Argyll and Bute Third Sector Interface
Supporting your people whilst working remotely

All the technology we have at our fingertips today certainly makes remote working easier. However, there's a difference between occasional working from home and a sudden shift to 100% remote working.

Your team will need support to adapt to new ways of working. Give them this support, and keep them happy, and they are likely to excel in their work.

Three key actions
- **Communication is key**
- **Promote staff wellbeing**
- **Provide any additional necessary training**

Communication is key
A good rule of thumb is: communicate, communicate, communicate. But use the range of different tools to do this, so people are not tied up in meetings all day.

If you're not sharing the same office space, you aren't sharing the same context. This can mean you miss cues about how your team are doing. Listen to your staff so you understand any issues which need to be addressed.

Everyone will also miss out on being able to share quick updates over a desk or over a cup of tea. So it's important to find communications practices and tools that help your team stay closely in touch without feeling overwhelmed. Encourage teams and colleagues to check in regularly – Slack and Microsoft Teams are useful for this.

If any staff are not in a team, ensure they are linked up with some colleagues so they don't feel isolated or left out of plans.

Encourage fun communication too – coffee breaks, Friday drinks, an occasional quiz or photo swap can work well. Schedule a social call now and then and have a #random office chat channel in your messaging platform.

Promote staff wellbeing
You have a responsibility for the health and safety of your staff in your workplace. You must still take this seriously, even though their workplace is now remote from you.

- You should ensure they have suitable workstations and remind them of good posture to prevent repetitive strain injuries.
- Another feature of remote working, is that people are likely to be working part-time and flexible hours. This can make it difficult to understand and respect healthy boundaries between work and home life. This is something you should regularly promote to your staff to avoid burnout, fatigue and ill health due to stress. Encourage your team to make it clear when they are working, and when they are not available , and when they need to be offline.
- Keep diaries, calendars and messaging status (active, away etc) up to date and encourage team members to check these before assuming someone will be responsive/ available.
- Most messaging apps and email clients have a 'drafts' feature. This can be useful if you are working outside of the usual core hours. Write messages when suits you but don't send out

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> with working hours This avoids making your people feel under pressure to be constantly responsive.

- Encourage your team to 'switch off' properly – putting work devices away if they can, or turning off any work-related notifications on a personal device.
- Remind everyone to be kind and supportive to each other, as some colleagues may have extra commitments or more caring responsibilities than usual.

Unplugging during the working day can also be a challenge. Encourage your staff to take regular breaks to stretch and rest eyes from screen time. Remind them to get some outdoor time if possible during their lunch break, to eat well and keep hydrated. This will help them take care of good mental health too and prevent burnout.

Additional training
Your employees may never have worked from home before, or used many digital tools. They may need some additional training to enable them to do this.

It is good practice to ask all your staff to complete a digital skills check, as some people may appear very competent digitally but may have some gaps in their knowledge.

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