



**BARRATT**  
DEVELOPMENTS PLC

# Working from Home Support Guide

**Dear colleague,**

As our business continues to adjust to the uncertainty caused by coronavirus, we have produced this working from home guide which expands on some of the guidance we've already shared with colleagues which aims to support you and help reassure you as we all get used to this new way of working.

We know many of you will be working from home for the first time, and although this situation will be temporary, we realise this will be a very different experience and one that some may find difficult.

Our priority remains the health, safety and wellbeing of our employees, so along with the measures we've put in place across our sites to keep people safe, we want to ensure those working remotely are also supported as well.

Working from home under these conditions can be challenging and cause us and those close to us, additional stress and tension. This guide highlights support available to you, including how to avoid these challenges as well as guidance on working effectively from home whilst looking after your health and wellbeing and finding a home-life balance.

I want to thank all of you for your continued support and patience during this period.

Regards,



David Thomas

**Chief Executive**



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## Looking after your mental wellbeing

Whether you enjoy working from home or are worried about it, it can sometimes be lonely – or in some instances stressful if you're suddenly juggling work, childcare and/or caring responsibilities in the same environment.

Here are some suggestions to help you look after your mental health and wellbeing.

### Relaxation & mindfulness

Try some meditation or breathing exercises. For example, sometimes we can be so tense that we do not even remember what being relaxed feels like. Progressive muscle relaxation teaches you to recognise when you are starting to get tense and how to relax.

Mindfulness techniques may also help you focus on the present rather than dwelling on unhelpful thoughts (though they may not be helpful for those experiencing more severe depression).

### Reflection

Make time every day to reflect on what went well. It's important to recognise your successes and the things you are grateful for, no matter how small.

## Looking after your mental wellbeing continued

### Sleep

Take time to look at how you can improve your sleep as feelings of uncertainty and changes to daily life may mean you have more difficulty sleeping.

- Aim to go to bed and get up at the same time each day, even at the weekend if you can.
- Try to get some natural sunlight (by opening your curtains and windows) where possible.
- Wind down before bed by avoiding using your phone, tablet, computer or TV for an hour before bedtime.

### Connect

Keep in touch with your friends, loved ones or colleagues. Talking and sharing your thoughts and feelings when you're feeling stressed or anxious can give you a fresh perspective, as well as enable you to process the experience and focus on ways to move forward positively. Although you may not be able to meet in person, you can make use of the telephone, social media and email.

#### Useful contacts/links:

[Headspace App](#)

# Looking after your physical wellbeing & keeping active



It is important that you keep up with some physical activity. Make sure you take time out to do some form of daily exercise.

In the office, you'd normally pop to the kitchen or walk over to one of your colleagues to ask a question, which you can't do when you're working from home. So make sure you factor in time away from your work space when you're at home – and get some fresh air as well. You can spend a couple of minutes in the garden, or go for a walk around the block to stretch your legs.

There's also a whole range of exercises you can do at home – such as a home yoga video or a fitness class. Some gyms live stream their classes.

There are strong links between what we eat and how we feel, for example caffeine and sugar has an immediate effect.

Eating a balanced diet has long lasting effects on your mental health and eating a balanced diet keeps your brain functioning well.

## Useful contacts / links

[NHS Fitness Studio](#): a variety of fitness videos from aerobic exercise to yoga and Pilates.

[Joe Wicks 'The Body Coach'](#) exercises shared daily and for free on YouTube

[Vitality Health](#) provide free workouts on their YouTube channel

[Wellbeing & Nutrition Podcast](#) through the Mental Health Foundation

[Information and guidance on eating and drinking healthily](#)



## Learning from home

We want to ensure that whilst you're working from home, you still get the opportunity to develop yourselves. Now could be an ideal time to focus a little on your personal development and develop those skills you've always wanted to... and we've added some great new content to MyLearning to help you.

We know that learning a new skill can have a positive effect on your wellbeing.

The Talent team are looking at new ways and sourcing new products for you to get involved with whether its:

- Refreshing your mandatory learning.
- Developing those Microsoft Office skills you have always wanted to try.
- Getting to grips with new technology like Office 365 and new selling tools.
- Gaining an insight into working in, or managing remote teams.
- Finding new ways of working and insights into reducing stress, anxiety and maintaining a positive and focused outlook.
- Undertaking a new qualification.

All these things are available to you and are there to develop you and enhance your wellbeing.



## Getting ready to start your day

Although you currently do not have a commute, aim to wake up around the same time every day. This helps stabilise your internal clock and improve your sleep overall. You'll feel less tired, more refreshed, and find it easier to concentrate throughout the day.

Why not use that extra time to plan the day ahead, take a walk, or exercise before starting work.

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## Getting into a work routine

Try to follow your normal morning routine, including getting into work clothes, as you would if you were going into your normal place of work – this will help you get into the right mindset for working from home.

Some people find that dressing more formally is helpful to create that work mind-set, and is also useful if you need to dial into a video call. Changing out of work clothes when you 'clock off' will help you switch off at the end of the day and create a separation between work and home.





## Managing your time

Working from home can give you more flexibility, but it can also lead to the normal boundaries between work and home life becoming blurred. Over time, this can start to take its toll on our mental health, so it's important to think ahead and create a healthy work routine.

Without the patterns of getting into work, taking breaks, meeting colleagues, and returning home it can be hard to establish good boundaries between work and home. Break down your working hours, when you will start, take regular breaks, and finish.

Create a work schedule – this is one of the most difficult things to get used to doing when you first start working from home, but is absolutely key to help you focus.

Ensure that where possible you keep to your regular working hours – this will prevent you from over-working which is easy to do when your office is at home.

Start your day at the same time as you would normally arrive in your office or workplace, and finish your day at the same time as you would normally leave. It's important to not feel you need to “overcompensate” because you are anxious about working from home.

As well as breaking up your day, we want to reassure colleagues that while you're at home, you should spend some time during the day with those living in your household, whether this is family or friends.



# Parenting at home

We appreciate that with schools, nurseries and other childcare providers currently closed, home schooling and occupying younger children is essential for many and flexibility around this is encouraged. Please see below some websites which you may find helpful:

## Teaching and activity resources

**BBC Bitesize:** Providing help with homework, revision and learning. Find free videos, step-by-step guides, activities and quizzes by level and subject. It allows you to drill down into the right tools for your child's school year, and even lets you pick a subject area to focus on – from English to Geography to Maths and History. It caters to school children all the way from primary school to post-16, so will work for whatever age your kids are.

**Twinkl:** Teacher-created planning and assessment materials and teaching resources! Perfect for inside and outside the classroom.

**Partnership for Children:** Resources to boost your child's wellbeing throughout the challenges posed by coronavirus.

**CBeebies:** Includes stories TV shows, games, activities, printable colouring sheets all aimed at younger children.

**Fun Home Activities:** Ideas for home-based activities with kids – from craft & games, to exercise, cleaning, home organisation and photography.

**Active for Life:** Activities and learning through play, using active games to keep children moving and learning at home.

**Scope:** If your child has Special Educational Needs (SEN). You can find online support and a range of educational and fun activities to help you through this difficult time.





## Dedicated homeworking space

Having a dedicated work area and setting out a proper desk space will help with your focus. This may be the kitchen counter or dining table, but having a separate work space is key to help define the part of your house where work happens. That makes it more likely that you'll actually get things done when you're there, but just as importantly will help you disconnect when you're not.

Clear your work surface of clutter and set up your equipment to avoid physical strain.

At the end of the day close the door on your workspace, or at the least cover it up and tidy away all papers. Having that physical disconnect like leaving the office supports that mental transition between work and home.



## Take regular breaks

It is very easy when you are working at home to lose track of time.

Don't stay glued to your screen all day. It's important to take regular screen breaks and get up from your desk and move around just as you would in the office.

Aim for frequent short breaks of around five to ten minutes every hour. Use your break times to clear your mind, stretch, get outside for some fresh air if you can and connect with others – even if that is via phone. Breaks allow you to unwind, re-focus and then apply yourself better.

Don't skip your lunch break and make sure you eat away from your workspace. If you really are too busy to take a proper lunch break then make sure you take at least 15 minutes away.



# Stay connected

When at work you are more likely to engage with colleagues. However, when working from home you can become isolated having not spoken to anyone.

Communicate with your team and colleagues as frequently as possible, and pick up the phone and have a conversation rather than emailing – having a conversation can be much more stimulating and productive than a chain of emails.

Some suggestions may include:

- Video/Teams calls instead of emailing can help team bonding and motivation during this period.
- Short check-in and check-out calls with your manager and your team, at the start and end of the workday.
- Social video/Teams calls or conference calls at breaks and lunch with friends and colleagues including having virtual coffee breaks.
- Checking in with the family and spending breaks with them.

With anyone working from home now having access to Microsoft Teams, try using the online chat to stay connected for both personal and work-related topics.

Consider creating new, light-hearted channels – to help connect people socially, and where they can share updates about non-work-related subjects. As with daily check-ins, online chat is also perfect to keep up-to-date with daily work/projects.

The Microsoft Teams 'Getting Started' Guides can be viewed on MyLearning.



Microsoft Teams

MyLearning 



## Top tips to manage your team remotely

1. Be as open as possible and trust people to do what is expected of them.
2. Recognising stress or a lack of engagement early is vital. Get to know each team member so you can spot when there is a change.
3. Communicate clearly and honestly about work and how they're doing.
4. Treat all team members as you would want to be treated yourself.
5. Promote training and development opportunities to keep up interest and motivation.
6. Don't forget the importance of recognition and thanks.
7. Keep an eye on people's output and less on the time they're working.
8. Ensure your team liaise amongst themselves – peer-to-peer interaction without a manager is essential.
9. Act as a role model for positive health and wellbeing.
10. Remind people of the importance of taking breaks.



## Working in a safe environment

Consider your environment and the immediate surroundings in which you will be working.

- Keep cables tidy so they are not a trip or snag hazard.
- Are objects like equipment, bags, paper, files and books stored safely? Remember there may be others working or living around you.
- Your computer and other equipment may dry the air. Try to work in a ventilated area and maintain a circulation of fresh air if possible by opening windows.
- Is the lighting suitable, not too bright or too dim to work comfortably? Consider shading windows, repositioning light sources, or providing local lighting such as a desk lamp.
- Are levels of heat comfortable? The ideal temperature is a minimum of 16°C.

Please ensure that you have a self assessment in accordance with the **SHE Form 74a Risk Assessment** so that you can self determine the suitability and safety of your home work area and any remedial action that needs to be taken. Once the Risk Assessment has been completed please email this back to your Line Manager.

# Setting up your workstation safely

- Where possible try to raise your screen so that the top of the screen is at eye level.
- Ensure your screen is positioned to prevent glare from natural or artificial lighting.
- When using a laptop where possible use a separate keyboard and mouse. This enables the laptop screen to be positioned correctly.
- Where possible adjust your chair height. Your arms should be at right angles, with forearms lightly supported by the work surface. You may need a footrest if your feet are not firmly on the floor or sit on a cushion to raise you up.
- Make sure the lower back is well supported. Support for your lower back will help encourage good posture. You can use a folded towel to give you more support or consider a back-support cushion if needed. Try to avoid sitting on unsupportive seating such as a sofa.



## Getting your seating right

- Seat back adjustable.
- Good lumbar support.
- Seat height adjustable.
- No excess pressure on underside of thighs and backs of knees.
- Foot support if needed.
- Space for postural change, no obstacles under desk.
- Forearms approximately horizontal.
- Wrists not excessively bent (up, down or sideways).
- Screen height and angle to allow comfortable head position.
- Space in front of keyboard to support hands/wrists during pauses in keying.



## Setting up your workstation safely continued

You can collect any additional equipment you normally use from your place of work (i.e. chair, lumbar support, footrest), as deemed necessary to carry out your job and ensure that your home working environment is safe. Please ensure that you agree with your Line Manager in advance the Company equipment which you will be taking home and note that you are responsible for the care and safe use and maintenance of this equipment.

If you have any queries relating to the safe set up of your workstation please contact your SHE Manager.

Please also refer to the current Company Expenses Policy on Docushare for further information on what expenses you are able to claim during this period.





# Keeping data secure at home

Working from home introduces a number of new security risks. It's therefore essential that you take extra steps to safeguard the company's equipment and data which you must do by complying with the **Group's Data Protection Policies**:

- Do not allow anyone else to use your computer at any time.
- Do not attempt to install any non IT-authorised software onto your computer.
- Do not connect any non-Barratt hardware to your computer.
- All business information should be stored on the network drives.
- Keep all paperwork containing personal data in a secure place and away from places where others in your home may see them.
- Do not take paperwork outside of the home, other than in transit to and from a Barratt office/site.
- Lock your screen when you leave your working area.
- Do not leave any Barratt equipment locked in a vehicle.
- Do not leave your equipment near an unlocked open window or door, opportunist thieves will be able to snatch a laptop very quickly.



# Maintaining security at home

You are our first line of defence against cyber-attacks. Attackers have learned that the easiest way to get what they want is to target you, rather than your computer or other devices. Here's a few pointers to help you stay secure and protect the business from cyber-attacks:

- Be aware of unexpected calls from “IT” to fix your computer or internet (they are probably a scam). If you're unsure contact the IT Service Desk.
- Be aware of requests to do things outside of normal procedures – verify with the requestor by contacting them on their normal number.
- Do not access the internet unless connected to the FortiClient VPN or CiscoAnyConnect VPN.
- Never deny the updating of Windows and Sophos Anti-Virus updates.
- Do not post photographs of your working from home setup to LinkedIn/ Facebook/Instagram/Twitter or any other social media sites.
- Check before you click on links or attachments. If in any doubt DO NOT click the link or open the attachment and delete the email.
- Be suspicious of unexpected emails. If you receive a suspicious email, please report it with the suspicious email as an attachment, rather than a forward.
- Ensure you complete your cyber safety awareness training.





## Maintaining security at home continued

For the period that you will be Home Working, the Company will provide IT access that must be used solely by you for business purposes and will be monitored in accordance with **the Companies IT Acceptable User Policy**.

For any IT issues or support requirements, including technical issues, access difficulties or additional equipment requests please contact the IT Service Desk:

**Telephone: 01530 518080**

**Email: [itservicedesk@barrattplc.co.uk](mailto:itservicedesk@barrattplc.co.uk)**





# Additional support

Working from home during times of stress and uncertainty can be lonely and isolating but it is important to remember you are not alone. Keep in touch with friends, colleagues, and family where you can.



## Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

If you are feeling anxious or isolated and want to speak to someone outside friends and family then our Employee Assistance Programme providers, Unum LifeWorks, offer someone to speak to in confidence.

Call **0800 0482702** or visit the LifeWorks website at [www.unumlifeworks.co.uk](http://www.unumlifeworks.co.uk)  
(user id: unum password: lifeworks)

**You can also download the free LifeWorks App on the App Store.**



## Construction Worker Helpline

BC&E is a construction focused charity that can provide a range of services including financial advice through their Construction Worker Helpline.

Call on **0808 801 0372** or visit: [www.bandce.co.uk](http://www.bandce.co.uk)



## Mates in Mind

We also have a strong relationship with Mates in Mind, a registered charity focusing on improving positive mental wellbeing for UK construction: [www.matesinmind.org](http://www.matesinmind.org)



## Samaritans

Call the free 24 hour helpline **116123** or visit [www.samaritans.org.uk](http://www.samaritans.org.uk)

## Support others

Whilst you may be coping well with the current situation your colleagues, friends and family may be struggling.

Take time to ask your colleagues “how are you?” Give people an opportunity to share if they’re struggling, and talk it through.

Lead by example and share how you’re feeling. When someone asks you, be honest. If you’re struggling, say so.

Often, just the simple act of saying it aloud helps, and helps others know they can be honest if they are struggling too.



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