

## Health & Safety, HR & Compliance while Working from Home



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## Disclaimer

*This white paper is not definitive for all workplaces and Health & Safety, HR and Compliance responsibilities/ duties vary depending on the type and size of businesses. This white paper is to be used as rough guidance only. iHASCO assumes no responsibility for errors or omissions in the contents of this document.*

## An introduction to working from home

There are many organisations that have started to embrace the idea of telecommuting, or more commonly referred to as working from home or 'remote working'.

In fact, [HSO<sub>1</sub>](#) predicts that by 2020 50% of the world will be working from home.

Like most things, there are many pros and cons to working from home, and it is down to an organisation to decide whether remote working would be suitable for their employees. However, there is evidence that suggests the pros outway the cons. We'll get to that later.

Firstly, let's take a look at what is meant by "working from home" and how it differs from lone working.

## What is homeworking or 'remote working'?



*"Telecommuting, also called telework, teleworking, working from home, mobile work, remote work, and flexible workplace, is a work arrangement in which employees do not commute or travel to a central place of work"*

- Wikipedia

So, you'd be considered a "home worker" if, quite simply, you perform day-to-day work from your home.

But there are several types of home workers. They go as follows:

1. Regular partial homeworkers - staff that regularly work from home either in agreement informally with their manager, or have it written into their contract of employment.
2. Ad-hoc homeworkers - staff who choose to work at home occasionally and with no established or identifiable pattern - and with nothing written into the contract acknowledging or formalising this.
3. Full time homeworkers - staff who permanently work from home, and have this working arrangement agreed in their contract of employment.



Working at home is a bit of a 'marmite' issue for both employers and employees. Some people still believe that work is best done in the office,

and this can be true for certain job roles. However, the opportunity to work at home can bring enormous benefits to both employee and employer.

But should your organisation employ any type of homeworker, it is essential that you have a strong understanding of how your homeworking employees go about their day-to-day tasks, not just to help you identify the quality of performance, but also so you know they are doing these tasks safely.

## What's the difference between working from home and lone working?

Lone workers are those who work by themselves without close or direct supervision. Anybody who works alone, including contractors, self-employed people, and employees, is classed as a lone worker. This includes homeworkers.

So, lone working is an umbrella term that covers a variety of different types of workers, including cleaners, social workers, estate agents, and those working from home.

## Why working from home shouldn't be a problem for most

You may be wondering how working from home would impact your employee's productivity?

Well, new research by [YouGov Omnibus](#)<sup>2</sup> reveals that 20% of HR managers believe that staff work to a slightly higher standard at home than they do in the office, and a further 7% believe they work to a "much higher" standard.

Even if the evidence for increased productivity from working from home isn't enough to convince you to allow it, 49% of HR decision makers think that it has no effect at all on output.

It may also fill you with confidence to know that 70% of organisations actively encourage employees to work from home.

Even some hugely successful organisations including Apple, Amazon, Microsoft, Google and Facebook are encouraging staff to work from home and not to go into their offices, in light of recent events.

Whilst it would appear that the negative stigma attached to working from home is gradually starting to fade, 27% of employers still actively discourage working from home.



## Questions you might want to ask yourself before allowing homeworking

- Is home working for my staff feasible or even possible?
- Where will the individual be working? Is it suitable for them?
- Do they have the right equipment and workstation set up?
- Will they have the proper safeguards in place to ensure information is not at risk?
- Does the individual have a medical condition or injury that requires accommodation?

## What we can learn from 37Signals and Basecamp

Jason Fried and David Heinemeier Hansson, founders of 37Signals and [Basecamp](#)<sup>3</sup>, published a book back in 2013 called "[Remote: Office Not Required](#)"<sup>4</sup>, which is all about their experience of running an organisation with an entirely remote workforce.

Basecamp offers a project management and team communication platform that is now used by over 3 million people and is now valued at over \$100 billion. What's so impressive about Basecamp? They only have around 50 staff, all of which have the complete freedom to live and work wherever they want. Their team is built up of staff that are spread out across 32 different cities around the world!



An entire company that is seemingly thriving from allowing employees to work from home? For some, it doesn't seem feasible, but the reality is, in this day and age, it is relatively simple.

## The benefits of working from home

While not all businesses and employees have the ability to work from home, there are many benefits to working from home for those that have the option. Many employers fear that employees working from home means a lack of communication, additional costs or difficulty in monitoring performance. However, what many don't realise is that there are many benefits of working from home for both employers and employees...

## Employee Benefits

### More productive

A [Stanford study](#)<sup>5</sup> found that remote workers took fewer sick days and breaks and they were 13% more productive than their counterparts working in an office. This is down to a combination of things, many listed below. As well as this, 85% of over 15,000 global business

confirmed that greater location flexibility lead to an increase in productivity ([IWG Global Workplace Survey](#)<sup>6</sup>).

### Flexible schedule

Working from home may allow you to fit other things into your day around your working life. Your working hours should not be reduced, but they may start or end at a different time or break patterns may be different.

### Your own environment

You might be one of those people that finds it easier to work in total silence or with music on in the background! When you work in your own space at home, you can tailor your working environment to your own taste.

### Reduced office distractions

While office environments have many positive aspects, but with a large number of people, there are more opportunities for distractions. In fact, [75% of people](#)<sup>7</sup> choose to work remotely because there are fewer distractions.

### Money saver

If your workplace is an hour down the M6 or you have to get 2 trains and a tube to work, working from home can reduce travel costs. You may also reduce the amount you spend on lunches if you're ever tempted by the food van that comes round your office! Not to mention the reduced costs in child care, child care may not be eliminated but the hours it is required for may be reduced.

### More time with loved ones

If you do something similar to the above, then the reduced time spent travelling can also be used to spend at home with loved ones.



## Employer Benefits

### Improved Employee Retention

Providing employees with the choice to work where and when they want, means that employers may see an increase in employee retention. [76% of respondents](#)<sup>8</sup> said they would be more loyal to their employers if they had flexible work options.

### Employer money saver

Not to mention the costs employers might save from rent (the need for a smaller office), electricity, water, property insurance, office snacks, office supplies, and much more!

### Employees might seek employers that offer remote working

Homeworking is becoming a sought after benefit for those job hunting, for an abundance of reasons. But those offering this opportunity might find they have a higher interest in job applications and open themselves to a wider talent pool.

### Environmental Benefits

As an employer, there are many benefits of caring about environmental sustainability such as; saving money, improving their images and holding onto employees. What's more, 54 million tonnes of greenhouse gas that could be reduced each year if those with remote compatible jobs worked at home half the time ([Merchant Savvy](#)<sup>9</sup>).

### Hire the best

By allowing remote working you can expand your search pool when you are looking to fill a new role. Depending on the role, this might even expand your employee pool to anywhere in the world?!

However, just because they are not in the office, employees still need the relevant Health & Safety, HR and Compliance training, even when they are working from home. That's the beauty of eLearning - it can be accessed from any device, in any place at any time. One of the two most popular bundles for homeworkers are our [Training for Remote Workers](#)<sup>10</sup> and [Mental Health and Wellbeing Bundles](#)<sup>11</sup>, but there are more considerations when it comes to health and safety and compliance when working from home...



## Health & Safety and Compliance considerations when working from home

### Are there different Health & Safety and Compliance considerations for homeworkers?

Whilst working from home might present new hazards and risks, considerations shouldn't sway too much away from the same areas of consideration of risks that a workplace might have. For example, in an office, a responsible person might highlight general Health & Safety, Fire Awareness, DSE and GDPR/Cyber Security as potential risks and then sort out plans (and training) accordingly.

These same risks will be present in a home working situation but



they'll more than likely present themselves in different ways.

### Who is responsible for the Health & Safety of homeworkers?

*Employers are required to protect the health, safety and welfare of homeworkers who are employees. If you employ homeworkers you should carry out a risk assessment of the work activities and take appropriate measures to reduce any associated risks.*

- The HSE



## Health & Safety and Compliance considerations for homeworkers

### DSE

DSE (Display Screen Equipment) is all about looking at the equipment you work with and ensuring that your workstation and the display screen equipment is set up correctly to promote good posture and decrease the chances of inducing musculoskeletal injuries.

DSE and working from home is no different. Employers should encourage best DSE practices and do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure that employees' workstation setups at home are suitable. This might include:

- Refreshing [DSE Training](#)<sup>12</sup>
- Providing a risk assessment for home working
- Making use of an online [DSE Assessment Tool](#)<sup>13</sup>



### Cyber Security and GDPR

Good Cyber Security and Data Protection is crucial in any business compliance strategy, but how does home working affect this? Whilst software and systems may still be secure regardless of where you're working from, there are other things to consider, such as staff taking sensitive documents from the workplace to their homes, their own network security and the security of sensitive documents when working from home.

Employers should encourage best Cyber Security and Data Protection practices and do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure that employees still work towards compliance with legislation. This might include:

- Refreshing [Cyber Security](#)<sup>14</sup> and [GDPR training](#)<sup>15</sup>
- Providing a risk assessment for home working
- Ensuring that staff password-protect files and use two-factor authentication



## General Health & Safety

Things like [Fire Awareness](#)<sup>16</sup>, [Slips, Trips and Falls](#)<sup>17</sup> and [Manual Handling](#)<sup>18</sup> should all be considered too. We offer a Health & Safety course specifically designed for homeworkers that includes information on:

- Avoiding slips, trips and falls
- Fire safety awareness
- Promoting good lifting technique
- Electrical safety
- Setting up home workstations correctly
- Home security
- Work confidentiality
- First aid



## Protecting your mental health

It is known that home workers can suffer feelings of loneliness and isolation, which in turn can cause more significant issues to their mental health and wellbeing.

Therefore employers should be mindful of this and take it into account when managing homeworking employees and providing advice.

You need to take care of your mental health as you would with your physical health. Suggesting the following ideas to employees can be useful to benefit their general wellbeing, when regularly working from home. It also offers suggestions as to what employers can do to provide support.

### Stay connected with people

Just because someone works at home it doesn't mean they shouldn't have regular contact with their colleagues like you would in an office. You could video call a colleague and have a coffee and chat during a break. It doesn't need to be task focussed; it can be an opportunity to see a friendly face and have a chat about anything from the weather to your evening plans. Likewise managers shouldn't always focus on only ever discussing work and deadlines. Ask how someone in your team is and really listen to them.

If you are homeworking you should also use your lunch and break to catch up with friends and family over a quick call or meet a friend for a lunchtime walk around the park. Homeworking doesn't mean you should have limited contact with others.

### Avoid negative thoughts

It's very easy to talk yourself down when you are sitting alone without the immediate support of your colleagues or people around you. Negative thoughts can come from worrying about a specific project to something in your home life or even concerns over something in the future. Negative thoughts are draining and will not help productivity or wellbeing. Agree to give yourself a break from negative thoughts or challenge them and consider if your thought is accurate, what is the worst that can happen or think about any solutions that could help you feel differently. Employers can offer coaching. If an employee asks you for your help, you can ask the following questions with genuine interest: "what do you think?" or "what would you do?" and allow them to think about the situation - they may already know the answer!

### Have breaks from social media

Generally, this is a good rule of thumb anyway, as it can be refreshing to get away from social media as it can be consuming. It is important to remember that how things are portrayed on social media are not always the reality and at times distressing news stories may also get a lot of coverage and play on your mind if it is spread across the many social media channels. Of course social media has its place but it is a good idea to put a time limit on it and be conscious to not continually check social media.

There are many things that can be a substitute for time spent on social media. For example, practice yoga, do breathing exercises, go for a walk, read a book etc... These are just a handful of great ways to relieve stress and anxiety, but different things will work best for different people.

An alternative way to control the messages you are reading on social media platforms if you feel you are becoming overwhelmed by it is:

- Muting keywords which might be triggering on Twitter
- Unfollow or mute accounts
- Mute WhatsApp groups
- Hide Facebook posts and feeds that make you feel anxious or unhappy



### Avoid burnout

Burnout is a state of exhaustion, whether it be emotional, physical, and mental, and it is caused by excessive and prolonged stress. It can occur when you're feeling overwhelmed, emotionally drained, and unable to meet constant demands.

It is crucial that you homeworkers give themselves some downtime every day and strike a balance between work and home life.

[AnxietyUK](#)<sup>19</sup> suggests practicing the "Apple" technique to deal with anxiety and worries.

Acknowledge: Notice and acknowledge the uncertainty as it comes to mind.

Pause: Don't react as you normally do. Don't react at all. Pause and breathe.

Pull back: Tell yourself this is just the worry talking, and this apparent need for certainty is not helpful and not necessary. It is only a thought or feeling. Don't believe everything you think. Thoughts are not statements or facts.

Let go: Let go of the thought or feeling. It will pass. You don't have to respond to them. You might imagine them floating away in a bubble or cloud.

Explore: Explore the present moment, because right now, in this moment, all is well. Notice your breathing and the sensations of your breathing. Notice the ground beneath you. Look around and notice what you see, what you hear, what you can touch, what you can smell. Right now. Then shift your focus of attention to something else - on what you need to do, on what you were doing before you noticed the worry, or do something else - mindfully with your full attention.

### Talk to someone

It's ok to not be ok. Sometimes opening up and having a conversation with someone can help you feel better if you are struggling with your mental health but it is a difficult thing to do. iHASCO have Mental First Aiders (MHFA). Generally, the purpose of a MHFA is to be a point of contact for employees if they are experiencing emotional distress or suffering in silence with mental health problems, such as stress, anxiety or depression, for example.



Mental Health First Aiders are trained to listen. They are trained to spot the early signs of mental ill-health in others. They are taught to confidently signpost someone to appropriate support, both internal and external, and they are equipped to deal with emergencies too - such as psychosis, thoughts of suicide, or attempted suicide.

It is important to note however - that MHFAs are not qualified therapists/counsellors/psychiatrists. They cannot advise, but they can listen and offer support options. They are trained to:

- Maintain confidentiality (unless someone's physical safety or life is at risk)
- Spot early signs of mental ill-health
- Assess the risk of self-harm or suicide
- Listen to what people are saying without judgement
- Know when to contact the emergency services (if required)
- Care for their own physical safety and mental wellbeing

- Know how to start a conversation with someone who may be experiencing emotional or mental ill health
- Encourage people to use additional support that's available, including internal and external support systems
- Complete critical incident documents where necessary

[MHFA England](#)<sup>20</sup> provide Mental Health First Aid training courses which employers may want to consider sending one or two selected employees on. Employers may want to consider the following before sending staff on the course:

- Do the individuals want to learn about mental health and help others with theirs?
- Will they be able to maintain the role alongside their current role?

## Practical tips for homeworkers

For many out there working from home is just 'another day at the office' and they have developed a good routine to be an effective homeworker.

This being said, some top tips to work efficiently, keep spirits high and navigate the possible pitfalls of remote working are listed below and can be shared with your homeworkers.

### #1 Get Up & Get dressed

It's easy if you're working at home to be tempted to put your trackies on, or keep your PJ's on, or work on the sofa from your laptop, but this will alter the way you approach your work. By getting up, showering, getting dressed it will prepare you for work like a 'normal' office-based working day. You need a routine, just as you would working from the office.



Getting showered and dressed will disassociate you from the clothes you associate from rest and relaxation of home life too. When work finishes, you are then able to get dressed in your relaxed clothes, this may help you to feel as if your working day is over.

Establishing a good routine will help you manage your working day to stop there being blurred lines between work and home.

### #2 Separate work from home

Darren Miller - iHASCO's Senior Developer, works from home 4 days a week and offered his top tip:

*"My number one tip is to separate your work environment from your domestic one as much as you can. If space is tight then arrange a suitable table as a working desk in the morning and at the end of the day put it all out of sight."*



It's easy to just set up at the nearest available space to you (your dining room table perhaps) but aim to create a separate 'working space', this might be another room where you can go to work or it might be that you set up and take down your workstation each day. Opening a window in the room you are working in will help fresh air circulate so the air isn't too stuffy, which will help with concentration.



### #3 Establish boundaries

If you have other people at home with you while you're working at home, try and find a separate space or different room from the other people at home. If you don't have a separate space you could try working with headphones or your back to where the distractions are. Or set break times where you can be interrupted.

This includes minimising distraction e.g. getting your phones out of the way!

### #4 Go outside

If you've followed our first tip, you will be dressed in clothes you would be happy to be seen outside in, so this may encourage you to take a break outside during your day - a quick walk to the shops maybe? Take the dog for a walk? Fresh air is key. A change of perspective, scenery or company might be good for any tasks you're struggling with or mental blocks!

### #5 Keep in contact

Here at iHASCO we use [Slack](#)<sup>21</sup> to communicate with each other in groups and direct messages to individuals. We use Google Hangouts Meet to have group meetings and catch-ups with our team members. Managers should also be regularly checking in with employees, not just about work, but about wellbeing too whether by phone, email or a face-to-face meeting every now and again. It is best to use a variety of communication methods for homeworkers and it shouldn't be restricted to telephone calls and emails.

Also go to company social events and the occasional optional office meeting so you can get to know your colleagues better and feel part of the team.

### #6 Take Breaks and socialise

Whether it's running up and down the stairs, hanging the washing up, stepping outside, stretching, breathing exercises, make sure you take regular short breaks and get away from

the screen!

And don't forget to take a lunch break, make yourself some food. And stay hydrated over the day (this will ensure that you regularly have to get up from your desk). Ensure that your break or lunch is separate from your workstation and you actually use your break to do something non-work related!

We all need to talk to others, speaking to no one all day can be isolating! Try not to just stick to phone calls, video calls and seeing other people will allow you to check in more thoroughly e.g. see if someone looks stressed or worn out, this is particularly helpful for managers and employers rather than emails and instant messages.

### **#7 Prepare Food the same way, eat healthy snacks and keep hydrated!**

If you meal prep on a Sunday night or make a packed lunch in the evening for the next day then keep up your routines! You don't want to have to take time out of your working day, even if you are at home, to make yourself lunch if you don't usually! Ensure you have healthy snacks to hand, such as fruit and keep hydrated throughout the day with plenty of water.



### **#8 Conduct Client Meetings Professionally**

If you are meeting with clients over a video call and you answer in your coffee-stained school leavers hoodie it's not going to set a very good impression! You should treat it the same as a face to face client meeting. Other team members can be invited to the video call if necessary (but bear in mind the greater number of people the more difficult it is to conduct a meeting where everyone can be heard and get their point across) and it can be helpful to set an agenda if there are a lot of points to cover. Make eye contact with those on the screen as you would face to face and also do not get distracted looking at other information on your screen or phone if it has nothing to do with the meeting.

### **#9 Take Sick days**

If you are unwell, for whatever reason, it can be tempting to power through and continue to work from home. But you should take the time that you need to recover otherwise you might make yourself more unwell and in turn, lose out on more working hours. Make sure you are aware of your company's sickness and absence policy.

### **#10 Work-Life Balance**

A good work-life balance is essential regardless of working at home or in an office. So, good planning, time management, communication, and prioritisation are key to finding that balance. Employers can provide time management training to homeworkers to build on these skills and help homeworkers manage their time effectively.

## Best forms of communication

Working in an office environment opens the opportunities to freely communicate with the people around you or even calling one another from office floors!

Everyone knows that communication in a business is key. So, keeping open lines of communication is one of the ways in which you can try and maintain some 'normality' while working from home. Although working from home can present a few hurdles when it comes to communicating with one another, there are many technologies out there that can assist us in communicating with one another. So there is now little excuse to stop communicating once you are not all in the same building.



*Look at those who've succeeded with remote working, and it becomes clear that it needs two things to thrive, and both boil down to good communication.*

*- Nigel Davies, Forbes*

Here are some possible forms of communication (a lot of which we are using while we are remotely working!):

### Video Calls

Sometimes a conversation needs to be had face to face.

#### [Google Hangouts Meet](#)<sup>22</sup>:

A lot of our iHASCO Teams have been using this to have our daily catch ups and check-ins. We're also using this for any face to face meetings we would normally do in the office!

#### [FaceTime](#)<sup>23</sup>:

For those with Apple phones/laptops/iPads you can FaceTime each other.

#### [Skype](#)<sup>24</sup>:

Skype enables both audio and video calls, messaging, screen sharing, and the ability to record skype calls too.

#### [Zoom](#)<sup>25</sup>:

The free version allows up to 100 people to join a video meeting at one time. Zoom allows for

video meetings, webinars, enables collaborations for conference rooms, phone calls, group chats and file sharing.

#### [WebEx](#)<sup>26</sup>:

Webex is hosted by cisco and provides video conferencing, screen sharing, team collaborations, webinars, online training, and messenger.

#### [Microsoft Teams](#)<sup>27</sup>:

Much like the rest you can video call, conference with up to 10,000 people, call and collaborate from anywhere! Unlike some of the above, this service does require a fee.



## Phone Calls

#### Your phone (duh!):

Make use of your phone while you're on breaks to catch up with people or simply call a colleague or manager if there is something you need to check in with, question, etc. Ensuring there is an open line of communication can stop errors being made.

#### [Mobile Data calling](#)<sup>28</sup>:

Lots of providers now offer 4G calling. This is perfect for those who might not live somewhere with the best signal!

## Group Messengers

A lot of the video call apps above provide an instant messaging service too, but here are some more...

#### [Slack](#)<sup>21</sup>:

We use Slack here at iHASCO to communicate with one another on an individual basis and as a group! It's great to support one another in achievements both big and small and enables us to keep up to date with any changes. You can also have one to one conversations and share files/images/folders with each other.

#### Email:

Emails can be one on one or a group email!

#### [GroupMe](#)<sup>29</sup>:

This app works on every device, iOS, Android & Windows, it also works for people without smartphones as it can work via SMS.

#### [Whatsapp](#)<sup>30</sup>:

You can have group messages of up to 256 people, as well as one to one messages. What a lot of people like about this service is that you can see when your message has been



delivered and when someone has read it (if they have that feature turned on). You can also have video/phone calls on here too.

## As well as various other helpful tools

### Shared Drives:

Google Drive, OneDrive, Dropbox, the list goes on, but being able to share projects, comment on one another's work and share with multiple people at the same time allows you to share a piece of work the same way that you would if you were all in the same building. You could also access the same documents while on a group phone call with each other to discuss a piece of work.

### Calendars:

It might not be practical to have a giant calendar of 70 team members and what they're doing. But sharing calendar invites with each other to book meetings into each others days is a great way to ensure you don't miss a meeting!

As you can see, there is an endless list of services that employers can provide their employees with now that they're working at home. But the main thing to remember is, that no matter how you do it, open lines of communication with your employees is key. You should endeavour to talk to your team(s) just as much as you would if you were all in the office together - whichever medium you choose to use!



## Documents, Policies & Legislation

Legislation states that employers have a duty of care to employees and to any visitors wherever your workplace is. Managers should be clear on any safety issues and ensure employees follow any procedures put in place for homeworking. Regardless of the fact that it's the law - it just makes sense!

Some considerations include:

### Health & Safety Policy

Your company will have a health and safety policy. This must be a written policy if your company has 5 or more employees. Your company Health and Safety Law Poster will be in a prominent position in your workplace. If someone always works from home, or rarely goes on-site, you must provide them with a leaflet or health and safety card, containing the same information as the Health and Safety Law Poster.

### [The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#)<sup>31</sup>

Although homeworkers do not travel to a fixed place of work, The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 must be applied to homeworkers to ensure their safety.

### [The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations](#)<sup>32</sup>

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations or MHSWR requires employers to carry out risk assessments of a homeworkers environment, this should identify any risks and allow the employer to control them, including DSE assessments and lone working (e.g. if they go to visit a client at another site).

### [The Health and Safety \(Display Screen Equipment\) Regulations of 1992](#)<sup>33</sup>

These regulations stipulate that all employees are provided with adequate health and safety training in the use of any workstation upon which they may be required to work. Employers should perform health and safety risk assessments of workstations to ensure health and safety risks relating to using DSE are minimised.



### **Homeworking Policy**

A company needs a clear homeworking policy so both employers and employees know what is expected and how the arrangement will work. This policy can cover employees who already work from home but be used to determine if homeworking requests are feasible. The policy will differ depending on the type and size of the organisation but needs to take into account whether homeworking is practical for the business to operate successfully. The policy should be created through discussions with employees and any third parties such as trade unions if applicable. Smaller firms may just confirm homeworking for individuals in writing but it is still a good idea to have a policy. The policy should also be reviewed from time to time.

### **How we've been using our own documents and policy LMS add-on to share WFH policies and Coronavirus statements with staff**

In uncertain times like these, you need to make sure that staff have read and understood important documents and policies.

Two that spring to mind and are probably relevant to most organisations given current events are working from home policies and Coronavirus statements.

Here at iHASCO, we've been using our very own documents and policies module to make sure staff have read and understood our policies.

It's by far the easiest way of communicating policies and eliminates the need for printing them or emailing them around to all of your employees and worrying that someone won't have read them properly or signed them.

Learn more about that [here](#)<sup>34</sup>.

## Working From Home Checklist

*Disclaimer - this checklist is not a definitive list and Health & Safety responsibilities/duties vary depending on the type and size of businesses. This checklist is to be used as rough guidance only. iHASCO assumes no responsibility for omissions in the contents of this document.*

Task	Status	Completion Date
Is the employee's job suitable for home working?		
Does the employee(s) have the correct IT equipment (i.e laptop, mouse, keyboard)?		
Does the homeworker know how to safely/correctly set up their work station?		
Are your employers aware that they should take regular breaks from their screen as normal and follow best DSE practices?		
Have your employees read relevant policies such as a working from home policy?		
Do the homeworkers have cyber security and GDPR measures in place?		
Does the homeworker have an emergency point of contact?		
Have you got measures in place to keep in touch with the homeworkers?		
Have the homeworkers completed essential training courses?		

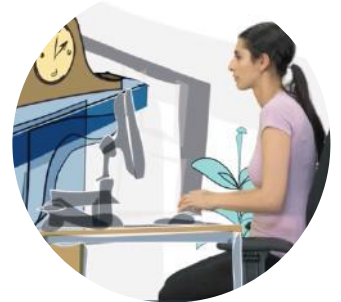
## Is the employee's job suitable for home working?

For some roles and organisations, remote work might be impossible. With that said, an employer can refuse an application if they have a good reason for doing so.

If you do choose to refuse a flexible working application, as an employer, you must inform the employee that you've rejected their application.

Employers can reject an application for any of the following reasons:

- extra costs that will damage the business
- the work cannot be reorganised among other staff
- people cannot be recruited to do the work
- flexible working will affect quality and performance
- the business will not be able to meet customer demand
- there's a lack of work to do during the proposed working times
- the business is planning changes to the workforce
- work physically cannot be done from home



If the reason for rejection doesn't fall under the bullet points listed above, then the job should be able to be completed from home.

## Does the employee(s) have the correct IT equipment (i.e laptop/mouse/keyboard)?

Have you supplied the employee with the correct equipment they need to do their job competently?

If not, you may need to order them new equipment, ask them to collect their equipment from the office, or ask them to use their personal equipment.

## Does the homeworker know how to safely/correctly set up their work station?

Good DSE practice shouldn't stop just because your employees are out of the office.

Your employees should be made aware of how to properly set up a workstation and understand how to avoid common injuries from DSE like musculoskeletal disorders.

Our [Online DSE Training](#)<sup>12</sup> course offers this information to employees in a short, easy-to-digest online course.

## Are your employers aware that they should take regular breaks from their screen as normal and follow best DSE practices?

It is recommended that employees take a 5 minute break from their DSE at least once an hour. Additionally, if an employee doesn't have the correct/appropriate work equipment, breaks should be taken every 25 mins to stretch.

The HSE suggests that short, frequent breaks are better than less frequent longer breaks, so a 5-10 minute break after 50-60 minutes is better than a 20 minute break every 3 hours.

Employees must be made aware of these recommendations so that they reduce their chances of injuring themselves from straining, poor posture, or other common issues from DSE.



### Have your employees read relevant policies such as a working from home policy?

Your organisation should have a policy for homeworkers that outlines both the employers and the employees rights & responsibilities when it comes to working from home.

Through our handy [Documents & Policies](#)<sup>35</sup> feature, you can upload policies like this to your LMS and make it required reading for all staff that it applies to.

### Do the homeworkers have cyber security and GDPR measures in place?

Homeworkers should be given security measures to reduce the chance of there being a data breach whilst they are working away from security measures within the office.

This could include anything from anti-virus software, to two-factor authentication to log in to private accounts. But the employee should be made aware of all measures that are in place.

### Does the homeworker have an emergency point of contact?

It is essential that those who are working from home have an emergency point of contact in case an emergency arises at home.

This is usually the employees line manager, or whoever they would normally report to.

### Have you got measures in place to keep in touch with the homeworkers?

There are many ways that employers are able to keep in touch with their employees when they are working from home.

Here are some possible forms of communication:

- [Google Hangouts Meet](#)<sup>22</sup>
- [Skype](#)<sup>24</sup>
- [Microsoft Teams](#)<sup>27</sup>
- Your phone
- [Slack](#)<sup>21</sup>

We list a few other options on our [blog](#)<sup>36</sup>!

## Have the homeworkers completed essential training courses?

There are various training courses that homeworkers should be undertaking in order to protect both themselves and the organisation. Here's what we recommend:

### Health & Safety for Homeworkers

Things like Fire Awareness, Slips, Trips and Falls and Manual Handling should all be considered too. We offer a Health & Safety course specifically designed for homeworkers that includes information on:

- Avoiding slips, trips and falls
- Fire safety awareness
- Promoting good lifting technique
- Electrical safety
- Setting up home workstations correctly
- Home security
- Work confidentiality
- First aid



### DSE

DSE and working from home is no different. Employers should encourage best DSE practices and do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure that employees' workstation setups at home are suitable. This might include:

- Refreshing [DSE Training](#)<sup>12</sup>
- Providing a risk assessment for home working
- Making use of an online [DSE Assessment Tool](#)<sup>13</sup>.

### GDPR & Cyber Security

Good Cyber Security and Data Protection is crucial in any business compliance strategy, but how does home working affect this? Whilst software and systems may still be secure regardless of where you're working from, there are other things to consider, such as staff taking sensitive documents from the workplace to their homes, their own network security and the security of sensitive documents when working from home.

Employers should encourage best Cyber Security and Data Protection practices and do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure that employees still work towards compliance with legislation. This might include:

- Refreshing [Cyber Security](#)<sup>14</sup> and [GDPR training](#)<sup>15</sup>
- Providing a risk assessment for home working
- Ensuring that staff password-protect files and use two-factor authentication

## How iHASCO can help your organisation

We hope you have found this white paper helpful, but remember we're only an email or a phone call away should you need extra help or support!

We are a market-leading provider of Online Health & Safety, HR and Business Compliance eLearning and have helped over 10,000 organisations across the UK with their workplace training.

We've been providing various industries with high-quality eLearning for over a decade. Counting some of the UK's largest and most reputable organisations amongst our client base, our online solution is designed to equip staff and managers alike with the correct skills and knowledge to perform their day-to-day roles to the very highest standard.

### Health & Safety for Homeworkers Online Training Course:

Our [Health and Safety Training for Homeworkers](#)<sup>37</sup> is broken down into 4 easy sections; responsibilities & legal requirements, hazards & risks, working at home and safety & emergency procedures. This training is perfect for anyone who frequently works from home, whether it's all of the time or some of the time.

Other relevant training for homeworkers includes:

- [Cyber Security Awareness](#)<sup>14</sup>
- [Display Screen Equipment](#)<sup>12</sup>
- [GDPR Essentials](#)<sup>15</sup>
- [Fire Awareness](#)<sup>16</sup>
- [Manual Handling](#)<sup>18</sup>
- [Mental Health Awareness](#)<sup>38</sup>
- [Slips, Trips & Falls Prevention](#)<sup>17</sup>
- [Stress Awareness and Management](#)<sup>39</sup>
- [Time Management](#)<sup>40</sup>



We provide free access to our simple but effective LMS as part of our package.

We take the user experience, design and accessibility of our LMS so seriously and that's why we're committed to constantly improving our product. We work hard to make the onboarding, managing and reporting of your employee training as simple as it can be, ensuring that you can see the full picture at a glance, which allows you to delve deeper as and when you need to.

*"iHASCO ticks every box for us! Your customer service has been superb from the start. Having a dedicated Account Manager made the process so easy. The courses are presented in an easy to understand format, the on screen graphics are not too overpowering and the LMS comes with a host of great features."*

- Mark Poncia, Learning, Development and Apprenticeship Partner at Morson Group

[Read the full case study here](#)<sup>41</sup>.

Want to learn more about iHASCO can help you? [Claim your no-obligation free trial](#)<sup>42</sup> today and see if iHASCO fits your organisation's needs!



## Resources

As a leading provider of Health & Safety eLearning, our team has recently been receiving a variety of different questions regarding Homeworking & Remote Working. We've collected some of those questions and answered them for you below...

### [Mental Health Resources Pack](#)<sup>43</sup>

It's important that home workers consider their mental health. Isolation can be difficult for some people, especially for prolonged periods. Share our Mental Health Resource Pack which contains useful resources, tips, and external guidance.

### [Time Management Tips](#)<sup>44</sup>

Time management can be a struggle when remote working. Use our Time management tips PDF as guidance.

### [Stress-Busting Tools](#)<sup>45</sup>

Feeling overwhelmed? Use our Stress Busting Tools PDF.

### [The 4Ds of Prioritisation](#)<sup>46</sup>

Struggling to get some perspective and prioritise work when working from home? Take a look at the 4Ds for prioritising.

### [10 Tips for Home Working](#)<sup>47</sup>

For those of you that might be working remotely/working from home, we have provided some top tips to work efficiently, keep spirits high and navigate the possible pitfalls of remote working.

### [Mental Health & Wellbeing Toolkit](#)<sup>48</sup>

Produced to support our Mental Health Awareness Training.



### [Training for Home Workers](#)<sup>10</sup>

Bundle of eLearning courses for home and remote workers. Try them for free today!

### [Handy Features & LMS Add-Ons](#)<sup>49</sup>

You may find our Documents and Policies and DSE Assessments add-ons useful for remote workers.

## Appendix

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