employer PAYE reference	961 / 3140364
Pay and Income Tax details		Employee's details	

When they get your P87 form, HMRC will adjust your tax code and inform our Compensation & Benefits Team about the change. You'll get a new tax code (you'll see that on your next pay slip) and you'll pay less tax.

If you normally do a self-assessment form, you can claim on it.

More information

Here are some infographics from Posturite, which show you the best way to set up your temporary workstation at home and which show you some exercises you can do at your desk.

Working from home short term Helpful Hints

If you're in a situation where you're having to work from home suddenly, with little preparation, you'll be relieved to know there's lots you can do to prevent discomfort.

Here you'll find helpful set-up tips for any situation you're in - whether it's just you and a laptop, or you have a full ergonomic set-up.



Good equipment already provided or in place

Desk, adjustable office chair, screen raiser or laptop stand, separate keyboard and mouse

- ✓ Take the time to set up the equipment you have to support your position.
- ✓ Adjust your chair so your elbows are keyboard height, forearms are level and back is supported.
- ✓ Top of screen about eye level.
- ✓ Keyboard and mouse close so your arms are relaxed by your body.
- ✓ Make sure you move regularly whilst working, look away from your screen at least every 20 minutes and try to get up at least every hour.

Some equipment provided

Screen raiser or laptop stand, separate keyboard and mouse

- ✓ Follow the above advice and...
- ✓ Be creative to achieve a well supported and good seated position.
- ✓ Use towels, cushions, pillows or a wedge to get your seated height to the suitable level.
- ✓ Make sure your back is supported with a cushion.
- ✓ If you need foot support consider using an old book, file or box as a footrest.



Separate keyboard and mouse only

- ✓ Follow the above advice and...
- ✓ Find a way of raising your laptop. A tin, plastic box, books or file can do the job but if the items are flammable please make sure you use a mat or tray between the laptop and the item.



No additional equipment

If you only have your portable device, you can still take care of yourself.

- ✓ Use the tips above to get a better position and support from a chair.
- ✓ Can you borrow a keyboard and mouse?
- ✓ Perform some simple exercises.
- ✓ Try to move at least every 15 minutes if your posture is compromised.
- ✓ Any concerns, you must let your manager know as soon as possible.



The worse your position is, the more you must move!

No matter the situation, you can look after yourself by regularly moving and taking breaks.

Plan your day and if any tasks do not require you to be using your device, move away.

Tasks like conference calls, reading documents, thinking and making notes could be done on a sofa, easy chair or even lying on the floor. We all get so used to staying in one place during the day, we do not change our habits when we can.

For further support visit posturite.co.uk and find out how we can help.

During long periods of inactivity, your muscles can become tense and sore. Try some of the following exercises, holding each stretch for 10 seconds



Sit with your back straight and feet firmly on the floor.

Pull your shoulder blades together while turning your thumbs and hands outwards.



Standing with hands clasped in front of you.

Lift both arms straight forward over your head. Separate your arms sideways and take them back down to the starting position.

Sit or stand. Place your hands behind your neck, elbows pointing forward.



Lift both arms straight forward over your head. Separate your arms sideways and take them back down to the starting position.

Sit on a chair with your legs apart.



Lift both arms straight forward over your head. Separate your arms sideways and take them back down to the starting position.



Stand straight with feet apart.

Support your back with your hands while bending your back as far backwards as possible. Keep your knees straight during the exercise.

PhysiApp code: dhueapzq

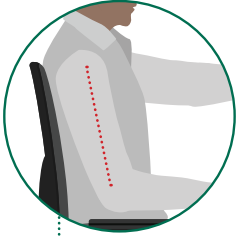


DSE Helpful Hints

For your perfect workstation setup



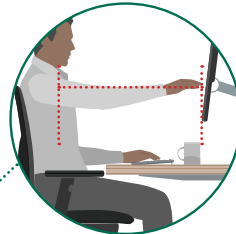
Arms relaxed by your side



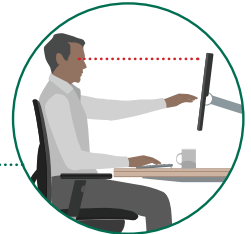
Balanced head, not leaning forward



Screen approximately arm's length from you



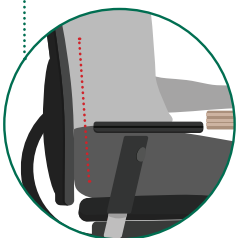
Top of screen about eye level



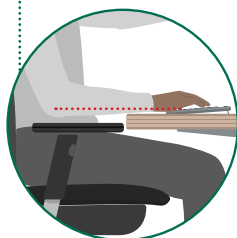
Always remember to move throughout your working day to promote good health.



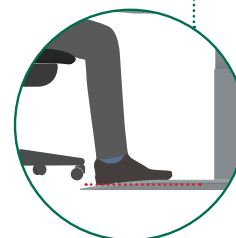
Sit back in chair ensuring good back support



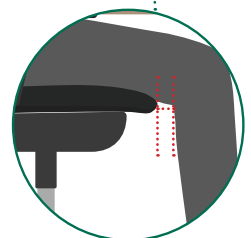
Forearms parallel to desk



Feet flat on floor or on a foot rest



Space behind knee



posturite.co.uk