 <p>Foillimneacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte Health Service Executive</p>	<h1>Guideline Document</h1>			
Ref: GD:011:00	COVID 19 Home Working			
Issue date:	April 2020	Revised Date:		Version No: 1
Authors(s):	National Health & Safety Function			
Consultation With:				
Responsibility for Implementation:	All HSE Line Managers and employees			
Note:	<p>The Government has announced a number of protective measures to protect citizens by delaying the spread of COVID-19. In order to comply with this requirement, the HSE has issued the following circulars to all employees ‘HR Circular 014/2020: Social Distancing in the Health Sector’ and ‘HR Circular 017/2020: update re social Distancing in the Health Sector’ and HR Circular 019 2020 - Essential service under new Public Health Guidelines COVID-19’</p> <p>All managers must check HSE.ie daily to keep informed of up to date information and advice</p> <p>Under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 (Act, 2005) employers have duty to ensure the safety, health and welfare of employees. These duties extend to when employees are required to work from home.</p> <p>Employees also have reciprocal duties under the Act, 2005. These are summarised in Section 4.0</p>			

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1.0 Introduction:

During this phase of COVID 19 pandemic many employees have been asked to work from home on a temporary basis. Under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 the HSE has a duty to ensure the safety health and welfare of our employees.

2.0 Purpose:

This guideline has been developed to support managers and employees to comply with their legal obligations in relation to staff working from home during this Covid-19 pandemic.

3.0 Scope:

This guideline applies to:

- All managers in the HSE who have staff working from home and
- All employees working from home during this pandemic.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities:

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 places specific duties on both managers and employees. In the context of home working these duties are summarised below:

Managers Responsibilities include:

- managing and conducting all work activities to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare of employees
- providing safe systems of work that are planned, organised, and maintained, assessing risks and implementing appropriate control measures
- providing information, instruction, training and supervision regarding safety and health to employees, and
- having plans in place for emergencies.

Employee Responsibilities include:

- cooperating with their manager and following their instructions
- protecting themselves and others from harm during the course of their work, e.g. taking care of any work equipment provided and reporting any defects immediately to their manager
- reporting any injury arising from work activity to their manager in line with HSE Incident Management Framework , 2018 , and
- following procedures that have been put in place by their manager.

5.0 Risk Factors associated with Home Working

The main risk factors which need to be considered when staff are working from home include:

- work environment
- work equipment
- staff wellbeing
- incident management

In addition, consideration may need to be given to the security of data.

5.1 Work Environment

As a minimum, there should be enough room for work to be carried out, including space for the workstation, other equipment (e.g. printers) and storage of materials. Ideally the staff member should identify a dedicated area which keeps domestic interruptions to a minimum and reduces risks to other people at home (e.g. young children), has safe access, adequate lighting, is free from trailing leads/cables and good standards of housekeeping are maintained.

5.2 Work Equipment (to include use of Display Screen Equipment)

Staff working from home must be provided with the necessary equipment to carry out work activities. This may include the use of laptops, monitors, keyboard, telephone headsets etc.

Staff working with display screen equipment (i.e. laptop / pc) must ensure they have completed the HSElanD DSE User Awareness Module and be provided with information on how to set up their workstation safely at home (Refer to guidance *GD: 010: Working from home during COVID-19 Workstation Setup*). The objective is to try to achieve a similar ergonomic set-up to that achieved at work. Ensuring the work desk/work station is set-up correctly will facilitate good posture and reduce the likelihood of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDS) and Work Related Upper Limb Disorders (WRULDs) and Repetitive Strain Injuries (RSIs).

Staff should be encouraged to stand up and stretch and take regular breaks away from their laptops / PCs and do other work related duties e.g. teleconferencing / standing up while taking phone calls.

Staff should be provided with details on how to access support in dealing with information technology systems failures, software problems and equipment failures.

5.3 Staff Wellbeing

5.3.1 Communication

Risks associated with home working extend beyond the physical work environment, staff may feel isolated, fatigued and or stressed. It is therefore important to have a formal, agreed and scheduled communication system in place e.g. use of scheduled teleconferences which encourages and allows staff to raise any concerns they may have.

Staff should also be encouraged to keep in regular contact with other colleagues and know that support is available for them.

5.3.2 Supervision

When staff are working from home, it is important that they have clear role clarification and know what is expected of them. Having an agreed check in with staff will provide an opportunity for updates on work related information and feedback.

5.3.3 Work life Balance

Taking regular breaks and exercise and practising good self-care can help with maintaining a healthy work life balance. Staff should be encouraged to set scheduled breaks and eat away from their workstation, exercise and eat healthily during this period. (Ref Good Practice Psychosocial wellbeing tips)

5.4 Incident Management

Staff working from home should be advised of what to do in the event an incident or become unwell while working from home. All incidents must be reported and managed in line with the HSE Incident Management Framework, 2018.

5.5 Data Security

In line with HSE policy all data must be processed and controlled in line with the principles of the GDPR and relevant Irish legislation, for further information please refer to *HSE Data Protection Policy, 2019*.

6.0 Risk Assessment:

Section 19, of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005 requires the employer to identify the hazards at the place of work and to assess the risk presented by those hazards.

The assessment needs to take account of the specific work environment and needs of each employee.

In normal circumstances, employees should only be permitted to work from home where it is organisational policy and where the manager has conducted a risk assessment to ensure employees have a safe work environment and suitable work equipment prior to the employee starting to work from home.

To assist in assessing the home working arrangements the risk assessment in Appendix 1 must be completed in consultation with each employee over the telephone.

7.0 Support and guidance:

GD: 010 Working from home during COVID-19 Workstation Setup, available at www.hse.ie

Minding your mental health during the coronavirus outbreak, available at <https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/mental-health/minding-your-mental-health-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak.html>

For further health and safety advice or support during the covid-19 pandemic, Please contact the HSE health and safety helpdesk by visiting www.hse.ie/safetyandwellbeing or alternatively phone 1850 420 420



8.0 References:

HSA (2020) FAQ's for Employers and Employees in relation to Home-Working on a temporary basis (COVID 19) available at https://www.hsa.ie/eng/news_events_media/news/news_and_articles/faq%E2%80%99s_for_employers_and_employees_in_relation_to_home-working_on_a_temporary_basis_covid-19.html

Health and Safety Executive (2020) Protect home workers available at <https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/home.htm>

IOSH (Dec 2014) Home Office, Mobile Office Managing Remote Working <https://www.iosh.com/media/1507/iosh-home-office-mobile-office-full-report-2014.pdf>

Appendix 1

		<h1>Health & Safety Risk Assessment Form</h1>					
Ref: CF:050:00		RE: Home Working Risk Assessment Form					
Issue date:	April 2020	Revised date:		Version No	2		
Author(s):	National Health & Safety Function						
Part A Home Working Risk Assessment Form							
Division		Source of Risk					
HG/CHO/NAS/Function		Primary Impact Category					
Hospital Site/Service		Risk Type:					
Dept/Service Site		Name of Risk Owner					
Date of Assessment		Signature of Risk Owner					
Unique ID No		Risk Co-Ordinator					
		Risk Assessor (s)					
Home Worker's name:							
Name of Line Manager:							
Note	<p>The Line Manager, in consultation with the employee must carry out the risk assessment for Home Working over the telephone. Please ensure the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 <p>It the responsibility of the Line Manager to ensure any remedial actions identified are implemented</p>						

	Work Environment and Work Equipment	Yes	No	Comments
1	Do you have access to a suitable temporary work space?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2	Do you have safe and easy access to the work space?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3	Is there adequate heat, lighting and ventilation to allow you work comfortably?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4	Is there adequate space to work without twisting, bending, or sitting / standing awkwardly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5	Is the work space large enough to accommodate work equipment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6	Is the floor free from trailing cables etc. to prevent slip, trips or falls?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7	Are electrical sockets, plugs and cables in good repair?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8	Do you have access to a private work area and freedom from disturbances?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9	Are you aware of how to set up work station correctly? Refer to guidance GD:010 Working from home during COVID-19 Workstation Setup	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10	Have you completed the HSE Land DSE User Awareness Module?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
11	Do you have an escape plan in the event of fire?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
12	Is your temporary workplace fitted with a smoke detector or fire alarm that is regularly checked?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

	Staff Wellbeing	Yes	No	
13	Are you aware of the agreed formal communication system in place?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
14	Are you aware of the supports available to you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
15	Are you taking scheduled breaks while working from home in order to maintain a healthy work life balance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
16	Are you aware of how to access supports in the event of systems / ICT failure?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
17	Are you checking HSE.ie for daily updates re: COVID 19?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

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

	Incident Management	Yes	No	
19	Are you aware of the arrangements for reporting incidents to the Line Manager?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Part B Home Working Risk Assessment Form							
HAZARD & RISK DESCRIPTION		EXISTING CONTROL MEASURES		ADDITIONAL CONTROLS REQUIRED		ACTION OWNER	DUE DATE
INITIAL RISK			RISK STATUS				
Likelihood	Impact	Initial Risk Rating	Open	Monitor	Closed		

Appendix 2 Summary of Key Tips for Home Working

