Remote Working during COVID-19

What's in this briefing

We understand that many more people are going to be working remotely or from home in the coming weeks and months, and whilst many people do the odd day it is quite different doing it on a more regular basis or even full time for the next period.

Here we consider some key elements for remote working to help us remain safe, healthy and productivity during this time:

- Helping yourself and your team
- Succeeding at remote working
- Technology and IT support
- Mental health and resilience
- Managing your teams remotely
- Microsoft Teams etiquette
- Home working risk assessment

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Helping yourself and your team

COVID-19 is creating enormous challenges for our business – the strength, spirit and ingenuity of our teams is critical at this time. Working together effectively will be a priority over the coming weeks. Managers will want to ensure that they are able to look after people and try to keep teams connected to enable business continuity.

- **Trust** and believe that colleagues will be productive and most people want to do their best in challenging circumstances.
- Remain **focused** and productive to the tasks in hand and try and not be distracted by media gazing.
- Explore **collaborative** ways to support one another and remain agile in your thinking during this rapidly evolving situation.

Focused

Collaborative

Trust

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Succeeding at remote working

How to Succeed as a Remote Worker

1 Experiment with Your Work Setup
2 Create Work/Home Boundaries
3 Prepare for Your Meetings
4 Create Accountability for Yourself
5 Be Visible at Work — Status: working on task #2
6 Communicate Clearly and Effectively
7 Work on Your Health
8 Set Clear Responsibilities
9 Talk with Your Team
10 Take Time to Socialize

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Succeeding at remote working

Prepare to work – getting washed, dressed and ready for work will not only improved your state of mind, it will psychologically prepare you to start work. Likewise at the end of the day, change out of your work clothes to help your brain understand the working day is over.

Define work/home boundaries – if you have set hours, it's important to stick to these. Start and end the day at the same time that you would normally arrive in your office or workspace. At the end of the day switch off your computer and tidy papers away. Space allowing, set aside a specific area in your home where you can set a temporary work-station up.

Create accountability – challenge yourself and set goals for the day, and at the end of the day, forward plan for tomorrow to keep on track.

Be visible – let your colleagues know your availability, movements and commitments through the day. Be agile to requirements on start and finish times as people work flexibility around emerging home situations.

Succeeding at remote working

Be mindful of your health – working from home shouldn't mean you stay cooped up indoors all day or glued to your screen all day. Move around and take appropriate breaks as you would do in an office. At lunchtime go out for a walk if you are able and get some fresh air, being mindful of government advice on exercising and social distancing.

Talk with your team – don't hide behind emails. Pick up your phone or call your colleagues or clients using Microsoft Teams. When you spend the day working on your own, calling people and having a conversation can be much more stimulating and productive than a chain of emails.

Manage distractions – during the current situation, there are likely to be others (partners, children) in the home alongside you. Focus on when it is suitable to juggle home responsibilities. Be understandable and respectful of everyone's unique situation especially during video or voice calls.

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Technology and IT support

Cyber criminals are taking advantage of the COVID-19 virus. The current situation has seen an increase in the risk of a cyber security attack.

Cyber-attacks via Email

Please be aware that the level of phishing emails have increased.

- Cyber criminals will try to convey a sense of urgency to tempt you into clicking harmful links.
- Spoof messages will arrive from what looks like a trusted organisation in an attempt to entice you to open harmful attachments.
- **DO NOT** click on any COVID-19 related links or attachments you receive via email or messaging apps.
- **DO NOT** put your Carnell credentials into third-party sites.

Report any suspicious messages to the IT Helpdesk

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Technology and IT support

Remote/Home Working

If you are working remotely the IT department will assist you to get online, connect to the Carnell network via VPN, install printers and redirect phones where necessary.

DO NOT be tempted to use non approved third party email and sites to carry out company business.

DO NOT forward email to personal accounts.

Be extra careful how you handle and process confidential data (both personal and commercial), this includes paper documents.

Reminder: You must adhere to the Carnell IT policies.

- POL17A Acceptable Use of IT
- POL17B Data Handling
- POL17C Email Policy

Contact the IT team on 01785 711500 or it.helpdesk@carnellgroup.co.uk

Improving value through innovation

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Mental health and resilience

Working from home can challenge your mental health. It can turn normally optimistic, productive employees into tired, unmotivated, irritable employees. Things to look out for include:

- **Loneliness and isolation** – even though there may be others at home, people can feel isolated from work colleagues leading to heightened levels of frustration or anxiety. Camaraderie in the workplace doesn't translate the same way over emails and text messages.

- **Anxiety, stress and pressure** – working from home anxiety takes on many forms, including pressure to be visible or online 24/7. The boundary between work and home life blurs. You may feel pressure to be on when you should be off.

- **Depression** – work from home depression can happen when you feel stuck. Without work related milestones, you may feel as if you're not achieving as much as you think your peers are achieving.

- **Staying sedentary** – fight the urge to stay glued to your computer and schedule active time to get your heart pumping. Continue to access nature and sunlight. Short walks in fresh air may help lower blood pressure and stress hormones.

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Mental health and resilience

Remember as part of your employee benefits package, Canada Life Group Insurance provides you with FREE access to EmployeeCare.

Debt Issues?

Negative Thoughts?

Legal Worries?

Health Concerns?

Addiction Problems?

Stress Issues?

Mental Health?

Free, 24/7 confidential advice & counselling
Tel:**0800 917 9330**

MORE DETAILS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT **WWW.CARNELLGROUP.CO.UK/CANADALIFE**

Canada Life™

A totally independent organisation working with

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Managing your teams remotely

Trust your team – they are doing their best and want to balance their work with obvious concerns about friends and family.
Strike a balance – between 'neglect' and 'overbearing'. Give clear, output-driven guidance as you won't be able to task manage as you would do normally.
Check in – diarise normal work meetings and schedule check-ins to stay connected. Implement regular team touch points.
Set expectations – make sure your teams know when they are expected to be available to each other.
Be present – have a daily team catch-up and set expectations for everyone to update on; what did I do yesterday, what am I doing today, what might stop me.
Over communicate – invest more time in telling people what is going on.

Trust your team

Strike a balance

Check in

Set expectations

Be present

Over communicate

Microsoft Teams etiquette

As we use Microsoft Teams on a more regular basis, here are some handy Do's and Don'ts to try and keep the meetings as productive as possible.
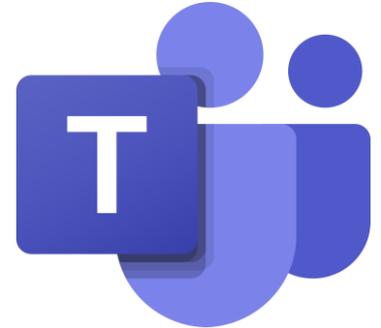
DO:
- ✓ Make sure someone is chairing the meeting, to keep on task.
- ✓ If you need to work something out, stop the meeting and take the task off-line.
- ✓ Be respectful, listen and wait for your turn to speak.
- ✓ Blur your background to avoid distractions for others.

DO NOT:
- ✗ Over-populate the meeting, only invite the people needed.
- ✗ Stay connected longer than you need to.
- ✗ Talk over others who are speaking.

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Home working risk assessment

We have a Home Working Risk Assessment RA 096 Rev 2 in place which can be accessed <u>here</u> or on the Carnell Management System.

In the unique situation in which we all find ourselves, please take time to familiarise yourself with this guidance and take the opportunity to make changes to your work station to ensure your health and safety.