

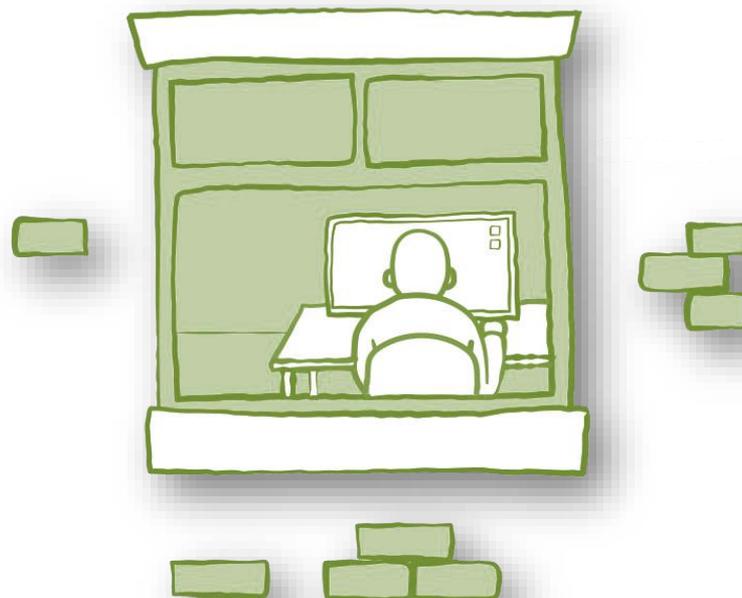
## Our Ways of Working – support for managing remote teams

This pack is intended to provide managers with guidance around managing teams remotely for a prolonged period, given recent developments with COVID-19.

There is a separate pack to support staff to work remotely.

### *This is an active document*

As more information becomes available this guidance will be updated. Check it regularly for the latest information.



## Key Principles: Managers

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**Working from home requires us to think about the way that we carry out our own roles, and also how we manage our staff and teams. We have a commitment to provide the same level of management, leadership and support, and need to be creative in how we do this.**

### **As a manager you will need to think about:**

- Maintain frequent contact with each member of your team. This is more important than ever before. Plan and agree how and when you will do this as not all of your staff will be available at the same time. Schedule in 121s as you normally would.
- Check-in with staff off work. Consider your staff who are absent from work. You have a duty of care to check how they are doing and keep them up to date with news and information. This includes those who are: a) already off sick, b) off sick during this time (with COVID-19 symptoms or other) c) currently suspended d) other leave incl maternity/paternity/special e) also think about any members of your team on secondment.

## Key Principles: Managers

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### Cont...

- Work planning - make sure that you understand what each member of your team is doing and when they are working. Your staff will have different needs and commitments whilst working from home i.e. children at home or caring responsibilities. You also need to make sure that everyone is clear about what it is that they need to be doing and where work is being paused or refocused as a response to COVID-19.
- Stay output focused - remember that this is a unique situation, people will adapt and adjust in different ways. Focus on the work that is produced and use 121s to revisit priorities and outcomes.
- Plan in regular communication updates - consider how are the team will keep up to date with what is going on. Don't assume everyone is aware of the latest news and updates. Be clear on the best way to communicate with your staff members and review to ensure that everyone has equal to access to information and support.
- Being supportive - recognise and acknowledge that this is an unusual time and your team may need your support in different ways. Familiarise yourself with the various offers of support available (informal and formal) that will help your staff through.

## Supporting staff with caring responsibilities

**While most parents have worked from home at some time with children due to the occasional sickness or weather-related school closure, the prospect of doing so for a longer period may feel daunting.**

Staff maybe facing new challenges to their work-life balance with a range of caring responsibilities from caring from children to caring for at-risk, sick or elderly relatives - while still doing their job. We know that people are good at being creative to fit everything into their busy working day, but everyone's work day and caring commitments will be different.

This is why it is important to understand each member of your teams caring responsibilities and commitments so you find a balance that works for them and agree how best to support them.

*You as managers will have caring responsibilities too and it is important to be honest with your team how you will be managing your commitments, role modelling to your team is important!*

## Supporting staff with caring responsibilities

Cont...

**Contact each member of your team on a 121 basis to do the following:**



- 1** Understand their needs and personal commitments during this time
- 2** Establish the reasonable adjustments that they require and what they hope their working pattern will be.
- 3** Agree what their programme of work will be and the key priorities
- 4** Plan how and when you will keep in touch and schedule these in your calendars

## Top Tips

**When your team workplace becomes virtual, working approaches and practices need to be adjusted to support remote team working**



Be honest with your team, if things are difficult and you are feeling under pressure. Have the conversation with your team and listen to their advice and support. By doing this hopefully your team will feel comfortable doing the same.

Check in daily with your team to ensure that people still feel part of a team and are kept up to date on any new announcements or changes concerning work at this fragile time.



Make sure you and your team take lunch breaks and consider virtual coffee breaks where people can get together online for a quick catch up about non-work-related things, as you would at work.



Ask your team some key questions when you check in:

1. What have we achieved as a team today?
2. What do we need to focus on tomorrow?
3. What support do you need from me?



## Top Tips: Cont...

- Make the most of Microsoft Teams and other digital platforms.
- Pick up the phone or call via Teams – communicate as a person and keep the human connection going rather than just emailing.
- Use your video and encourage your team to do the same. Seeing each other really helps.



- Appreciate not everyone has the perfect home working space.
- Ensure all of your team have the necessary equipment and IT they need to work remotely.



- Create a safe place, build an environment of trust.
- Be there to listen not to task.
- Create a community space for the team.

Role model what you expect of your team, even when working in high pressured situations.

Set clear goals of what you are working on as a team.



*Special thanks to Manchester City  
Council for sharing their resources to  
help shape this guidance.*