

Coronavirus and mental wellbeing – Working from home

This guide has been produced to help support you working from home during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Following the [Five Ways to Wellbeing](#) and connecting with others, being active, keeping learning, giving or supporting others and taking notice of your environment can make a big difference to your mental wellbeing. [Our guidance](#) shows you how you can do this whilst following the latest Government guidelines.

As more organisations move to online working, human connections are more important than ever. Protecting the mental wellbeing of us all is really important. There are a lot of things we can do to help protect and promote our mental health and wellbeing, which applies to all ages including those of us who are working from home and/or self-isolating.

Taking the time to relax, eat well, stay hydrated and maintain healthy and active lifestyles that include good quality regular sleeping patterns (e.g. see [Every Mind Matters](#) sleep page) will also help you to support your overall wellbeing.

In addition, the [Mental Health foundation](#) have provided some simple steps to help your mental wellbeing whilst following the Governments advice. These have been used to inform this working from home guide.



Top tips for working from home

Set up a separate office space

Use a space in your home that's designated solely for work if you can. Bringing work materials into your relaxing or sleeping space can interfere with your ability to relax later on and can create mental associations that keep your mind occupied with professional obligations during your own time. See also the [Health and Safety Executive](#) guidance on display screen equipment.

Choose a good chair

Choose a comfortable, ergonomically sound chair that will keep you properly aligned throughout the day. Check out this [NHS information on how to sit correctly](#).

Get up every hour and move about

It can be easy to get stuck in your seat, especially since you feel comfortable in your space. You can try [desk yoga](#) to help you free your joints and improve your posture. Set a timer or use an app to remind you to get up and stretch once every hour, and make sure to get outside and get some fresh air if you can once a day.

Set a schedule and stick to it

It will benefit your mental health and the quality of your work if you set a schedule as if you were going into the office. Track your hours and keep yourself accountable. Don't let work bleed into your personal time, or vice versa and keep an eye on how much time you're spending on work every day.

Create your ideal environment

Working from home means you have more control over your surroundings, so make sure you maintain adequate warmth, lighting and ventilation in your work area. If a beautiful view helps you stay calm, set up your desk near a window (but avoiding any glare) or within eyesight of a picture or artwork you enjoy.

Keep the kitchen stocked with healthy snacks and meals

It can be really easy to dip into the biscuit tin, so keep temptation at bay by buying fresh, frozen or tinned fruits and vegetables if you can, and having them ready to snack on when the urge hits. This will support your positive mental health in the short and longer term.

Get showered and dressed as if you're going to your regular workplace

Staying in your pyjamas all day is likely to impact on your productivity and your ability to separate home life from work life, so put on an outfit you'd be likely wear to work.

Stay connected

It's important to have some social connection, especially in the absence of your regular co-workers. Maintaining healthy social connections improves your overall well-being and helps you stay motivated. Using apps like Teams or Skype can help us stay connected.

Returning to work after a period of sickness or caring for someone else

Some of us may have a period off work due to sickness and/or caring for someone else in your household. It is important to consider and discuss the return to work steps you need to take with your line manager. Agreeing these early on may help you to put in place the things you may need to get you back to work.

Talk to your Mental Health First Aider

If your company has trained Mental Health First Aiders or Champions, make a note of their contact details, and get in touch with them if you need to. They can use their skills to support anyone struggling with their mental wellbeing by

signposting them to the appropriate support, both in and outside of the workplace. See the [Healthy Cornwall](#) website for more information about the role, and for dates for training for people who live and/or work in Cornwall.

Speak to your HR or EAP If your organisation has this in place, talk to your Human Resources (HR), Personal/People Development (PD) or Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) who can support you remotely whilst you work from home.

Health and Wellbeing Apps

Keeping healthy and well is a priority and there are now many apps available to help improve your general wellbeing, from meditation and breathing techniques to managing emotions, and reducing the urge to self-harm. Take a look at some [NHS apps](#) which may help you with your mental well-being.

Useful links

People Hub is a telephone hotline that provides residents of Cornwall with critical information in relation to their immediate job and skills concerns.

People Hub provides: immediate information, advice, and guidance; and signposting to organisations and projects with specific expertise and delivery capacity (including other ESF projects, Council services, and voluntary and community support).

A telephone hotline **0333 0150699** is available between 10am–5pm, Monday–Friday, with an out-of-hours messaging service.

Cornwall Council's **Healthy Workplace** programme supports people who work in Cornwall to access advice, training and support to stay physical and mentally healthy at work - www.healthycornwall.org.uk

Volunteer Cornwall are a charity who support people through voluntary action. They now have an online referral form for their Coronavirus support service (for vulnerable people who need assistance during isolation) - [Volunteer Cornwall](#)

A handy guide from **Cornwall Council** which includes information about benefits and crisis grants www.cornwall.gov.uk/advice-and-benefits/benefits/benefits-and-coronavirus

The Growth Hub is offering advice to businesses affected by closure. Finds links to advice which is available on their website. www.ciosgrowthhub.com

NHS 24/7 helpline - To talk to someone about your mental wellbeing you can call the 24/7 NHS mental health telephone support, advice and triage help line - **0800 038 5300**. Support is available to anyone, regardless of age, all day every day. If you or someone you know feels they need to access urgent mental health support, they will listen to you and assess how best to help.

Outset Cornwall offers support to self-employed people in Cornwall contact rosie.laurent@outset.org to find out more.

Outlook South West provide free talking therapies for people aged 16+ and suffering with anxiety and depression. Self-referrals can be made online here: www.cornwallft.nhs.uk/outlook-south-west or by calling **(01208) 871905**; At this time any therapy being delivered will be via telephone or online platform.

Pentreath are a charity in Cornwall who promote good mental health through personal development, education and employment. www.pentreath.co.uk

Valued Lives is a mental health crisis service in Cornwall www.valuedlives.co.uk

Cornwall Bereavement Network provide a list of charities and services able to support those bereaved, from any cause and any age - www.cornwallbereavementnetwork.org

'We are with you' for information about drugs, alcohol and mental health **01872263001** or visit www.wearewithyou.org.uk/services/cornwall-truro

Safe Futures provide information for those affected by domestic abuse, sexual violence and those demonstrating abusive behaviours. Call **0300 777 4777** or visit www.saferfutures.org.uk

Citizens Advice (CA) Cornwall offer free, independent, confidential and impartial advice. Text ADVICE to **78866** or for debt issues text DEBT to 78866 and CA will call you back within 48 hours (excluding weekends). Or call **03444-111444** Mondays to Fridays from 10am to 4pm www.citizensadvicecornwall.org.uk

Community Energy Plus is a Cornish charity which provides energy advice and practical help for vulnerable householders in Cornwall to achieve warmer, healthier homes. Call on Freephone **0800 954 1956** or **01872 245566** or email: advice@cep.org.uk