



Healthier  
**Lancashire &  
South Cumbria**

# Agile Working Guidance

---

April 2020

# 1. Health and wellbeing

Maintaining health and wellbeing is important when working remotely. Here are some tips for colleagues and managers, who should establish positive virtual management practices.



## Keep connected

Connecting with colleagues is important – not just through formal meetings / communications but developing **strong social network connections**.

Consider the nature of interactions and the best virtual method for this – by email, Microsoft Teams call or video etc.



## Proactively discuss colleagues' health and wellbeing

Be sure to **keep in touch with team members regularly and check in on them, not just their work**.

Remember your colleagues may not pick up on the same signs as they would working face to face if you are not quite yourself. Connect regularly and be open to conversations about **maintaining mental health and wellbeing**.



## Know how to access support services

Make sure staff are **aware of the various types of support mechanisms available to them** such as through People and Organisational Development Services, Occupational Health and Wellbeing, Working remotely can be lonely and isolating but remember it doesn't have to be this way. **You are not alone. Know how you contact your manager, team, support services** who can support you with a range of issues and concerns, as well as your mental health and wellbeing.



## Encourage work life balance

It is important to establish a clear work life balance to ensure you **do not develop unhealthy working habits** such as working longer hours, checking and responding to emails at night and weekends etc. Replacing a physical commute with setting up and packing up time may help if space is limited.



## Establish a workday routine and area

**Define your working hours**, when to start, take a break etc. **Following a schedule** will help retain focus and keep from procrastinating or over scheduling yourself. A schedule will help establish hours of work and help with time management.



## Create a productive working environment

Set out a workspace where you feel comfortable, can work productively and switch off at the end of the working day. A structured environment, free from clutter in a relatively quiet space will help to be more focussed and productive. **Ensure confidentiality** at all times (awareness of who else is around you)



## Find a balanced routine

When working remotely make sure you **keep active and maintain a balanced diet** as part of your everyday activities. This will help break up the day and upkeep physical health too. Get up and move at regular intervals.



## If you are not well

Just because you are working from home, it doesn't mean you have to try to work through it. Let your manager know if you are poorly so they can help support you.



## Be online and stay in touch

**Keep in regular contact with colleagues and the wider team** by being online. This will enable you to communicate efficiently, keep you in the loop and also ensure you to upkeep relationships with the team/s.

## 2. Working in virtual teams

Working virtually as part of a wider team requires all team members to work differently to ensure everyone feels connected, supported enabling individuals and the team to be the best they can be.

	<p><b>Keep colleagues in sight and in mind</b> Consideration should be given to <b>showing emotional intelligence and encouraging strong social network connections</b>. No one should feel 'out of sight, out of mind'.</p> <p>Take care to ensure interactions via email, Microsoft Teams etc. are <b>managed sensitively with consideration for colleagues working remotely – video contact is encouraged</b>.</p>		<p><b>Proactively manage communication channels</b> Communication across virtual teams can be particularly difficult and requires additional thought. Be sure to <b>keep in touch with colleagues regularly and check in on them</b>. One way to do this is to <b>schedule 1:1s and meetings using Microsoft Teams</b>. Engaging with colleagues regularly will create a connected and open environment.</p>		<p><b>Team behaviour</b> Set some <b>ground rules for team communication</b> goes a long way in making sure you the team <b>works together productively and happily</b>.</p> <p>Remember that the kinds of <b>nuanced communications s you get in an office setting doesn't necessarily translate online</b>. Agree how colleagues can feedback about <b>improvements to team working</b></p>
	<p><b>TEAM AWARENESS</b> Working remotely requires you to <b>over-communicate</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Let those who needs to know about your <b>schedule and availability</b></li><li>- When you <b>finish a project or an important task, say so</b></li><li>- If you have a question or problem, <b>just ask</b> your team</li><li>- <b>Offer help to others</b> in the team</li><li>- <b>Keep each other up to date</b></li></ul>		<p><b>Support each other</b> <b>Informal contact</b> is important – consider virtual coffee breaks with colleagues. Make each other smile!</p> <p>Support colleagues if they have concerns . <b>Buddy up and check on each other</b> daily.</p> <p>If you are worried about colleagues contact your line manager.</p>		<p><b>Dispelling remote working myths</b> 'Remote workers are not working hard' <b>Just because you are not physically at a desk, doesn't mean you are not working hard</b>.</p> <p>'It is up to the remote worker to prove they are working' <b>Remote workers often feel they constantly need to be visible</b> which can create anxiety and additional pressure.</p> <p>'Remote workers are available at all times' <b>Working hours</b> should be as if they were on site.</p>
	<p><b>Learning together</b> Teams are continually developing and working more virtually is <b>learning for all</b> of us.</p> <p>Talk about <b>what has worked well and what could be better next time</b>. Share best practice with other departments.</p> <p><b>Ask for advice or help</b> when you need it through your line manager or host organisation's People and OD team.</p>		<p><b>Build trust, stay accountable and get work done</b> Everyone in the team should know what their <b>role</b> is and what they are <b>responsible</b> for.</p> <p><b>Developing trust</b> is important when working virtually. Work planning and setting of achievable objectives will help this.</p>		<p><b>Chat tools versus video tools</b> Tools can mask intention and humanity <b>Remember at the end of the chat is a person with feelings and reactions</b>.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>Constructive feedback</b> should be over a video so intentions come across.</li><li>2. <b>Lack of verbal and emotional cues</b> can result in one person <b>perceiving</b> a chat conversation as an <b>argument</b> when another perceives it as a discussion.</li><li>3. Resentment can build over time if underlying issues are not addressed – <b>be aware of misunderstandings and hurt feelings</b>.</li></ol>

# 3. Effective Virtual Meetings

Virtual meetings are a great way to connect – from 121s and informal catch ups to team meetings, formal meetings and committees.

	<p><b>Be prepared</b> Preparation is key – for both the meeting lead and wider team. Agree <b>who is leading</b> the meeting and each agenda item in advance to enable colleagues to prepare. Ensure everyone knows <b>how to access</b> the meeting and what type of meeting (video / phone / combination it will be).</p>			<p><b>Inclusion</b> Each person should feel <b>equally represented and present</b> in the meeting. Ensure everyone knows who is on the call – <b>'Hello my name is....'</b> Give everyone the opportunity to contribute during the meeting and in the preparation of agendas. In large meetings use a <b>'hands up'</b> tool if available to indicate you would like to speak.</p>
	<p><b>Etiquette</b> Good virtual meeting etiquette is key:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>Mute</b> when you are not speaking</li><li>- <b>Keep your video on</b> to stay engaged</li><li>- <b>Do not take other calls / do other work</b> killing any potential for lively discussion, shared laughter and creativity.</li><li>- Just because you're in a virtual meeting and it's possible to be disrespectful, it has to be understood that it's unacceptable. This is about <b>civility and respect</b> for people, so if you wouldn't do it in person, don't do it virtually.</li></ul>			<p><b>Use of technology for everyone</b> Unless everyone is in the same room, meetings may be more effective with <b>everyone attending virtually</b>. This avoids a difficult experience for one person dialling into a room full of echo, noise and side conversations on the other end. <b>Turn the video on if you can.</b> People are more likely to feel together, as humans. It enables response to body language and emotions. <b>Familiarise yourself with the technology</b> – ask for support if you need it.</p>
	<p><b>Environment</b> A <b>quiet space, or headphones</b> in an open / noisy environment will help. <b>Ensure confidentiality</b> at all times (awareness of who else is around you)</p>			<p><b>Civility and respect</b> Most importantly in virtual meetings, civility and respect must be the norm. This applies pre, during and post the meeting. <b>Be respectful of others' time, and be present.</b></p>



Healthier  
**Lancashire &  
South Cumbria**

---

**Web** [healthierlsc.co.uk](http://healthierlsc.co.uk) | **Facebook** @HealthierLSC | **Twitter** @HealthierLSC