



Using digital technologies to support your employees' wellbeing

This factsheet builds on "[Helping your employees through COVID-19](#)" to include ways in which a business can use digital technologies to help their employees stay well during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Mental

- **Digital anxiety:** many people feel increased levels of stress when faced with more digital ways of working. For some this is simply because it's different, but for others this will be because they feel they lack the necessary skills, equipment or access to platforms. Employers can hold a "digital amnesty" to allow colleagues to let their line managers or central services teams know that they may need extra support, as well as scaling up their digital skills training. Business in the Community's [Digital Champions Network](#) has many leading examples of digital skills programmes.
- **Digital leaders:** other employers have been able to increase levels of digital literacy by using a network of "digital champions" or mentors, who volunteer to help other colleagues with digital technology questions. Feedback from these volunteers also help the business to better identify strengths and weaknesses across the organisation.
- **Work-life balance:** giving people the digital skills and equipment needed to work remotely is only the first step to effective flexible working. Creating the right culture is key. Especially at this difficult time with increased stress, restricted lives and increased caring responsibilities, an important first step is encouraging colleagues to work the hours they can. Simple measures such as adding notes to signatures can help people ensure work fits their lives, whilst being mindful of their effect on others:

We work flexibly at Business in the Community. I'm sending this now because it suits me, but please don't feel that you need to respond if it's outside your regular hours.

Sharing guidance and examples may also help to avoid creating an "always on" culture:

- Turn off notifications at the end of the day and maybe throughout parts of it too.
- Manage your inbox by scheduling time to address its content and use assistant tools such as calendar.
- Set aside focus time each week





- **Tools that can help:** there are many free or tools included with software that are available for colleagues and employers. Microsoft include “MyAnalytics” in their Office365 suite, which allows colleagues to see their working patterns differently, share suggestions and improve productivity through wellness.
- **Enabling volunteers:** businesses can still support their communities by encouraging colleagues to volunteer remotely. Business in the Community’s new [community fact-sheet](#) has more information, including details of how Business in the Community can help to broker community relationships.

Physical

- **Health and safety at home:** many employers will run training and assessments in their offices to ensure that colleagues have set up their desks to minimise the risk of injury to joints, the back and eyes. At home, many won’t have the same adaptations and will default to inappropriate working conditions. Resharing guidance and offering adaptations at home, especially for those with extra needs, will help to minimise these risks. Additionally, encourage people to take mini breaks from their computer. Just a walk around their flat or garden may help or walking whilst on calls will all help to keep the body moving.
- **Moving, digitally:** approximately a [third of people](#) own a smart watch or health tracker, with most owning a smart phone with health tracking apps. Some employers are even offering them as an employee benefit. Businesses can encourage people to use theirs to track movement whilst working from home, including by running team competitions. Some companies ask employees to share that data and other with them to give them a better insight into their wellbeing and what affects it, although there are clear privacy challenges here.
- **E-health:** are your employees able to digitally access the healthcare they need? For some, this is a case of ensuring that insurance providers have online alternatives, whilst others can let employees know about alternative services.

Social

- **Staying connected with colleagues:** online video conferencing services are great for helping people stay connected whilst working remotely. It helps even more if businesses create a culture where videos are shared by default too. These tools can be used for both professional and casual meetings, such as regular “virtual tea times” and wellbeing sessions to help maintain team morale.
- **Digital in and out of work:** employers may also wish to suggest ways for their employees to continue socialising outside of work hours. For example, free apps such as [Houseparty](#) are a fun and informal way to stay connected.





Financial

- **Equipment costs:** for those who don't normally work remotely, this may include the need to buy, repair or replace their personal laptop or phone if they're finding themselves having to use it more. Businesses should understand the scale of this challenge and offer to help where possible, either by subsidising costs or finding second-hand / refurbished equipment.

