Coronavirus: working from home guidance
Correct at: 18 March 2020

During times of uncertainty, it is important we stay connected with one another, look after ourselves, and set up rhythms as we work in new environments.

It can be challenging to adjust to changes in our routines and ways of working. The tips, suggestions, and information in this document may help you to continue to be effective, productive, and take care of your wellbeing.

This is a working document and will be updated.

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If you are in the UK and need to contact the Facilities Team, please use facilitieshelpdesk@tearfund.org. Please do not use the email addresses of individual staff.
Staying informed

It is helpful to receive as much up to date and correct information as possible during uncertain times. This keeps you informed and aware. You will receive regular email updates as we connect with one another virtually and globally.

Document: coronavirus guidance for all staff

We ask that you check the Coronavirus guidance for staff document daily. It is being updated with the latest information about coronavirus, as well as a Q&A section regarding Tearfund's approach and response. We will highlight all recent changes to make them easy to find.

Hub site

Please also ensure you bookmark the coronavirus hub site in your web browser, and make this your go-to source of information. The site is being updated daily.

Please review information regularly

You might like to add a daily reminder to your calendar to help you view the above information and updates regularly.

If you're not sure where to look for the latest information, please check the following in this order:

1. Coronavirus guidance for all staff and the hub site
2. Speak with your line manager
3. Email coronavirus@tearfund.org.

The Global Leadership Team will be meeting at least weekly to receive a briefing from Nigel Harris and Myles Harrison.

We will also be setting up additional staff Q&A sessions as they are needed.

Looking after yourself

Maintaining a healthy living routine is vital in times of uncertainty and change.

Below are some tips in setting up and maintaining personal practices in your new work routine, staying connected to others, managing anxiety and stress, and finding additional support.
Set up personal practices
Take some time to know what is helpful for you. Be kind to yourself as you learn how you work best in a new environment, and recognise your limitations.

- If you can, set up a designated space in your home to work in. Ideally this is where there is natural light in a well-ventilated room. You can find more information about setting up a healthy workspace further below.
- Create and stick to a daily routine that works for you. Habits can be key! For example, start and end each day at the same time.
- It can be helpful to start the day in personal reflection and/or grounding. View the resources on the prayer and spiritual practices page for ideas.
- Tune into Tearfund’s daily devotions from Monday 23 March.
- Take regular breaks away from the computer to move your body. Maybe you could make a cup of tea or coffee.
- Set a timer to remind you to look away from the screen.
- If possible, incorporate physical exercises in your daily and/or weekly routine. If you’re able to go outside, take a walk in nature.
- Good posture is helpful to decision-making, as well as to the circulatory and respiratory systems. If you can, change positions frequently and stand or sit up straight.

Stay connected to others
- Schedule virtual coffee and lunch breaks with your friends, workmates, colleagues, or team.
- Over the coming weeks we’ll share any virtual groups with you, such as online exercise and book clubs.
- Contact and check in on one another. Find out how you can offer support, and seek support if you need it.

Care for your body
As much as possible, maintain your daily practical health and hygiene routine while working from home.

- Remember to regularly wash your hands, avoid touching your face, and cough and sneeze into a tissue.
- Keep a healthy diet and drink plenty of water.
- Make sure you keep good sleep hygiene. For example:
  ○ Reduce your use of electronic devices and avoid caffeine and alcohol in the hours before bedtime.
If getting to sleep is difficult, write down concerns in a notepad before resting. Pray or meditate, and practice gratitude – being thankful restores the soul and reduces anxiety.

Additional support during this time
The information below focuses on protecting and promoting a healthy wellbeing during this time:

- Coronavirus and your wellbeing – MIND (mental health charity)
- How to protect your mental health – BBC News (Source: bbc.co.uk/news).

For additional support on wellbeing, contact Tearfund's Pastoral Care Coordinator on wellbeing@tearfund.org.

Chaplains are available for prayer at tearfund.chaplains@tearfund.org.

Managing anxiety and worry
Fear, anxiety and worry are understandable, especially at this time, but Jesus encourages us not to be afraid, anxious or worried about anything. Use these practical steps to help.

You can view this document for practical spiritual, mental, physical, and relational advice on managing anxiety.

Working effectively
It can be challenging to be efficient and productive when you're working alone and from home.

Stay connected with your team
Connecting with one another is important:
- Keep up regular one-to-one meetings with each other and your manager
- Continue to hold team meetings online. These slides will help you with virtual meetings.

Meeting outside the office
If it is essential to your work that you meet in person with colleagues, please choose the least risky way of doing this.
That could be a public area, an open space (such as a park), a coffee shop, a home, etc.

However, before choosing to work together in someone's home you must ensure it is definitely the option with the least risk. Confirm that there are no household members who:

- Have elevated risk factors for COVID-19 (age, pre-existing health conditions)
- Are showing any symptoms of COVID-19.

Other advice:

- Minimise the number of people meeting in person and the time together
- Follow recommended physical distancing and hygiene: wash your hands
- Minimise the potential for you to transmit the virus to vulnerable persons or members of the public
- Minimise the potential for you to become infected (such as via close contact on public transport).

Also consider other risks to:

- Health, safety and wellbeing
- Confidentiality and data privacy (see below)
- Tearfund's reputation.

You must comply with your country's government advice and requirements at all times when working.

**Personal productivity**

- Acknowledge it might take time to get used to working in a different environment.
- If you can, designate an area of your home for work only.

**Setting up your workspace**

It's important for your health and safety that you look after your body's needs, just as you would in the office. This means:

- Sitting correctly
- Taking regular breaks from screen and computer work
- Staying hydrated
• Moving about – you don’t always need to be at your computer. For example, you could sit in a comfortable chair or outside if you’re taking notes, phone calls, or reading paper materials.

If you can, set up a workstation for yourself where you use your computer.

Ideally this would comprise:
• An adjustable office type chair
• A separate, adjustable screen connected to your laptop
• A separate keyboard connected to your laptop
• A separate mouse connected to your laptop
• A headset with a microphone you can mute for Google Hangout and conference calls.

If you can, adjust your seating position so that:
• Your forearms are level with the desk
• Your hips are above your knees
• The chair is supporting the curves of your back and taking some of the load
• The top of the screen is at eye height.

If you are going to work on your laptop or computer for any length of time, try to keep good posture. Don't sit looking down at your laptop screen all day.

Short-term comfort is often not a good predictor of long-term health. It may feel comfortable slouching on your sofa for ten minutes, but it will soon become uncomfortable.

If you don't have an adjustable chair or a desk, you can adapt a dining room chair by raising the height using cushions. A dining table may be used as a desk, but don't put a hot laptop on top of anything flammable!

**Getting the right equipment**
You may feel that you need additional equipment at home to work safely and efficiently at home. If so, please advise your line manager. Your line manager will be provided with guidance on how to respond to these requests week commencing 23 March. We are working hard to develop this guidance as soon as possible, taking into consideration the current availability of suitable equipment to buy/rent, budget provision, tax implications, etc.

In the meantime, please take extra care to follow the guidance in this document around health and safety at your workstation.
Further guidance is available from the UK Health and Safety Team. Contact the facilities helpdesk: facilitieshelpdesk@tearfund.org.

**IT technical support and guidance**

Many staff are already very familiar with working away from the office. However, this may still be a challenging time as we move to doing all of our work remotely.

You can find a simple ABC guide to working from home on the IT hub site.

Most of our work (such as Google Docs, Hangout, AffinisWeb, etc) is done through a web browser (such as Google Chrome).

For other tools (such as PSF, IBIS) we can use a VPN to connect to the office and still work effectively remotely.

**Use Tearfund supplied laptops**

Because all staff have laptops, you should be able to connect to your home WiFi and begin working straight away. As you know, it is important to use your Tearfund supplied laptop for your work rather than home computers. This will keep our data secure and ultimately protects those we serve and each other.

**Use the same tools as usual**

We encourage you to continue to use the same tools you normally use for your daily work as these are what you are familiar with. They have enabled you and your team to work effectively, have been checked for cyber and data security, and are what IT already supports you with.

**Digital and Technology Reference Group**

The Digital and Technology Reference Group (facilitated by Catriona Dejean with representatives from across all parts of Tearfund in the UK and internationally) are currently reviewing the use of digital tools across the organisation over the next two weeks and will then provide recommendations to the ExCom on potential new tools or approaches. In the meantime, we are asking most staff to make the best use of our existing tools (Google and others approved by IT), as they adjust to their new work environment.

If you would like to be involved with the innovation process, please get in touch with the Digital and Technology Reference Group (digandtech@tearfund.org).
Suggesting new ways of working
There may be new ways of working and tools which could help Tearfund. Where appropriate, we will explore and innovate. From an IT perspective, we will do this in a careful way to ensure we don’t cause extra work at this challenging time or put Tearfund’s data at risk. The Digital Reference Group will work together to gather learning around this.

Google Hangouts
In order to work effectively in meetings, we will continue to use Google Hangouts as our default conferencing tool.

Please ensure you are comfortable and familiar with this tool and the controls in it. For example, check that you know how to mute yourself, and how to choose the best speaker and microphone for your set-up.

Use headsets
We have asked line managers to purchase headsets for all staff. This is also a key part of our Virtual Meeting training. A headset ensures you get the best possible audio quality for your meetings, and also that others hear you well.

You can find recommendations for headsets on the IT hub.

Talk to IT if you need support
If you have any need for IT Support, please continue to talk to the IT Team. We are working and ready to help you.

You can email itsupport@tearfund.org. We have also found recently that chat is working really well, so try it by using itsupport@tearfund.org in Google chat.

We will also try to give any advice we can about your home working experience.

Guidance for managers
This is a challenging time and we would encourage you to embrace the potential of remote management to become the best virtual leader you can be.

Remote management is not always possible as not all roles can be outworked at home, or the home environment may not be suited to home-working. If the staff
member's role does not allow the individual to work from home then please speak to your HR Manager or HR Business Partner for guidance.

Any request to work from home must be at the prior agreement of the Country Director/Team Leader unless a decision is made at a corporate or government level. For staff in the UK agreement has been given at a corporate level.

Leading well
Remote management requires leading and managing in a different way.

- Think ahead – how are you going to lead your remote team?
- Discuss what sort of team you want to be and agree your ways of working.
- Clarify roles, goals and responsibilities.
- Put in place ground rules for behaviour, ensure these are contextualised and in line with Tearfund policy.
- Build trust and confidence in this new way of working.
- As much as possible set clear expectations about the period of time for remote working (refer to the Coronavirus guidance for staff and Q&As).

Building your virtual team
- Make communication more conscious, planned and personal to replace daily face to face interactions.
- Connect in regularly (as a team and individual catch ups /one-to-ones).
- Make time for personal interaction (for example small talk, icebreaker, turn camera on at start of meeting).
- Be aware of each other’s personal situations (such as children in home, housemates, relatives in the house, caring responsibilities).
- Empathise with each other, develop trust.
- Create clear working documents for individual and team tasks.
- Stay focused on priorities, agree clear actions and communicate any changing goals.
- Consciously and systematically give regular updates, status reports and share important news with the team.
- Expect projects to be affected and consider how to minimise the impact and build in buffer time as things may take longer to achieve.
- Pray as a team, organise virtual devotions (resources).
- Keep the team motivated and encourage thoughts, ideas and suggestions.
- In meetings be present: avoid looking at emails/phone during meetings, take turns to speak, ensure everyone has the opportunity.
- Appreciate differences, create space for individual styles and understand cultural differences when communicating with each other.
- Celebrate success and encourage each other.
● Address problems quickly, don't let things fester.
● Spend quality time with new recruits ensuring they are fully briefed.
● Use matrix management guidelines to ensure effective working in a matrix team.

**Wellbeing**
A change in work arrangements can be challenging for staff and line managers. Moving to increased remote working can lead to people feeling a sense of disconnection which can affect productivity and engagement.

● Be sensitive towards each other.
● Make sure workloads are manageable.
● Monitor stress and psychological wellbeing for extended periods of isolation.
● Each person's situation is different – ensure you are aware of care responsibilities.
● Ensure team members have clear boundaries in place for work/home life (including only working contracted hours, taking breaks from screen and for lunch).
● For additional support on wellbeing contact our Pastoral Care Coordinator directly for assistance wellbeing@tearfund.org.

**Technology and communication tools**
● Establish good understanding and ability to use technology (such as email, Google Docs/Sheets, Hangouts, Skype, Zoom, WhatsApp).
● Discuss preferred means of communication to keep in contact with your team.
● Ensure you have permission to use personal numbers if setting up a WhatsApp group.
● Clarify how urgent messages will be communicated/responded to.
● Ensure Google Calendar is used and up to date.
● Mute microphones on video conferences when not speaking.
● Use headsets/speakers where available to improve audio.
● Consider using a rolling Google Document to share key updates within the team to maximise meeting time efficiency.
● Ensure Data Protection Policy is followed.
● For IT assistance on Remote Working please have a look here.
Confidentiality and privacy

If you handle confidential information as a part of your role or you handle any personal data, it is important to maintain standards of confidentiality and privacy when working from home. Please consider the following:

- Work in a confidential space wherever possible
- If you are taking confidential papers or documents containing personal data home - please lock them away or keep them somewhere safe and private when not in use
- If you are sharing your ‘home office’ and you need to take a call that will contain confidential information ensure that you have privacy for the duration of the call
- Sit with your back to a wall so that your laptop screen cannot be easily read without your consent
- Do not use personal devices to work on Tearfund documents and ensure, as always, that you lock documents down so that they can only be accessed by the people who need to see them.