

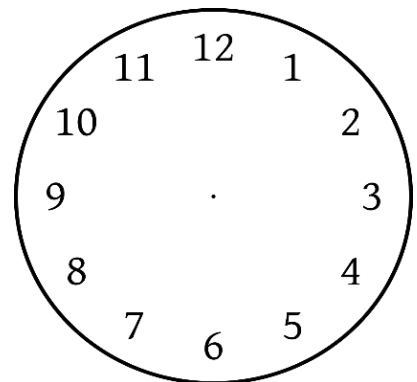
Staff Guidance – Flexibility and Boundaries

So many colleagues are working differently right now, whether that's where we work, what we're doing, the need to balance with other responsibilities at home and/or the volume of work required to deliver our ongoing response. Whichever elements are true to you right now, it is important that we seek to support flexibility where it is needed but also understand boundaries and when it's time to switch off. Before we continuing, we want to acknowledge that everyone, whatever their role or circumstances, is doing brilliantly. We know this is tough.

Guidance has been produced for all managers via the staff information page and we recommend everyone have a look through. Underpinning all of our guidance is the need for managers and colleagues to keep in touch regularly and have open dialogue.

Here are some tips for everyone, which we hope, will help you have conversations and receive the support you need to manage your own circumstances:

- If you don't have regular check-ins with your manager, or you feel you want to talk more often... ask! We hope all managers are proactive and disciplined in making these happen but we get everyone is under pressure – be personally responsible for booking them in.
- This time is about you and not just work; be open about your reality, your challenges and what could be impacting your wellbeing
- If you are juggling a number of responsibilities e.g. home schooling or childcare, make your manager aware and try and come with suggested solutions
- Leave no option unexplored! Whilst we know changes will be temporary for now, and are subject to change as life (we hope) tiptoes back to normality, explore all options around flexibility and focus on what can be done, e.g.
 - Different working hours – is it better to work later and spend time schooling in the morning? Alternatively, carrying out caring responsibilities in the evening, so maybe start earlier?
 - Can we split the day? Does it help you to take time out during the day to manage other responsibilities – including your own health and wellbeing?
 - If your arrangements can be better managed on weekends (e.g. extended family 'bubbles' or no schoolwork), could we consider a non-working day in the week but working a Saturday or Sunday



Boundaries

We know from survey feedback that many colleagues are finding it a challenge to manage the home/work boundaries – more so for those of us whose two worlds are very much merged right now.

Boundaries are personal and again very much dependant on individual circumstances. Here are some suggestions based on conversations we've had with colleagues that may be useful – but remember, working through what you need with your manager is absolutely essential.

- If working at home and it's feasible, find a space that you can work comfortably in.
- Close the door when you're done (or pack the laptop away) – out of sight can help it be out of mind.
- Mute WhatsApp conversations/group messages when on leave or in the evening – or switch devices off.
- Please try not to tag colleagues out of hours in queries via social media groups e.g. Staff Facebook Page – keep queries to the working week or send an email to People Support Plus+
- Take breaks – and not just get a coffee and sit back down breaks! Sit outside, go for a walk, have lunch away from your 'desk'.
- Know when you need to take leave; we appreciate it's tough not knowing what holiday options may be available, or feeling like it may not be worthwhile, but everyone we speak to tells us they didn't appreciate how much they needed time off until they took it.
- Don't be concerned about family members (including pets!) turning up on screen during calls – we get it and we're experiencing it as well! Introduce colleagues to whoever shows up and please do not apologise for it.
- Speak up. If it's too much, or deadlines need to be pushed back – let us know. We'll try and find a workaround or an extension to support you but managers need to know when something just isn't feasible.
- Create space between working and being home – even if your commute is now the walk between the bedroom and the kitchen table! Put the earphones in, listen to the radio, a podcast, some music as you would if driving/walking/cycling in – create that space between getting up and starting work. If you can, go for a walk before work or engage in some exercise/meditation.



Above all, remember what dialogue is: it's two way and it doesn't have to be defined – this isn't a debate and it should feel win-win!