

Preparing managers and teams for new ways of working as a result of COVID-19

King's recognises that many staff will be worried about coronavirus (COVID-19) and its potential impact, particularly given the wide-spread coverage in the media. As managers, we further appreciate the additional difficulty that COVID-19 could place on you and your team(s).

We continue to encourage all managers to think creatively about how to support their staff in caring for their health, as well as reducing their risk of exposure to COVID-19, whilst still enabling them to continue to perform the important work they do.

If you have any concerns about your health in relation to novel coronavirus, COVID-19, please follow [Public Health England](#) advice and use the [NHS 111 coronavirus service](#).

The information can help colleagues and teams to prepare to work more effectively in the new circumstances, encouraging teams to define how they would best together.

How to use this document

The material in this document is provided as a starting point for teams to review and adapt to suit new ways of working.

- **Information:** is standard across Kings and therefore is not adaptable (IT access). Links are provided to further information for example how to use Teams
- **Guidance:** can be reviewed and adapted by teams, for example guidance on staying in touch as a team
- **Things to think about:** are included where there may be further consideration or options.

Consider adapting this for your team using language and tone most appropriate to your teams.

Consider using a team meeting to test out and develop the guidance.

Revisit and evaluate regularly with your team.

Remote working protocols

The overriding objective of continuing to deliver outstanding service in all that we do, including how remote working operates in practice. Responsibility for making this work rests equally with staff and managers, who together need to assess the opportunities and challenges, openly and honestly, including the need to ensure equality of opportunity across teams. Careful advance consideration, planning and agreement will help. In the spirit of supporting efficiency and flexibility for King's staff, the following guidance on remote working on an ad hoc is produced to supplement [King's College e-Working Policy](#).

General

- **Working Hours:** consider maintaining regular hours, with adjustments for established flexible working arrangements
- **How colleagues can be contacted:** colleagues should be available to contact during their working hours when working from home through either phone or Teams/Skype and make clear through your Outlook calendar how you can be contacted
- **Contact details:** consider sharing your contact details with your line manager.
- **Find out how to get started** with using [OneDrive](#) and [SharePoint](#) if you haven't used them before
- **Keep Outlook calendar up to date:** this should be open and shared with your team.

Comfort and Health

- **Working environment:** ensuring home environment is safe and suitable. Risk assessment (see pro forma within the eWorking Policy) must be undertaken ahead of any home working taking place
- **Follow** relevant [DSE good practice](#). Speak to manager if you have concerns
- **Take breaks:** You are encouraged to take breaks away from your workstation. Leave your desk for lunch. Make time for proper meals and drink water regularly
- **Distinguish between work and home mode:** consider what you will do in your usual commute time, eg breakfast, exercise etc
- **Routine:** Try and establish a regular routine, it helps keep focus
- **Set boundaries to the workday** eg like a 20minute coffee in the morning and then exercise right after work to open and close the day
- **Managing our mental health:** focus on what you can control and follow trusted outlets and bodies only.

Digital skills

- **King's laptop check:** is it in good working order and can you access what you need to from home now. If you do not have a laptop, discuss with line manager
- Check you have the relevant **accessories** e.g. charger, laptop bag, headset
- Consider if you need **headsets** - [Link to headset ordering](#) [select 'Dell & Non-Standard Equipment Order Form]
- Consider a **carry case** for your laptop - [Equipment Order Form](#)
- Consider moving as many meetings as possible to [Microsoft Teams](#) and try running your meetings via Teams now. [See guidance about using Teams](#)
- **Transfer access and share files** via OneDrive for personal files; Teams here a team could be as small as a group of people but as large as a department. and Sharepoint tended for sharing files with diverse groups through the creation of a site

Communications and staying in touch

- Consider **regular check-in meetings** using Microsoft Teams
- Consider setting up a **Teams site** which may become more significant and be used for more important comms during periods of home-working
- **Be sociable:** loneliness is one of the most common reported challenges of remote working, therefore include as much face-to-face interaction online as possible through video calls, regular manager check-ins as possible
- **Avoiding isolation:** consider having work from home buddies and chat at the same time each day
- **Be explicit in what you say:** in a written environment, your tone of voice and body language are no longer available to you to communicate key messages, so you need to choose your words and punctuation carefully. Every adjective, full stop and exclamation mark matters.
- **Written comms:** keep all written correspondence short and concise – no space for mis-interpretation
- **Daily Coffee break:** experiment with a daily coffee breaks for all staff on teams for a maximum of 15 minutes

Virtual Meeting Etiquette

- Who leads the meeting? Assign a team member who is technically interested/intuitive that can support teams virtual meeting
- **Having voices heard:** In group meetings there may be extraverts and introverts, allow everyone time, go round the group and allowing all to answer
- **Include questions** in the chat function for the host (for those that haven't spoke up)
- **Stay on mute** until you wish to speak to avoid background noise, noting some colleagues may have family also at home

Setting goals and expectations

- **Set goals as individuals and/or team:** What do you want to achieve with remote working?; What are the goals you'd like to get to?
- Consider a **structure** to your time eg working in 45-60 minute chunks of focused work followed by a short break.
- **Consider** what will you be missing as a team by not seeing each other face to face?