# Working from Home - Prompt Sheet

## January 2021

### Introduction

This is a set of questions to facilitate a discussion between a Senior Leader or manager and a team member who is working at home. The questions below are a guide to enable that conversation. You can simply use it as a Prompt Sheet, and if you wish you can capture comments along the way, which may help if there are actions and steps that can be taken to better enable the individual to work more effectively and have an improved work / life balance as a consequence.

With this Prompt Sheet, there is no mandate to capture the discussion formally or share it further. The prompt sheet has been requested by managers and staff within SCC to aid their discussions around working at home. This will help ensure that your manager can continue to support and protect your safety, health and wellbeing at work during this pandemic and help you where they can.

**School staff who are unable to work within school premises due to shielding or other reasons agreed by the school, may find this useful.**

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| **Equipment and set up at home** |
| 1. Do you have an office room or office desk to work from?
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| 1. Do you use a dining table, folding, convertible or makeshift desk as a primary alternative to an office desk?
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| 1. If you don’t have a dedicated office space / room are you able to pack away your work equipment at the end of the working day?
 |
| 1. Do you have an office chair or a chair with some adjustability to it (height, tilt, swivel)

If not what do you do? (e.g. an item with limited adjustability - dining chair, sofa, bed) |
| 1. Do you have enough leg room and desk space free of clutter?
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| 1. Are your primary desk and chair roughly set at the correct height for you?
 |
| 1. Do you have a separate keyboard and mouse you can use easily (with still having enough room)? Does this include a laptop stand?
 |
| 1. Would an additional monitor be of benefit for your work at home?
 |
| 1. Do you have any significant equipment barriers for home working? (e.g. need a desk or you have poor internet connection).
 |
| 1. How would you describe your physical work environment currently? (e.g., workstation/ noise / natural light etc).
 |
| **Comments:** |
| **Working arrangements** |
| 1. What are your current working patterns? (e.g. 7-12 and 2-5)
 |
| 1. Do you take a daily lunch break away from your screen? If not, why not?
 |
| 1. How are you managing to take additional regular breaks during your working days?
 |
| 1. Have you explored installing an app on your work computer which encourages taking breaks?
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| 1. Are you experiencing meetings overrunning or being planned back to back, resulting in you going from meeting to meeting without breaks? If so, do you have any ideas about how we can improve that?
 |
| **Comments:** |

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| **Wellbeing and support** |
| 1. Are you able to receive support from colleagues remotely? If so, in what ways? Similarly, are you able to offer support to colleagues?
 |
| 1. How would you rate your current energy levels?

(Maybe on a scale of 1-10, from never tired to always tired?) |
| 1. Do you experience feelings of isolation? And how often?
 |
| 1. Are you aware of any of the mental health and wellbeing support available through your school, and from Suffolk County Council?
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| **Comments:** |

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| **Summary** |
| 1. Overall, how satisfied are you with your current working from home arrangements? (Maybe on a scale of 1-10, from very satisfied to very dissatisfied)
 |
| 1. Is there anything else you would like to share?
 |
| **Comments:** |

### Guidance to Senior Leaders / Managers:

In having the discussion, you will be able to better understand the current constraints and pressure on your staff and to explore and follow up with them any further adjustments or additional support/changes may be possible to assist. Follow up questions you could ask include:

* + What changes, if any, would help you work more easily from home?
	+ Are there any adjustments in your pattern of work/contracted hours of work that could assist?
	+ What changes that can be made would help to improve your mental health and wellbeing?
	+ Would it be helpful to have a further conversation with me about your mental wellbeing, either now or at a later date?

Also:

* DSE Self Assessments should be encouraged and undertaken and are available on Suffolk Learning
* Guidance on supporting the mental health and wellbeing of staff is available Suffolk Learning, and from your SEO / Education Resolution Officers / HR

### Computer workstations at home during Coronavirus outbreak:

Try and follow the general advice for working at home and mobile working as best as you can. Try and recreate a normal workstation, with a separate monitor and keyboard, as best as you can. You need to accept that it may not be perfect, and we may need to accept compromises.

If staff do not already have them at home, peripherals such as mouse and keyboards should be borrowed from the school. Just let your manager know as if staff are shielding these may need to be delivered for them, or picked up by someone’s support bubble – permission may need to be granted for this. Schools should keep a record of what was borrowed to ensure it comes back again.

If staff do not have a space for a proper office chair, then they should make do as best as they can with whatever they have and use cushions etc. to get comfortable.

Setting up with a separate monitor may be cumbersome if the space you are working at is a temporary space, e.g., a kitchen or dining table. Using your laptop as the monitor, with a laptop riser and separate keyboard and mouse, is a lot quicker and easier to set up and take down than using a separate monitor, although a laptop screen is a bit smaller.

If staff like to work with two screens, you can use your monitor as the second screen, either side to side, with a laptop riser; or try using the laptop as the keyboard with the laptop screen as a secondary screen, beneath the main screen. It follows the spirit of the relevant Regulations, if not the letter of them.

Avoid using the laptop alone unless you have either a separate screen, or a laptop riser, separate keyboard and mouse.

### Useful Resources:

**Computer Workstation and Working from Home advice on Suffolk Learning** <https://www.suffolklearning.co.uk/leadership-staff-development/health-safety-wellbeing/display-screen-equipment-health-and-safety>

**Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Working from Home information** <https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/home.htm>

**Chartered Institute of Ergonomics and Human Factors – Home Working and Staying** **Healthy** Infographic. A useful source of information for all to consider which is signposted by the HSE:

<https://www.ergonomics.org.uk/common/Uploaded%20files/Publications/CIEHF-Working-from-Home-Infographic.pdf>

**Stress and Mental Health Management on Suffolk Learning:**

[https://www.suffolklearning.co.uk/leadership-staff-development/health-safety-wellbeing/stress,-mental-health-and-wellbeing](https://www.suffolklearning.co.uk/leadership-staff-development/health-safety-wellbeing/stress%2C-mental-health-and-wellbeing)

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