

## **Working from Home (including ICT)**

### **2.21 Do I need to tell my insurance provider that I'm working from home?**

According to the [Association of British Insurers](#) (ABI), working from home should be covered by standard home insurance policies, if the work is clerical (using a computer, making calls, paperwork) in nature.

However, we recommend you check your insurer's website. Many insurance providers are saying they do not need you to contact them to tell them you are working from home, but some may want you to confirm this.

You do not need to take out additional insurance against loss or damage of WG-owned ICT or other equipment (e.g. laptops, chairs) provided to support home-working. However, WG will not cover the cost of loss/damage of any personally-owned equipment you may also be using. This includes items purchased by you, but subsequently reimbursed by WG, such as a monitor.

### **2.22 Will WG make tax payments while I'm working from home?**

Welsh Government will not be making additional payments for homeworking.

Individuals may wish to claim tax relief for the additional costs arising from having to work from home on a regular basis. Regular is defined by HMRC as frequent or following a pattern. You cannot claim tax relief if you choose to work from home. The Welsh Government will be making clear to HMRC what the position is for staff on working from home and that it is not a decision for the individual.

You can only claim for costs relating to your work, for example, business telephone calls or the extra cost of gas and electricity for your work area. You cannot claim for things that you use for both private and business use, for example, rent or broadband access.

You can only claim if you have paid tax in the year. Tax relief will be based on the rate at which you pay tax. Collecting or apportioning any additional costs arising from working from home could prove difficult and, therefore, HMRC has agreed individuals can claim tax relief of £6 per week regardless of the actual costs incurred.

HMRC has confirmed that no evidence will be required to support claims based on £6 per week. Any claims in excess of £6 per week will need to be evidenced.

Claims must be retrospective. Claims can be made on an ongoing basis during the year or once at the end of the year. It is unlikely that HMRC will directly reimburse costs incurred. It is far more likely that HMRC will adjust an individual's tax code for the year to come. Further information is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/working-at-home>

Claims can be actioned using the HMRC self-assessment form or the HMRC 'claim income tax relief for your employment expenses (P87)' form.

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There are a number of different ways to claim tax relief depending on your circumstances.

### **Claim online**

To claim these expenses, you will need a Government Gateway user ID and password. You can create a user ID if you do not already have one. Creating a Government Gateway ID usually takes about 10 minutes. It works best if you have:

- your National Insurance number
- a recent pay-slip or P60 or a valid UK passport

[Claim using the online service \(registration required\).](#)

### **Claim by post**

A hard copy claim form is available but you must use this form if you're claiming either:

- on behalf of someone else
- relief for more than 5 different jobs

You'll need to fill in [the print and post form on-screen](#) and send it to HMRC. The return address is on the form.

### **Claim by phone**

You can claim by [phone](#) if you have already claimed expenses in a previous year and your total expenses are less than either:

- £1,000
- £2,500 for professional fees and subscriptions

## **2.23 What can I do to work from home smarter?**

We've produced a really handy guide to working from home that you can access [here](#).

If you haven't already done so, please

- Set up call forwarding from your desk phone to an alternative number.
- Read the 'Effective Working from Home Handbook' and the Virtual Meeting Guide.
- Consider whether you require any other equipment to enable you to work from home safely. There is further information below on how to get additional equipment and how whether you can be reimbursed.
- you know how to spot scams/phishing emails (there are quite a few circulating about COVID-19). Cyber Safe Wales have produced an online tutorial about phishing which you can access via the WG Learning Lab. Or watch this short video from the [National Cyber Security Centre](#) on how to spot a phishing scam.

If you need further information on how to connect to the Welsh Government network from home, please call the ICT Service Desk on 0300 025 5555.

## 2.24 Can I go to the office to collect my equipment to use at home?

If you have equipment that you did not manage to take home with you i.e. standard office chair or an already assigned specialist chair, keyboard, mouse, mouse mat, lap top riser, headset, specialist chair or footrest and is **essential** for you to be able to work effectively at home it may be possible to collect these items from your **nearest office** under the following arrangements:

- You must be able to collect and transport the equipment yourself.
- You **must** also be able to return and transport the equipment yourself if it is necessary to do so once office working is restored.
- You should only travel to the office if it is essential that you need the equipment to be able to work at home.
- You should **only** travel to the office if you are well enough to do so. You must **not** go to the office if you have any symptoms or if a member of your household has symptoms.
- You will need your building security pass in order to gain access to the office and remove items. Please remember your pass as temporary passes will not be issued on the day.
- You will need to complete the 'Request Office Equipment for Home form' which can also be found on MyIT under the Remote Services section. Your local facilities manager will then contact you to arrange a date and time that you can call to collect your equipment.

**If you are collecting an office chair** you need to read the Furniture and Equipment for Home Use guidance which contains important details of your responsibilities and information regarding the size and weight of chairs and suggested two person handling.

You must be able to visit the respective office on the time / day which Facilities advise; access will not be allowed at any other time.

We are managing the movement of people around our offices for health and safety reasons so stocks of equipment will be made available and you will not be permitted to visit other parts of the building such as your desk at the current time. You must have your building security pass with you to access the building and pick up any equipment.

Any equipment that is moved will be taken at your own risk. You will need to make sure that you have a suitable vehicle and consider manual handling guidelines.

Please note that **monitors** are attached to arms and don't come with a stand so these unfortunately cannot be removed.

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If you have:

- An underlying condition that hasn't to date merited a specialist chair but which is being exacerbated by homeworking
- An underlying condition for which the freedom chair has been recommended by Workplace Adjustment Team (WAT)
- Are developing a musculoskeletal disorders as a result of working from home and generic advice on breaks isn't improving your condition

You should complete an online DSE assessment and if advised by Workplace Adjustments Team (WAT) that a chair is needed, you should arrange to pick up the chair from your local office in liaison with the local facilities team.

Any items taken home must be returned when you are back in the office, though headsets can be taken back and forth as needed.

If you are working at home and have any concerns about:

- reasonable adjustments, please contact the **Workplace Adjustments Team** for advice;
- ICT software or adjustments, please contact the ICT Service desk for advice;
- furniture or other standard equipment, please contact the Facilities Helpdesk for advice.

### **2.25 I need a monitor and other equipment to work from home, can I buy and reclaim?**

Due to the high level of requests for additional kit to assist home working, we are currently unable to process any new or outstanding requests for equipment made via the ICT catalogue nor would we be able to provide monitors or printers. Connecting your laptops to a personal printer breaches ICT Security Policy and is not allowed. On that basis, personal printer consumables will not be reimbursed as they should not be used for work related activity.

In exceptional circumstances where you cannot reasonably work without the following equipment, your line manager can authorise you to purchase and be reimbursed for the following if needed and within the limits (inc VAT):

- Mouse and Keyboard set (up to £25)
- Monitor (up to £150)
- Laptop Riser (up to £20)
- Headset (up to £20) – if not available via MyIT<sup>1</sup>

Under the transitional working arrangements, a 'print and collect' service is now available from the Aberystwyth, Cardiff, Merthyr and Llandudno Junction offices. An additional 'print and post' service is also being trialled via the Copy Unit in the Cardiff

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<sup>1</sup> Please check MyIT for stock availability **before** purchasing your own headset.

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office. Please see the separate guidance on Office Printing Arrangements for details of both options.

For many people, the laptop and headsets will be sufficient to work effectively at home and you can make adjustments to make your work space more comfortable. There are some steps that you can take to make life easier:

You can connect your laptop to your TV or home monitor if you need a larger screen. If you are unable to use an alternative screen in your home you will need to speak to your line manager to discuss your specific needs.

You are able to plug in a personal keyboard and mouse (including Bluetooth). Other personal items must still not be connected in line with our Security Policy. If you use some household items such as a box or some books to raise your laptop you can create a user experience more like the office, otherwise you can purchase a laptop riser.

If you are in a quiet room at home you do not need a headset to use Skype or MS Teams. Alternatively you can use a personal set of headphones (not Bluetooth) for example, those that came with your mobile phone as they have a microphone built in.

Where the WAT team advise, following a DSE assessment, that other office equipment is needed in order to work from home, Welsh Government may exceptionally reimburse for reasonable costs towards the equipment

These can be claimed via e-payments via own budget, but only with a valid receipt. Costs will then be met centrally once we have worked through the details of how recharging costs will work in practice. Additional guidance on how to use e-payments can be found here. It enables you to set up your bank account details for payment purposes on the T&S system. If you are already registered on the T&S system, you don't need to go through this process again.

You do not make any claim through the T&S system. You then need to make the claim by providing copies of any invoices to your line manager or local divisional finance / operations team where they exist, who will process the claim for you.

If you purchase ICT equipment and claim the costs back, it is our expectation that these will be retained by you for future smart working from home. Welsh Government will not reimburse for each item of equipment (monitor, mouse, keyboard, laptop riser, headset) within 3 years of first claim.

The purchase of ICT and other office equipment for the home may have tax implications. The equipment you purchase and are subsequently reimbursed for should not be for private use. The provision of equipment should be based on your duties and the need for you to have the equipment to undertake these duties.

### **2.26 Can I order a desk for home use?**

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We want you to have a safe and comfortable home environment to work in and ExCo have listened to your feedback and agreed that desks are available for you to order if you need one. You can request a desk for homeworking by completing the 'Request Office Desk for Home' form in the Remote Services Section of MyIT.

Before ordering, please read the Homeworking Desks guidance and ensure the option you need will fit the space you have available in your home and that you are familiar with the package size, weight, delivery and assembly instructions etc.

Desks will be provided in flat-pack format for assembly at home. A limited number of flat-packed desks will also be made available from a number of our offices if you would prefer to collect one. Please make sure your vehicle is big enough to accommodate the package before selecting this option. If calling to your local office would mean travelling in or out of an area that is under travel restrictions due to a local lockdown related to coronavirus (COVID-19) then you will need to select the delivery option.

### **2.27 How do I get stationery items or be reimbursed for them?**

If you are based at one of the four open offices, you may attend your office to pick up stationery (pens, notebooks or other small items) from your team or Division's stocks where you are unable to replenish from any personal provision. Please follow the Ad-hoc Attendance guidance for details of the process to follow for your office. Please don't attend the office without approval in advance or you may be turned away.

If your 'home office' or other local office is not open or you are unable to collect items yourself for any reason, you can obtain prior approval from your Line Manager to purchase stationery items. Receipts must be provided and you will be reimbursed via e-payments using your divisional cost codes. To reduce the administrative burden of processing claims, no claim under £5 will be paid.

In order to get the most from your office visits, you should where possible aim to collect stationery when visiting an office for another reason, e.g. collecting printing or on days where it has been agreed that you will work out of an office.

### **2.28 Where is the IT kit I ordered for my new starter?**

All new users will be issued with a laptop but the build cannot take place until all New Starter arrangements have been completed. Before contacting ICT can you please check that you have completed the following:

- Submitted a New User Account for the user via MyIT
- Completed the Laptop request for the user via MyIT

Until confirmation is received from Shared Service Centre (SSC) that a New User Account has been approved and created ICT are unable to action the laptop build. To progress a New User Account please speak with your HR Business Partner or SSC.

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The commencement of the laptop build process is completely dependent on the approval of the New User account from HR. Once approval has been received we will commence the laptop but may not be able to provide an estimated date for completion as this is dependent on the numbers already being built

### **2.29 I have no connectivity at home. What can I do?**

If you already pay for broadband at home then no additional expenses can be claimed without creating a potential tax liability. If your broadband is capped and you're unable to remove that cap for free, WG will reimburse the differential.

If a broadband internet connection is needed to work from home and is not already available, then the broadband fee can be reimbursed by WG and is non-taxable.

If you wish to purchase your own external wifi dongle then you are allowed to do so, but they must not be of the type which connect via USB. Welsh Government will not reimburse any costs associated with purchase of such dongles.

Official telephone calls and extra data charges can be claimed back by annotating bills with the additional costs highlighted, in line with T&S policies. For more information please refer to the Staff Reimbursements page on the intranet.

**Welsh Government will only reimburse the costs until you are once again able to work from a WG office. The funding for this will cease when your office re-opens and you will become solely responsible for any ongoing costs, so please bear this in mind before committing to any additional expenditure.**

Please note the agreement to funding is given at a departmental level with the approval of your line manager following a discussion around the need and reimbursement will be made with evidence of extra costs via e-payments.

Note: under normal circumstances paid special leave or flexi credits are not available where broadband speed/quality cannot reliably support individual home-working. In the event of short-term disruption to connectivity, if there are no off-line tasks that can be done at home, employees may use annual leave, flexi leave or apply for unpaid leave to cover any lost working time. If connectivity issues are likely to be long term, individual employees can apply via their line manager to work out of one of the available WG offices.

### **2.30 Receiving Work Phone Calls**

Did you know you can forward your office phone? You can do this by following the guidance contained within the MyIT – Call Forwarding Guide.

### **2.31 I need IT support, how can I get help?**

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You should try MyIT in the first instance or alternatively call the ICT Service Desk on 0300 025 5555. They are open from 7am through to 7pm Monday to Friday excluding bank holidays.