



Children's Health Ireland

Sláinte Leanaí Éireann (SLÉ), Herberton, Siúlán San Séamas, Rialto, D08 HP97, Éire
Children's Health Ireland (CHI), Herberton, St James's Walk, Rialto, D08 HP97, Ireland

14th October 2020

Deputy Paul Murphy,
Dáil Éireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2.

PQ 29654/20

"To ask the Minister for Health the policy of the HSE with regard to administrative hospital staff working from home where possible during the Covid -19 pandemic details supplied: and if he will make a statement on the matter".

Details: in particular with regard to apparent changes in policy whereby staff who were previously working from home successfully are now being requested to carry out the same tasks but working from a hospital-based office.

Dear Deputy Murphy,

I refer to your parliamentary question above to which I have been asked to provide a response.

All employees in Childrens Health Ireland (CHI) are deemed "essential" workers.

There are over 500 licenses to facilitate remote working where appropriate.

However, whether an employee in CHI can do their role or a portion of their role remotely is an operational decision for local management. Every department is currently fully operational and has different requirements to meet the service needs of sick children and their families.

I have attached a copy of CHI Home Working (During Covid 10 Pandemic) Policy document for your convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Joe Gannon
Chief Operations Officer
Children's Health Ireland
Email: joe.gannon@nchg.ie

Mission – To promote and provide child-centered, research-led and learning informed healthcare, to the highest standards of safety and excellence. We do this in partnership with each other, with children, young people and their families through a network of children's services in Ireland.

CRA Registered Charity Number (RCN): 20202295 **Revenue Charitable Status CHY:** 22235

Board Members: Prof James Browne (Chairman), Prof Niamh Brennan, Mr Con Cronin, Ms Mary Cryan, Mr Liam Dowdall, Prof Martin Elliott, Ms Catherine Guy, Dr Anne Kilgallen, Dr Gavin Lavery, Ms Brigid McManus, Mr Turlough O'Sullivan, Mr Sean Sheehan



Children's Health Ireland

CHI Home Working (COVID-19 Pandemic) Policy:

Is this document a:

Policy Procedure Protocol Guideline

Insert Service Name(s), Directorate and applicable Location(s):

Title of PPPG Development Group:	CHI New Ways of Working Group		
Approved by:	Director of Human Resources Children's Health Ireland		
Reference Number:	TBC		
Version Number:	Final		
Publication Date:			
Date for revision:	12/07/2022		
Electronic Location:	TBC		
Version	Date Approved	List section numbers changed	Author
V1	12/07/2020		

This is a controlled document: While this document may be printed the electronic version posted on the website is the controlled copy and can only be guaranteed for 24 hours after downloading.

CONTENTS

1. POLICY STATEMENT	3
2. PURPOSE.....	3
3. SCOPE	3
4. GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR HOME WORKING:.....	3
5. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES	3
6. PROCEDURE FOR IMPLEMENTING TEMPORARY HOME WORKING ARRANGEMENTS.....	3
7. NATURE OF ARRANGEMENTS	4
8. SECURITY OF INFORMATION AND DATA	4
9. INSURANCE.....	4
10. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR WORKING FROM HOME INCLUDE:.....	4
10.1 MANAGERS RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:	4
10.2. EMPLOYEES RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:.....	5
10.3. TRAINING	5
11. RETURN TO WORKING ON SITE.....	5
12. EMPLOYEE WELLBEING	5
13. CONTINUOUS REVIEW	6
14. AUDIT AND EVALUATION	6
15. KEY STAKEHOLDERS	6
REFERENCES	6
APPENDICES	7

1. POLICY STATEMENT

During this phase of COVID-19 pandemic many employees have been asked to work from home on a temporary basis. CHI supports this new way of working for services that can be provided on an off-site basis in order to comply with public health guidelines and maintain services to patients.

Children's Health Ireland (CHI) has a duty to ensure the safety, health and welfare of employees and endeavours to fulfil its responsibilities under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act (2005). Equally the employee is required to take reasonable care for his/her own Health & Safety requirements.

2. PURPOSE

This document is written with the intention of providing a fair, consistent and safe approach to all aspects of temporary home working during the period of COVID-19. It has been developed to provide guidance to managers and employees on new ways of working and outlines organisational requirements and procedures to allow for safe and effective home working and return to work safely procedures.

3. SCOPE

The policy applies to all CHI employees who have approval to work from home during COVID-19.

4. GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR HOME WORKING

- Experience during the acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic has shown that some services can be successfully provided from an individual's home on a remote access basis. Opportunities and suitability for the delivery of services in the home environment is subject to management approval.
- Working temporarily from home is not a change in contractual terms.
- All employees working from home must read and be familiar with the content of this policy and at all times abide by and follow CHI's security procedures to protect confidential information or information of a sensitive nature pertaining to our patients, employees and the organisation. Please refer to the CHI Data Protection Policy for further information.
- Although temporary home working will give some employees more time for their family responsibilities, it is not a substitute for dependent care.
- Where employees require time off for childcare or other dependents, alternative rosters or working arrangements must be discussed with line management.
- CHI will provide access to the IT network and IT-required software for employees who are working from home.
- Employees have a responsibility to ensure that they have sufficient and appropriate equipment for working from home.
- CHI is not responsible for associated costs of working from home including the costs of heating, lighting, electricity or telephone calls.
- CHI staff may be entitled to claim tax relief on expenses incurred while working from home during, subject to the conditions laid down by Revenue (under Section 114 of the Taxes Consolidation Act (TCA) 1997; Paragraphs 2.4 and 2.5) (**Appendix 3**).

5. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- All employees: adhere to all policies and procedures relevant to their area of work.
- Line Manager/Head of Department: to ensure employees are aware of and compliant with all CHI policies and procedures relevant to their area of work.

6. PROCEDURE FOR IMPLEMENTING TEMPORARY HOME WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

- Head of Department/Line Manager will consult with employees in relation to temporary home working arrangements and role suitability for same.

- The relevant site remote working ICT application form must be completed by the employee and approved by the Head of Department/Line manager to grant access remotely to CHI ICT Systems.
- Employees should note and comply with local site ICT provisions for remote network access and relevant ICT policies.
- Employees should also complete the Health and Safety Home Working Risk Assessment form on-line (**Appendix 1**) in conjunction with their Line Manager.
- Employees must ensure that they have completed the mandatory training as outlined in this policy. Failure to do so may lead to the home working arrangement being revoked.

7. NATURE OF ARRANGEMENTS

- This policy is to be considered as a “living” document which will be amended in line with Government and Public Health advice along with relevant HSE HR and Wellbeing Circulars.
- All CHI Policies and Procedures continue to apply to employees when working from home.

8. SECURITY OF INFORMATION AND DATA

- All employees working from home must be aware that patient and staff identifiable data (including photocopies) must never be taken out of the hospital sites unless for the purposes of outreach clinics or for other legal requirements without the prior approval from management.
- Employees must ensure that all data held by them at their premises must be kept securely and in the strictest of confidence and measures should be taken to ensure that no unauthorised person can access information (e.g. a locked home cabinet).
- Employees are reminded of their responsibilities under data protection regulations, and that they are obliged to adhere to the CHI data protection policies and procedures which were put in place to ensure compliance with GDPR. Failure to comply with any of these policies and obligations may result in the removal of ICT privileges and/or disciplinary action.

9. INSURANCE

- Employees who have approved working from home arrangements are included in CHI’s Employers’ Liability Insurance Policy, as applicable. An accident occurring at home during the course of work must be reported immediately via usual Risk Management and Incident reporting mechanisms.

10. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

10.1. MANAGERS RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE

- Ensure that employees carry out a risk assessment using the Home Risk Assessment Form and manage risks identified.
- Ensure that employees are aware of their individual responsibilities regarding health and safety, information governance, GDPR, undertake required mandatory training and are compliant with all CHI policies and procedures.
- Keep in regular contact with employees and put in place regular and recurring communication forums to ensure that employees do not feel isolated from the team and disengage from the workplace. This can be done through ICT communications systems and telephone conversations.
- Ensure that work is allocated and being completed to the required standard as part of on-going service needs and service activity levels.
- Ensure sufficient numbers of appropriately trained staff are available onsite to meet service activity demands whilst maintaining social distancing requirements in line with national Return to Work Safely Protocol.
- Ensure all home working hours and patterns are recorded to comply with the Organisation of Working Time Act.
- Review the home working arrangements with the employee on a regular basis and revise accordingly.

10.2. EMPLOYEES RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE

- Make available a suitable environment for safe and effective working at home by identifying an appropriate workspace that is free of distractions (e.g. other people, outside noises etc. that could hamper their productivity when working). See Health and Safety guidance on setting up a work station (**Appendix 2**).
- Carry out the on-line Home Working Risk Assessment (**Appendix 1**). The link to this form will be emailed to the employee by their line manager. It is the responsibility of the employee to provide assurance that their environment is suitable for home working. If required, CHI will provide necessary training or guidance to carry out the assessment in conjunction with their manager.
- Identify and report any health and safety concerns to their line manager / Health & Safety Manager in line with relevant site procedures.
- Flexibility is required in the event that home working has to be cancelled / rescheduled / swapped with colleague (e.g. when on site cover is not available, or if there is sickness within the team).
- All staff (with the exception of OHD identified at risk category staff) must be available to attend working from home must be available to attend for on-site work at short notice when requested.
- Be available during agreed working hours both by phone and email.
- Co-operate with their manager and follow their instructions.
- Deliver on agreed work objectives and key performance indicators together with targets against timelines. Team members will be subject to the same performance measures, processes and objectives that would apply when working on-site.
- Ensure that working hours as defined in contracts of employment are completed.
- Ensure sufficient rest breaks are taken during the working day in line with contractual terms and conditions.
- Comply with the CHI's absence reporting procedures and report sickness absence and fitness to return to the relevant line manager. Medical certification will be required in line with sickness absence policy.
- Undertake any training during working hours as required.

10.3 TRAINING

- Complete CHI mandatory training requirements associated with temporary home working which is available on [HSELand.ie](https://www.hse.ie)
 - Display Screen Equipment user awareness training module
 - Good Information Governance
 - General Data Protection Regulations

11. RETURN TO WORKING ON SITE

In the event that an employee has been fully working from home during the COVID-19 period, a COVID-19 Pre-screening form must be completed three days prior to returning on site. In addition staff who have rotating rosters which include part home working, must also complete the Covid -19 pre-screening form in line with National Returning Staff to Work Safely Protocol. The link to this form will be issued by the manager to the employee to complete and the record of completion will be maintained in the HR "Formstack" system. The manager will review the completed form and advise the employee if they are authorised to continue/return to site on the information submitted. (**Appendix4**).

12. EMPLOYEE WELLBEING

CHI recognises that owing to COVID-19 employees were required to work from home with limited notice within a short period of time. CHI is aware that for some employees, a time of adjustment was required and a sense of isolation, fatigue or stress may have been experienced. To support our employees, CHI has established a number of wellbeing support mechanisms to assist in adjusting to this temporary new way of working. For details of these supports please log onto your local intranet or download the MyCHI app onto your mobile phone for information.

13. CONTINUOUS REVIEW

This policy and procedure shall be reviewed at frequent intervals by the Chief HR Director or nominee in order to determine its continued effectiveness and appropriateness. It shall be assessed and amended as necessary to reflect any changes in Government/Public Health guidance, best practice, law, substantial organisational change and professional or academic change.

14. AUDIT AND EVALUATION

In order to ensure the effectiveness of this policy and procedure the Chief Director of Human Resources or nominee shall complete an audit annually to review compliance with this policy and procedure. The Chief Director of Human Resources or nominee must further provide a systematic process for the reporting and investigation of non-compliance, or potential non-compliance, to enable proactive prevention in the future.

15. KEY STAKEHOLDERS

This policy was reviewed and approved by the following key stakeholders:

Name	Title
Trevor Murphy	CHI Chief Human Resource Director
Catherine Lee	Human Resources Director in CHI at Temple Street
Joan Troy	Deputy Director HR CHI at Crumlin
HR Working Group	New Ways of Working Cross City HR Team

REFERENCES

- E-Working: A Growing Element of Work-Life Balance, IBEC 2007
- Flexible Working Practices, CIPD 2016
- Practical Guide to Employees working from home, CIPD 2020
- Getting the most from remote working, CIPD 2020
- COVID-19 Home Working Policy, National Health & Safety Function, HSE April 2020
- CHI Data Protection Policy

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Health & Safety Assessment

1. Link - https://chiatemplestreet.formstack.com/forms/home_working_risk_assessment_form
2. Copy of the Form, please see below:



This form has to be completed by the Line Manager in conjunction with the employee. It the responsibility of the Line Manager to ensure any remedial actions identified are implemented

PART A: Home Working Risk Assessment Form

Employees Name:

First Name

Last Name

Employee Number:

Email Address:

Confirm Email Address*

Mobile No

CHI Site

Position

Department

HSE Category

The Line Manager in consultation with the employee must carry out the risk assessment for Home Working over the telephone.

Please ensure the following:

1. The DSE User (employee) has completed the DSE User Awareness module on HSElanD prior to this assessment.
2. You use the comment section to document where the employee advises that adjustments to the work environment have been implemented.
3. Actions that cannot be resolved during the assessment are documented on **Part B** of risk assessment form.
4. Provide the employee with a copy of this risk assessment once completed.

It is the responsibility of the Line Manager to ensure any remedial actions identified are implemented

Work Environment and Work Equipment

1. Do you have access to a suitable temporary work space?

Yes No

Comment

2. Do you have safe and easy access to the work space?

Yes No

Comment

3. Is there adequate heat, lighting and ventilation to allow you work comfortably?

Yes No

Comment

4. Is there adequate space to work without twisting, bending, or sitting / standing awkwardly?

Yes No

Comment

5. Is the work space large enough to accommodate work equipment?

Yes No

Comment

6. Do you have access to a private work area and freedom from disturbances?

Yes No

Comment

7. Are you aware of how to set up work station correctly? Refer to guidance GD:010 Working from home during COVID-19 Workstation Setup

Yes No

Comment

Slips, Trips and Falls

8. Is the floor free from trailing cables etc. to prevent slip, trips or falls?

Yes No

Comment

Electrical Equipment

9. Are electrical sockets, plugs and cables in good repair?

Yes No

Comment

Manual Handling

10. Have you attended the Safe Handling Course?

Yes No

Comment

Fire

11. Do you have an escape plan in the event of fire?

Yes No

Comment

12. Is your temporary workplace fitted with a smoke detector or fire alarm that is regularly checked?

Yes No

Comment

Communications around Home Working

13. Have communications from your site and Manager been clear enough so you know what you have to do when homeworking?

Yes No

Comment

14. Have you read and understood the CHI working from home policy

Yes No

15. Are you aware of how to access supports in the event of systems / ICT failure?

Yes No

Comment

16. Are you checking your local intranet or APP for daily updates re: COVID 19?

Yes No

Comment

Staff Wellbeing

17. Are you aware of the supports available to you?

Yes No

Comment

18. Are you taking scheduled breaks while working from home in order to maintain a healthy work life balance?

Yes No

Comment

Note: staff are encouraged to raise any concerns with their managers to avoid feelings of isolation, fatigue and or stress

Expectant Mothers

19. What additional adjustments are needed for your working from home as you are pregnant?

Yes No

Comment

20. Have you taken adequate precautions to keep yourself safe around your home work space?

Yes No

Comment

Incident Management

21. Are you aware of the arrangements for reporting incidents to the Line Manager?

Yes No

Comment

PART B: Home Working Risk Assessment Form

Hazard & Risk Description:

Existing Control Measures
Additional Controls Required

Action Owner

First Name

Last Name

Due Date

 / /

Initial Risk Rating

Likelihood

Impact

Initial Risk Rating

Risk Status

Open Monitor Closed

Managers Name

First Name

Last Name

Managers Email Address

Confirm Managers Email Address*



National Health and Safety Function, Workplace Health and Wellbeing Unit,
National HR Division



	<h1>Guideline Document</h1>				
Ref: GD:010:00	RE: Working from home during COVID-19 – Workstation Setup				
Issue date:	March 2020	Revised Date:		Review date:	March 2021
Author(s):	National Health & Safety Function				
Consultation With:					
Responsibility for Implementation:	All HSE Staff				
Note:	<p>The coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak has officially been categorized by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a pandemic, meaning infection is accelerating in multiple countries concurrently.</p> <p>The government has announced a number of additional measures to protect citizens by delaying the spread of COVID-19, as a result many people have been asked to work from home / work remotely where possible during this outbreak.</p> <p>Working from home poses some challenges, however, there are easy, straightforward steps, which can be taken to minimise risks and to maximise comfort & productivity.</p> <p><i>The information provided is for general guidance only, should you require more specific advice please contact the Health & Safety Help Desk. The management of any occupational safety and health issue(s) remains the responsibility of local management.</i></p>				

Table of Contents:

1.0 Introduction	3
2.0 Purpose:.....	3
3.0 Scope	3
4.0 Organising your workspace at home.....	3
4.1. Ergonomic tips to improve your workspace at home.....	3
4.2. Regular Stretching	4
Figure 1: Simple Stretches	4
5.0. A Worked Example	5
A) Laptop Set-up without adaptation	6
B) Improved set up using laptop stand, separate keyboard and mouse	6
6.0. Further Advice and Support.....	6

1.0 Introduction:

Many people have been asked to work from home during the current COVID-19 outbreak as part of social distancing and to delay the spread of the Covid-19.

2.0 Purpose:

This guideline has been developed to help guide employees on how to achieve a similar ergonomic set-up to that achieved at work.

3.0 Scope:

This guideline applies to all employees within the HSE who have been advised to work from home or work remotely during this Covid-19 outbreak.

4.0. Organising your workspace at home:

The objective at home is to try to achieve a similar ergonomic set-up to that achieved at work. A neutral upright posture should be adopted. Ensuring your work desk/work station is set-up correctly will facilitate good posture and reduce the likelihood of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDS) including Work Related Upper Limb Disorders (WRULDs) and Repetitive Strain Injuries (RSIs), which may cause soft tissue injuries that affect the muscles, tendons, nerves, ligaments, joints and/or blood vessels.

4.1. Ergonomic tips to improve your workspace at home:

Position your screen correctly

To reduce eyestrain, position your screen arm's length from your face.

Lighting

Glare on the screen should be avoided to reduce eyestrain. To reduce glare, situate the screen away from window light and close blinds/curtains when necessary.



Change positions

Avoid awkward, static postures by regularly changing position from sitting to standing.

Give your eyes a break

Every 20 minutes, for 20 seconds focus on an object 20 feet away. This allows your eye muscles to rest.



Keyboard

Awkward wrist, arm and shoulder positions may lead to discomfort and/or injury. Adjust the height of the keyboard if possible so that your wrists are in line with your forearm.

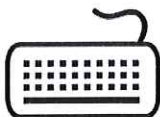


Get up and move

Break up long spells of screen work with rest breaks (at least 5 minutes every hour) or changes in activity.

Chair

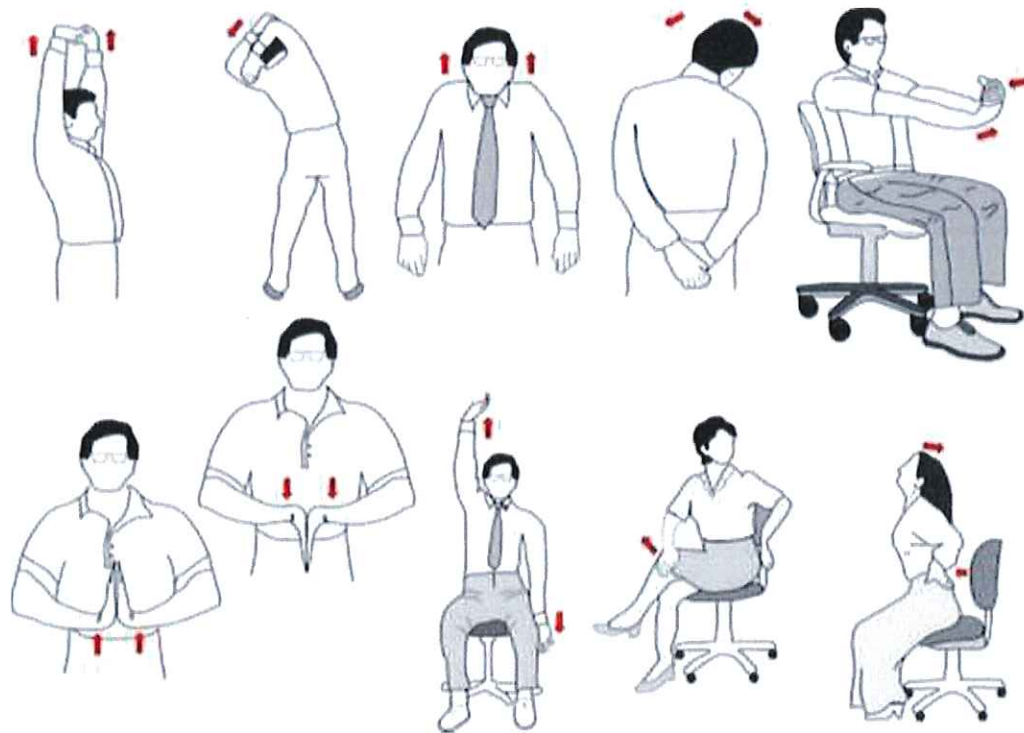
Adjust your chair so your feet are flat on the floor or use a foot rest if required. Ensure your lower back is fully supported by the lumbar support in your chair. Ideally you should have an office otherwise use a cushion.



4.2. Regular Stretching:

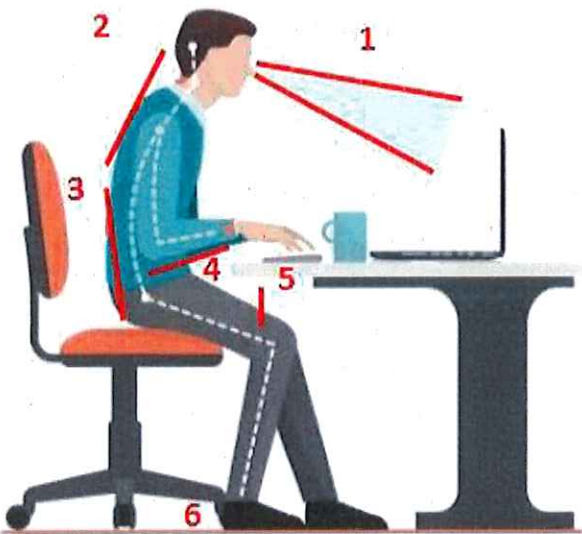
The following stretches can be performed at any time during the day. All of the stretches should be performed slowly and in a controlled manner. Not everyone has the same range of movement so, if at any time, you feel any discomfort or pain beyond the intended stretch, do not push beyond it, stop and return to centre.

Figure 1: Simple Stretches:



5.0. A Worked Example

A) Laptop Set-up without adaptation



1,2 Viewing angle, Head and Neck Position.

Target: The top of screen should be at eye level or just below eye level.

Picture: This angle is quite steep and results in the head and neck bending forward.

3 Back Position and Support;

Target: Ensure a vertical upright back, keep the shoulders square and relaxed. The chair should support a natural spinal curve.

Picture: Not everyone working from home / working remotely may have an office chair. However the type of chair you use should be upright and provide support to the lower back.

4, 5 Forearm & wrist position;

Target: The hands wrists and forearm should form a level line from the keyboard to the elbow. The wrists should not be bent and should reside (float) above the keyboard during use. The wrist should be kept free of the desk surface when using the mouse. The mouse should be moved through a combination of elbow and shoulder movements, the wrist should not be involved. The forearm will form a 90-degree angle with the upper arm.

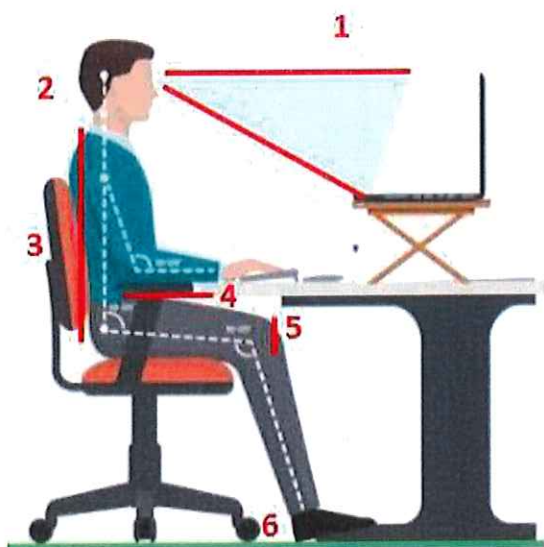
Picture: The elbow is lower than the wrist, causing the wrist to bend.

6 Legs and Foot Placement;

Target: Feet flat on the floor. The chair will not make contact with the back of the knees. Thighs are parallel to the floor.

Picture: In this case both feet are placed flat on the floor there is no excess or pressure on the

B) Improved set-up using laptop stand, separate keyboard and mouse.



1, 2 **Viewing angle, Head and Neck Position;** the laptop stand brings the head up, straightening the neck, shoulders and back. If a laptop stand is not available then books may be used to improve the viewing angle.

3 **Back Position and Support;**

A cushion can be used to support a more upright posture especially where employees may be working from a kitchen chair.

4, 5 **Forearm & wrist position;**

A 90-degree angle is formed between the upper arm and forearm there is no pressure on the wrists. Again cushions can be used to elevate the seating position to achieve a neutral position of the forearm, wrist and hands, which are all level.

6 **Legs and Foot Placement;**

A footrest should be used to ensure the thighs remain almost parallel to the floor, with the hip slightly higher than the knee. Space is maintained between the back of the knees and the edge of the chair. A footrest can be anything such a plastic box.

6.0 Further Advice and Support:

For further advice or support regarding your work station setup during the covid-19 pandemic, please contact the HSE health and safety helpdesk.

<http://www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing>