

## Hybrid Working Safety Guidance

### Introduction

Many people worked from home for extended periods during the Covid pandemic. As we have emerged from the pandemic, new patterns of work have emerged, including more widespread “hybrid” working where people work at home as well as on campus.

Health and Safety legislation applies to all places where people work. Under these new arrangements, that means that the University has certain responsibilities for work that is carried out in an employee’s own home. Most of these responsibilities will relate to Display Screen Equipment (DSE) use. DSE includes working on computers, laptops, tablets, and other similar devices, such as smartphones. but we will also have responsibilities for the safety of the equipment we provide and to make sure that any work-related stressors are properly managed.

The extent of our responsibility is limited to those things we can reasonably be expected to have some control over. This means that we are not responsible for the maintenance of your home, for example, but we would be responsible for making sure that the equipment that we provide for you to use is safe.

We are also responsible for setting guidelines on what work it is or is not acceptable to do away from the University campus. Generally, home working should be restricted to the type of work that would routinely be carried out in an office type environment. This would include things like administrative or computer-based tasks, such as online research or attendance at virtual meetings or calls or talking to people on the telephone.

### The Legal Position

The key legislation that is likely to apply to hybrid working is:

- The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992 as amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002.
  - These regulations apply if a DSE user is employed to work at home, or at other locations away from their main base, whether the workstation is provided in whole or in part by the employer.
- Electrical Safety Regulations 1989
  - Applies to any equipment provided by the employer for use at work. It does not apply to an employee’s home electrical system or to an employee’s domestic appliances when used in their own home.
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
  - This will mostly apply in relation to other risks that may be associated with homeworking. This could include psychosocial risks such as work-related stress and impacts on wellbeing that are associated with the employee’s work.

### Working with DSE

Those working at home on a hybrid or permanent basis will require an ergonomic workstation. The minimum requirements for home and office working are set out in Table 1, below.

**Table 1: Minimum Ergonomic Provisions for Workstation Use at Home, Office or when Agile Working**

Workstation Component	Laptop (short duration use – agile working). Assumes no additional equipment.	Laptop (or portable computer base unit) – dedicated machine (home or long duration agile working)	Desktop / Laptop with docking station – on campus
Monitor	Use integrated monitor.	<p>Connect to separate monitor where space allows. The monitor should be able to be adjusted for tilt and height to enable adjustment to suit user needs.</p> <p>Monitor stands or adjustable monitor arms can be used for fixed height monitors.</p> <p>Where work tasks require frequent switching between programmes (such as working between spreadsheets, data input etc) a second monitor may be beneficial.</p> <p>If a separate monitor cannot be accommodated (e.g., due to space constraints), a laptop raiser should be used to raise the height of the screen. This will also apply if the laptop screen is being used as a second monitor or camera provision (e.g., for Teams meetings) or for switching between documents.</p>	<p>At least one monitor to be provided at each workstation. This monitor should be able to be adjusted for tilt and height to enable adjustment to suit user needs.</p> <p>If height adjustment is not provided, then the monitor(s) should ideally be mounted on an arm to enable user adjustment.</p> <p>If using a laptop as a second monitor, or for camera capability when on online meetings, then a laptop riser should be provided.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to issuing laptop users with lightweight laptop risers as a standard to maximise working options.</p>
Keyboard	Use integrated keyboard	<p>Separate keyboard to be provided. Where space is limited, consideration should be given to providing a “short keyboard”. For people who frequently input data, a separate numeric keyboard may be advisable.</p> <p>Where a specialist keyboard (ergonomic) has been recommended following an ergonomic assessment (by Assistive Technology) then this should be used in all locations for long duration work.</p>	

Workstation Component	Laptop (short duration use – agile working). Assumes no additional equipment.	Laptop (or portable computer base unit) – dedicated machine (home or long duration agile working)	Desktop / Laptop with docking station – on campus
Mouse	Use integrated trackpad	<p>Separate mouse to be provided.</p> <p>Where a specialist mouse (ergonomic) has been recommended following an ergonomic assessment (by Assistive Technology) then this should be used in all locations for long duration work.</p>	
Chair	Should use a chair with back rest where possible.	<p>A specialist operator chair should be provided. This should have the following standard features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitable base (5-pronged base)</li> <li>• Adjustable seat-pan depth and angle</li> <li>• Adjustable seat back rake and height</li> <li>• Adjustable seat height (on a gas-lift mechanism)</li> </ul> <p>DSE assessments may identify additional requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requirement for chair adapted to employee size or weight.</li> <li>• Lumbar adjustment or an equivalent (lumbar roll cushion)</li> </ul> <p>In rare cases, a Workstation assessment may identify a requirement for a specialist / non-standard chair (e.g., due to an underlying health condition). Where this is identified as being required, then this standard of chair must be provided in all work locations.</p>	<p>A specialist operator chair should be provided. This should have the following standard features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitable base (5-pronged base)</li> <li>• Adjustable seat-pan depth and angle</li> <li>• Adjustable seat back rake and height</li> <li>• Adjustable seat height (on a gas-lift mechanism)</li> </ul> <p>DSE assessments may identify additional requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requirement for chair adapted to employee size or weight.</li> <li>• Lumbar adjustment or an equivalent (lumbar roll cushion)</li> </ul> <p>In rare cases, a Workstation assessment may identify a requirement for a specialist / non-standard chair (e.g., due to an underlying health condition). Where this is identified as being required, then it is advised that this chair be reserved for the specific user. Other people should refrain</p>

Workstation Component	Laptop (short duration use – agile working). Assumes no additional equipment.	Laptop (or portable computer base unit) – dedicated machine (home or long duration agile working)	Desktop / Laptop with docking station – on campus
		<p>Arm rests are provided on some chairs – these are not required for workstation use (and should not support arms when typing etc.).</p> <p>Furniture provided for use at home is required to comply with “The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988 (amended 1989, 1993 and 2010)”. Most office furniture is not tested to these standards, and it should not be assumed that office chairs will be suitable for home use.</p>	<p>from using the chair or altering the set up wherever practicable.</p> <p>Arm rests are provided on some chairs – these are not required for workstation use (and should not support arms when typing etc.).</p>
Footrest.	Not applicable	A foot-rest is required if a person is unable to put their feet flat on the floor when seated at a workstation. It is recommended that a supply of footrests be provided in open plan shared workspaces.	
Desk	Work surface should be large enough to accommodate the laptop. Working off lap is not recommended.	<p>It is recommended that flat desks are chosen in preference to wave desks.</p> <p>If wave desks are provided, the workstation should be positioned on the flat part of the desk</p> <p>Desk size should be adequate for a workstation to be positioned. Depth should be at least 650mm (which allows the monitor to be positioned approximately one arm’s length from the user). The width needs to be sufficient to accommodate the monitor (no less than 800mm wide). It is recommended that larger desk widths should be provided where practical.</p> <p>Sit-stand desks are not provided as standard; these are subject to a DSE risk assessment (either by SHEW or by an approved University specialist DSE Assessor or following medical advice).</p>	

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Space	N/A	<p>Home office arrangements will need to be of sufficient size to accommodate the required desk and operator chair.</p> <p>If insufficient space is available, then the employee may need to be based on campus for all or most of their working time.</p>	Office accommodation should be allocated based on a provision of <b>no less than 11m<sup>3</sup></b> per workstation.
Environmental Factors - Lighting, temperature, etc.	Ideally, people should take account of environment when agile working – choosing somewhere out of draughts, with adequate lighting etc.	<p>Homeworking location should take account of environmental factors - avoiding draughts, noise or other factors that can impact the ability to concentrate. If lighting is an issue, the provision of task lighting (i.e., a desk lamp) should be considered. Workstations should be perpendicular to windows where feasible to avoid glare on screens.</p> <p>If a suitable space cannot be accommodated within an employee's own home environment, then consideration may need to be given to the employee working permanently on campus.</p>	Office accommodation should be organised to ensure adequate spacing, with room layouts taking consideration of sources of noise, draughts, available / provided ventilation. Desks should ideally be set out to avoid people working with screens facing directly towards windows (screens should ideally be perpendicular to windows) and blinds should be provided where glare is an issue. Office lighting should be specified to meet general CIBSE office work standards. However, in shared offices there may be variations in lighting perceptions (between occupants) and provision of task lighting (i.e., desk lamp) may need to be considered.
Headset		If using "Teams" telephony or you are attending online meetings, it is advised that a headset with integrated microphone is used to reduce disturbance / background noise. In shared offices / spaces then consideration might need to be given to using different spaces for long calls or meetings.	

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Eyesight	All employees who regularly (usually interpreted as being for longer than an hour a day for each working day) use display screen equipment are entitled to a free basic eyesight test covering computer use. Where corrective glasses are required specifically for display screen use, then the employer is required to fund these.		
Tasks	See Table 2, below, for a list of tasks that each set up is suitable for.		

The type of equipment you need may be influenced by the type of tasks you will be carrying out and where you will be working. Table 2 provides an overview of what devices should be used for specific types of work.

**Table 2: Selecting the Right Display Screen Equipment for Specific Work Tasks**

The following table provides an overview for the selection of the appropriate display screen equipment for specific tasks.

	Smartphone	Tablet	Laptop (no Additional Equipment)	Laptop / tablet with stand, separate keyboard and mouse.	Office, desktop computer (or laptop used as a docking station)
Reading emails	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reading documents	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Short text / email replies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Keeping up to date on the go	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗

	Smartphone	Tablet	Laptop (no Additional Equipment)	Laptop / tablet with stand, separate keyboard and mouse.	Office, desktop computer (or laptop used as a docking station)
Searching the internet	✓ Short periods only	✓ Short periods only	✓ Short periods only	✓	✓
Directions on the go	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Voice inputting	✓	✓	✓	Depends on office set up – can be distracting- may require other measures in open plan	Depends on office set up – can be distracting – may require other measures in open plan.
Document creation	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
Watching webinars	✓ Short webinars only – 10 minutes maximum	✓	✓	✓	✓
Conference calls	✓	✓	✓	Depends on office set up – can be distracting - may require other measures in open plan	Depends on office set up – can be distracting - may require other measures in open plan.
Note taking in meetings	✗	✓ Short meetings – less than half an hour	✓	Yes - provided equipment can be used in the meeting setting	Unlikely to be suitable unless meeting is in the user's office.
Spreadsheet creation	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓

### Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Risk Assessments.

All DSE users are required to complete a DSE assessment. The number of assessments that people are required to complete will depend on the type of worker they are. The requirements are set out in table 3, below:

**Table 3: Workstation and Workstation Assessment Requirements**

Worker Type	Office Workstation	Office Workstation Assessment	Home workstation	Home Workstation Assessment
Office based	Must meet minimum standards	Required	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Office based with occasional home working	Must meet minimum standards	Required	Available workstation should be set up ergonomically as far as is practicable.	Not required
Hybrid Worker	Must meet minimum standards	Required	Must meet minimum standards	Required
Home-Based Worker	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Must meet minimum standards	Required

Workstation assessments are based on the Health and Safety Executive's Display Screen Equipment checklist. You will need to log on to the TopDesk Self-service portal to complete your assessment.

**Before carrying out your assessment,** follow the instructions given below to set up your workstation.

If **once you have followed these instructions,** you find that you require some additional or new workstation equipment, or you need to replace a broken or faulty chair, then you will need to speak to your line manager about replacing these items.

Departments are responsible for funding these purchases out of local budgets. If this raises any issues, then you should contact SHEW / your HR Advisor for advice.

Once you have received the required equipment, follow workstation set up instructions.



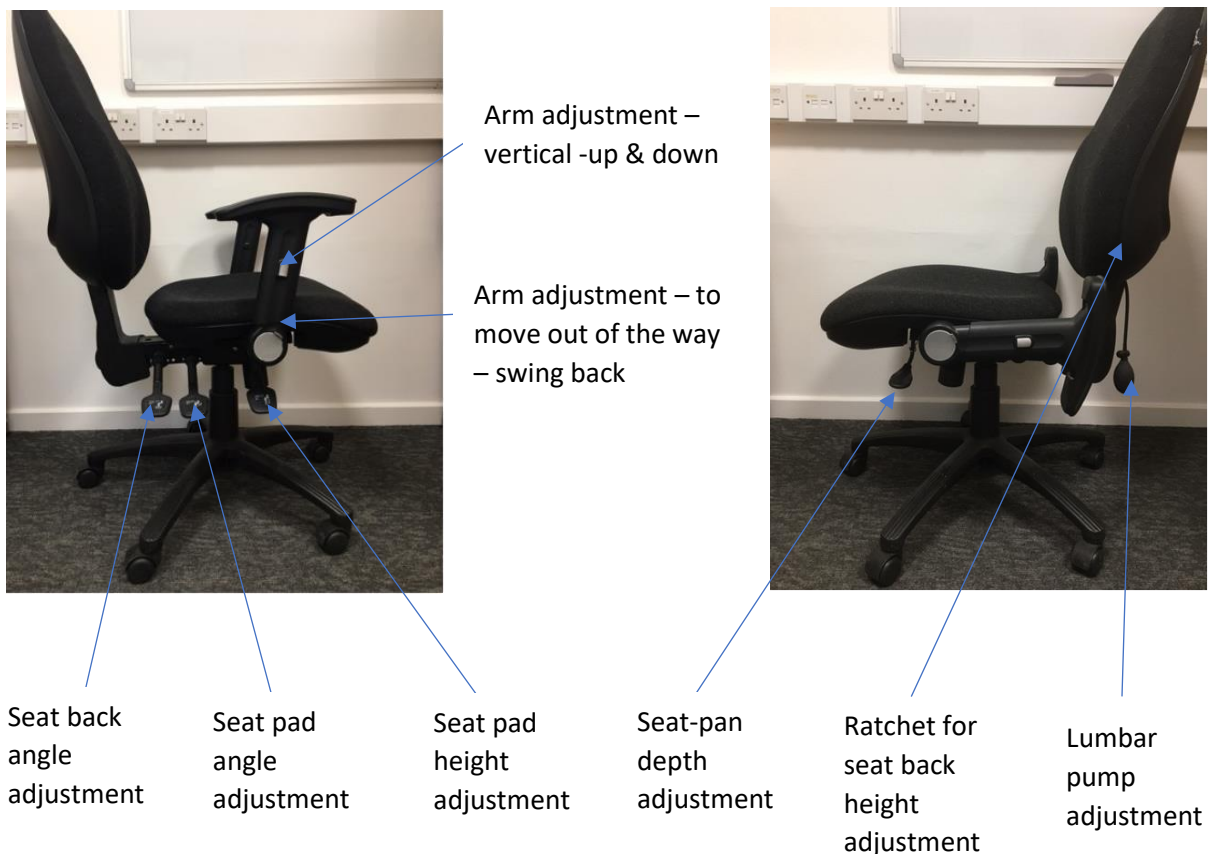
## Setting Up your Workstation

The following instructions guide you through the steps you should follow to set up your workstation properly.

### Setting Up Your Workstation Chair

#### Getting to know your chair

People come in different shapes and sizes. Workstation operator chairs are designed to provide an ergonomic sound set up to enable people to work safely at their workstation.



Recommended operator chairs come with a variety of controls to allow you to set your chair up in a way that suits your specific ergonomic requirements. A properly set up chair will reduce risks of sustaining neck, back and joint pain or injuries.

The chair in the picture above is a Conway chair. This is one of two “approved” office chairs (the other is a Coast Chair) that can be purchased through Bridgend Office Furniture (BOF), the University’s approved office furniture supplier.

Please note that control levers may be in different positions depending on which chair you have. Most of the main control functions are clearly marked on the respective levers as per the photograph on the right. Note - the seat pan depth lever on the BOF chairs does not have a diagram.



## Setting up your chair

### Start by Moving the chair away from the desk.

1. If your chair has arm rests, then move these out of the way by pressing the lower button and rotating the arms backwards. Once any arm rests are down, sit on the chair
2. Adjust the angle of the seat pan (the bit you sit on) so that it is roughly horizontal. Raise the middle lever and tilt the seat either forward or back by changing your weight distribution on the seat pan. You should aim to achieve a sitting position where your hips are slightly higher than your knees. Once you have found the correct position, lower the lever to prevent further adjustment.
3. Adjust the back rest angle by raising the appropriate lever and sitting with your back against the rest. The backrest will freely swing backwards and forwards. The chair should be almost vertical. Some people prefer the back to be angled slightly away from the seat-pan. The main thing is that the seat back should just support your back without pushing you forward. Once you have achieved the desired angle lower the lever to lock the backrest in position. Over time you may want to make slight adjustments to achieve a position that exactly suits you.
4. Now check the seat pan depth. Your back should touch the chair back, and there should be a gap of about three or four fingers' width between the front of the seat pan and the back of your knees. To adjust the seat pan depth, raise the lever and push the seat pan forward or back using your weight.
5. Adjust the height of the chair back using the ratchet mechanism. Pull the back of the chair up so that the curve of the chair back matches the curve in your lower back. If the curve of the chair back is too high, pull it up to its highest position and the ratchet mechanism will unlock and allow the back of the chair to drop to its lowest position, so that you can again raise it to the desired position. This is provided on the BOF chairs but controls may vary; some chairs do not have this ratchet mechanism, but instead have a knob at the back that needs releasing first, then tightening up after the desired height has been set.
6. You may need to add more curvature into the lumbar area to fully support your lumbar spinal area. Pump up the lumbar pump to give you the amount of support you need. There is a button on the side of the bulb pump that lets excess air out.
7. Now sit with your arms down by your sides and your shoulders relaxed, so that your shoulders are taking the weight of your arms. Raise your lower arms so that they are horizontal, and your fingers just slightly hang down when touching your keyboard. This will be the ideal position for keyboard work.

### Move your chair back into position by your desk.

8. Move the chair in to the desk and see where your fingers come when using the keyboard. Resist the temptation to hunch your shoulders or to bend forward to reach the keyboard. If your fingers don't touch the keyboard in a relaxed way, adjust the height of your chair up or down.
9. If this now means that your feet can't be placed flat on the floor, you will need a foot rest. [Lyreco](#) carry a range. If your legs feel scrunched up under your desk, you may need your desk to be raised. The easiest way to achieve this is usually to have desk raisers installed under each of the desk's "feet". These can be purchased from [Posturite](#). To work out how much your desk needs raising, set

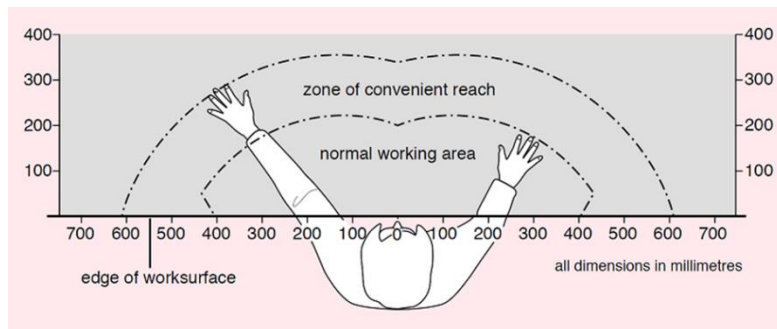
your chair at the best height for comfort in your legs, then raise your forearms as if to use the computer keyboard. Measure the gap between your wrists and the desk-top, then subtract 2cm. This gives the approximate height of the blocks that you need.

11. Finally, make any small re-adjustments to seat angle, back angle, and lumbar pump, to maximise comfort and support from the chair.

12. Rotate the arm rests back up until they lock into position. To raise or lower them, press the upper button, move the arm rest into position and lock it with the upper button released. Most people use the arm rests only when they are in a meeting. The arm rests shouldn't be used while typing and indeed often get in the way.

## Setting Up Your Monitor / Organising Your Desk

Having enough space on your desk for your computer, telephone, accessories, and any paperwork can be a challenge. You will need to think carefully about how you use the various items on your desk and place each one where it will be most easily in reach.

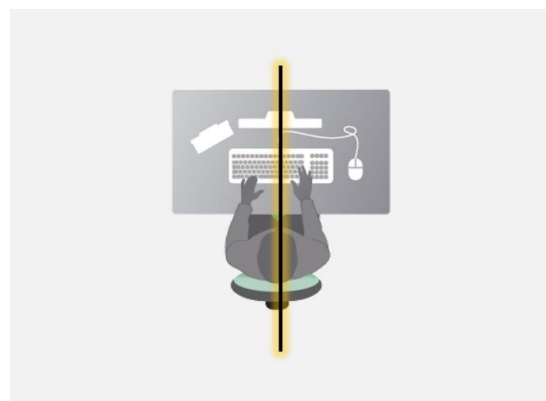


All computer users should have a suitable table-style desk to work at. If you are planning on purchasing new desks, try to avoid the 'Wave' style, as its double curvature makes it difficult to sit at **ergonomically**. Straight desks are generally preferable as people can easily sit face on to the monitor with required equipment in easy and convenient reach. Desks with curved sections can result in users sitting slightly further away from the desk face and limited space may mean users have to twist more to reach equipment.

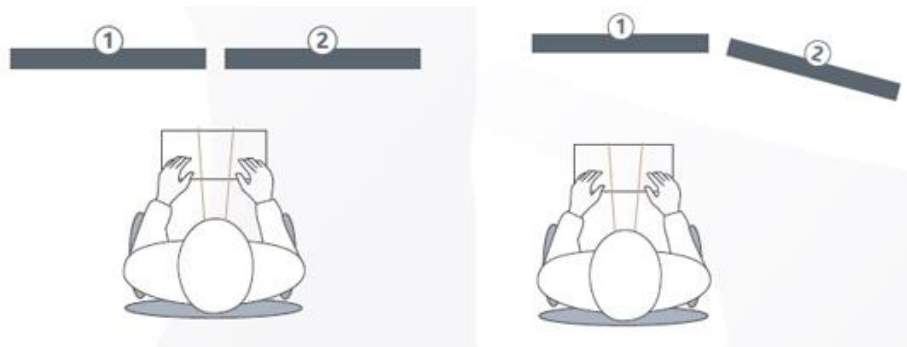
Your keyboard, mouse and any other input equipment should be in the "normal" working area. The distances in the above diagram are indicative; you may need things slightly closer or further away depending on the length of your arm. Telephones and other less frequently used equipment should be in the "zone of convenient reach".

Your monitor should be placed directly in front of you, about an arm's length away (see diagram to the right).

If you have more than one monitor, the layout should ensure that you are using them as ergonomically as possible. Ideally, the tops of the monitors should be aligned to minimise awkward head and eye movements, and you should be able to view the monitors without having to crane your neck up or hunch down.



If you have two screens and use them both equally, position them symmetrically with a small angle between them (image below left). If you use one as your main screen and one as a reference screen, have the main screen in front of you and the reference screen to the right or left at a slight angle for ease of viewing (image below right).



When looking directly ahead, your gaze should be just at or over the top of your monitor/s. If your monitor is too low even at its highest setting, your department should provide monitor stands. These can be purchased from Lyreco. As a temporary measure you could use books or similar to raise your monitor to the correct height.

Slightly tilting the bottom of your monitors towards you will help your eyes to focus more naturally as you view different parts of the screen. There are usually buttons (often on the underneath of the monitor) for adjusting the brightness and contrast.

If you are using a laptop monitor for prolonged periods (either as a primary monitor or a secondary monitor or for online meetings and calls) then you will need a laptop riser so that the monitor is at the correct height (see right).

If possible, try to position your desk and monitors to avoid glare and reflections from the windows. The best arrangement is for the monitor to be positioned so that it is perpendicular to any windows.

If you must have your back to the windows, then you may need to draw the window blinds to minimise glare. If your campus office windows don't have blinds, or the blinds are broken, speak to your line manager about remedying this.



## Other Tips for Healthy DSE Use.

### Take a break

Periodic screen breaks are an important part of staying comfortable at your workstation, helping to prevent eye strain and muscular problems. Simply standing and stretching and looking away from the screen at least once an hour is all that is needed. This will need to be done more frequently if any aspect of your workstation is not ergonomically set up. There might be occasions when this isn't always possible but, provided this is an occasional occurrence rather than the norm, this shouldn't be a problem.

You can download free software, called “Big Stretch”, from the university’s Software Control Centre (accessed through your Windows start bar) which can be set to provide periodic reminders to take a break.

You might also want to try to incorporate these [simple exercises](#), which can be done at your desk, into your screen breaks to relieve pressure on your muscles and skeleton.

### **Eye Tests**

All workers who need to use the computer for a substantial part of their work are entitled to have their regular eye test paid for by their employer. The University will normally reimburse an employee for the cost of a sight test and will also contribute up to £45, for single vision glasses, or £80, for bifocals/varifocals, where it is confirmed by the optician that they are needed solely for display screen equipment work.

The University will not reimburse employees where the glasses are also used for other activities including, but not limited to, reading, driving or watching television. You must pay the optician for the sight test and spectacles and then submit a claim, with receipt/invoice, through Agresso to be reimbursed. Check with your faculty/department administrator or safety co-ordinator before submitting a claim for eye tests or glasses.

### **Use Shortcuts**

Using keyboard shortcuts will cut down on mouse use and help to reduce the likelihood of pain in the hand and fingers of your 'mouse hand'. A quick way in to learning shortcuts for Microsoft applications such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher, or Outlook is to press and release the Alt key (to the left of the space bar). A series of letter codes will pop up on the Ribbon, and by using the keyboard to select the relevant code, a second series will pop up to take you to the action you wish to perform.

There's a short video [here](#) that demonstrates changing page layout using the Alt key sequence. Teach yourself one or two at a time and you will quickly build up a repertoire of the ones you most frequently need. You can find a fuller list of shortcuts for Word [here](#).

### **The DSE Assessment**

Once you have set up your workstation as well as you can, taking account of the advice above, you should complete your online workstation assessment. Depending on where you work and how frequently, you will need to complete an [office assessment](#), a [work from home assessment](#), or both. You will need to be connected to the university’s network to access these assessments. If you “hot-desk” you do not need to carry out an office assessment for each desk you work at. However, you will need to set up each desk location ergonomically to suit your needs.

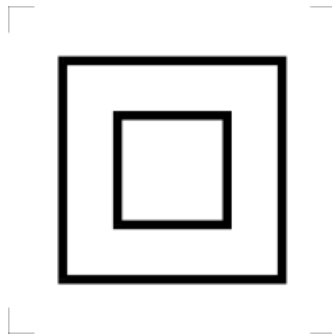
If your assessment(s) identifies any concerns or needs, then a member of SHEW will contact you to discuss further.

### **Electrical Safety when Working from Home**

If the only equipment being used at home is office type equipment, the risk to staff from an electrical fault is very low. There will usually be no requirement to carry out regular portable appliance tests (PAT) on the office equipment staff use at home provided IT policies are followed. However, some basic checks will be required, see the manager and staff actions below.

### What do Managers Need To Do?

- Ensure any electrical equipment supplied for use in people's homes is under five years old or has been PAT tested. This equipment must also have a moulded plug (one you cannot open with a screwdriver). Any equipment purchased through IT, or through university preferred suppliers will meet these requirements.
- Require your staff to **complete and record** a formal visual inspection of the equipment in use in their homes every year, the manager must maintain records of these inspections.
- Ensure that any electrical equipment supplied by the university and already in use in people's homes is under five years old, or has been PAT tested. Any equipment over five years old (such as monitors) will need to be replaced, or (if in serviceable condition) PAT tested. Departments are responsible for paying costs associated with portable appliance testing
- Equipment labelled with the below symbol is intrinsically safe and does not need a PAT test regardless of age, however a detachable power cable that the equipment may use will need testing.



### What Do Employees Need to Do?

- Perform regular user safety checks of all your electrical equipment and wires. The HSE recommend that these basic checks are carried out on electrical equipment before every use. You must stop using dangerous equipment immediately and report any faults to your line manager.
- Perform a formal annual visual inspection of your university supplied equipment, or when asked to do so by your line manager.

Employees should refer to the [online guide](#) for further details on the list of common faults associated with electrical equipment.

**If any electrical equipment is found to be damaged, then it must not be used. You should contact your line manager to arrange for a replacement.**

### Wellbeing

Remote working can affect wellbeing in two main ways:

- Loneliness and isolation. Some people can find working from home isolating if they are separated from colleagues or from an office or working environment that they are used to. This could be because they don't have the same level and degree of social and workplace interactions with others that they may be used to. Feelings of isolation can increase stress levels and bring a sense of disengagement both to work and to the university itself. This in turn can negatively affect emotional wellbeing.



- **Burnout.** One of the key issues with remote working is that it can be easy for boundaries between work and home life to become blurred. A sense of always being connected can result in remote employees working longer hours. This can be made worse by people feeling that they must contribute more because they aren't in the office. A poor work-life balance can lead to high stress levels, which ultimately can result in burnout if left unresolved.

### **Supporting Hybrid Worker Wellbeing?**

#### **What employees can do:**

**Set boundaries** – Employees should try to create clear boundaries between their work and their personal life. Where possible, working from home should be done from a fixed location and once the working day is complete, computers, laptops and other devices should be switched off.

**Take your breaks** - Working for long periods without breaks can lead to increased stress levels and poor performance and reduced productivity. Build rest breaks into your working day are important and you should take a proper lunch break (as well as screen breaks) where you do something other than work. You can book set time in your diary or change your status on Teams so that you are not disturbed during breaks.

**Stay in contact with colleagues** – working remotely doesn't mean losing contact with colleagues. Try to plan in short catch ups with colleagues to keep in touch with team members and what they are doing. This can help improve your, and your colleagues', sense of belonging. If you have any concerns about the wellbeing of team members, or anyone else from the university that you are meeting with, then tell your line manager.

**Access Wellbeing Support** - Just because you are working from home for a portion of you time, that doesn't mean you can't access university services or support networks. The University provides a free counselling for staff through our contract with Royal United Hospital. This service operates on a self-referral basis and is confidential; the university is not provided details of who is attending counselling. Your reason for accessing support does not need to be work-related. Appointments can be face-to-face or over the phone. You can find out more about this service [here](#).

As a member of university staff, you can also access support services provided by the Education Support Partnership. They provide a 24/7 telephone and email helpline. You can contact them directly by phoning 08000 562561 or by emailing [support@edsupport.org.uk](mailto:support@edsupport.org.uk).

We operate a network of [wellbeing champions](#) that provide signposting to services and networks that you might find helpful. Wellbeing champions are not counsellors, but they can point you in the direction of appropriate support. You can also talk to your [HR contacts](#) if you have any work-related concerns.

**Use our Wellbeing tools** – we have developed a range of wellbeing toolkits. These include the [Workplace Wellbeing Wheel](#). This is based on the Health and Safety Executive's "management Standards" which aims to identify potential workplace stressors. There are seven areas outlined that are associated with and recognised to impact on our health and wellbeing. Taking the time to evaluate how satisfied and content you are in these domains can help you chunk down and identify what is working well and not so well. You can use the tool to identify improvements that you want to make with regards to your work or work-life balance. It can be helpful to share results with your line manager to agree any work-related changes that you have identified as supporting your wellbeing.

Alternatively, you might want to complete an [Individual Wellbeing Action Plan](#). The purpose of this tool is to act as a reminder of what we need to do to stay well at work and identify what additional support is available. It also helps us develop an awareness of our working style, stress triggers and responses, and enables us to communicate these. This can be used reactively, for example if you are experiencing poor mental health and want to find out how a WAP can support you, or it can be used proactively to map out what needs to be in place for you to be mentally well at work.

The University provides free access to a Mindfulness app for staff. Be mindful is a clinical grade mindfulness course specifically for improving mental health. It uses a Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy approach and several academic and clinical studies have established a strong evidence base that the app can significantly reduce stress, anxiety, and depression amongst users. You can find out more information, including how to register online, [here](#).

### **What can line managers do?**

**Help staff establish work-life boundaries** - Managers can support employees by communicating the importance to “switching off”. If you see that direct reports are regularly sending emails outside of working hours, then check in with them to ensure they aren’t struggling with workload or other pressures. You can also set a good example by letting your team know that you consider your own wellbeing to be a priority – by not sending emails outside working hours (you can automatically set emails to send in working time), taking regular breaks and encouraging others to do the same.

**Set up regular one-to-ones / team meetings** – when workers are remote, you may need to work harder to maintain a strong line manager-employee relationship. Having regular one-to-ones provides your employees with a direct opportunity to turn to someone for support if they are experiencing any issues with work or workload. If you are already having regular one-to-ones, then you might want to ask people if they are frequent enough or are covering everything the employee wants to talk about.

It is important to really listen to what is being said, and to consider what may be behind any pauses in the conversation. Is the employee mentioning any pressures or anxieties or are there subjects that are being avoided? You can get insights into wellbeing through discussing work goals and progress. If things aren’t progressing as you expected, then this could be a sign that the employee is experiencing stress or burnout.

You could use one of the Wellbeing toolkits ([Workplace wellbeing wheel](#) or [Individual Wellbeing Action Plan](#)) as a way of structuring conversations

**Set realistic goals** – It can be difficult to keep track of remote workers’ workloads. This can result in people working harder and longer hours to manage workloads. However, if goals are too simple, then this can result in people losing motivation and becoming disengaged. Basing current goals on past performance can boost motivation by removing unrealistic expectations. However, it is important to keep monitoring progress so that you can make any adjustments (which could mean reducing or increasing workload) that might be required to ensure healthy stress levels.

**Signpost effectively**– Line managers are not expected to be counsellors, but they can provide effective signposting to the range of supports that are available. This could include [staff counselling services](#), [Wellbeing champions](#), [Staff networks](#), [Human Resources](#) or to resources such as the [wellbeing toolkits](#), [Be Mindful app](#), or [external sources of support](#).