



EUROPEAN SAFETY WEEK

NATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY FUNCTION (NHSF) • 2023

"SAFE & HEALTHY WORK IN THE DIGITAL AGE" CAMPAIGN 2023 - 2025

BLENDED WORKING

Remote working is any type of working arrangement involving the use of digital technologies to work from home or a fixed location away from an employer's premises. The term blended working refers to a combination of working from an employer's premises and working remotely. The Health Service Executive (HSE) is committed to facilitating blended working arrangements for those roles that can be performed remotely. Blended working is based on an agreement between you and your employer. It is not an automatic entitlement and is subject to an application process where certain criteria must be met and requires management approval. Once finalised, these arrangements can be reviewed and changed as necessary.



In line with the HSE's Blended Working Policy for the Public Health Service, managers and employees have responsibilities to ensure that the health and safety requirements as set out in the legislation and relevant guidance are met while blended working arrangements are in place.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Who is responsible for carrying out the Blended Working Risk Assessment?

It is the responsibility of the line manager or designate (i.e. employees at Grade V level or above) and for clinical areas CNM1 level and above) to complete the Remote Working Risk Assessment. This assessment reviews the proposed workspace and display screen equipment (DSE). It can be completed online, for example through the use of video calls ideally with a smartphone, so that the employee can move freely around the designated workstation and space. During the assessment, the line manager/assessor can identify and direct the employee to areas that require improvements or changes. In line with the requirements of the HSE's Policy and Guidance on Lone Working, a Lone Working Risk Assessment for remote workers must also be undertaken. Please see below the details of safety responsibilities.

Manager's Responsibilities

- To ensure that the Remote Working Risk assessment is completed by a competent person/DSE Assessor and periodically reviewed
- To comply with the requirements of the HSE policy and guidance on lone-working
- To ensure equitable treatment for employees whether working from the work premises or remotely
- To promote a positive, open and inclusive working environment
- To maintain regular contact with your employees to maximise engagements at individual and team levels
- To ensure your employees know that they are subject to the terms and conditions of their contract of employment, HSE policies, and procedures while working remotely
- To promote a culture that supports a healthy work-life balance in line with HSE's right-to-disconnect policy for public health service employees
- To provide training and support to enable your employees to carry out their roles remotely
- To support the health and well-being of your employees and provide details of support available

Employee's Responsibilities

- To complete the Blended Working Application Form and Declaration
- To identify a single designated remote workstation that is suitable for the performance of duties and meets health and safety requirements
- To agree to risk assessment conducted by the manager or designate
- Not to make substantive changes to the workstation without authorisation
- To confirm that they can connect to a work computer via their own reliable broadband connection, and
- To confirm that the workstation allows compliance with data security and applicable confidentiality standards



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DSE ASSESSOR

The safety of your colleagues is paramount and to ensure that your colleagues are safe while availing of remote working the Remote Working Risk assessment needs to be completed by a competent person/DSE assessor. To become a DSE Assessor, you must complete the following training modules available on [HSeLanD](#):

- Managing Health & Safety in the Healthcare Setting
- DSE Users Awareness training
- DSE Assessor module

You will find more information on Office and DSE safety on the [NHSE](#) web pages.



BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF BLENDED WORKING

Following the COVID-19 Pandemic, our working lives and the way we work have in some way or another changed. A national survey on [Remote Working in Ireland](#) from the Western Development Commission and NUI Galway was released in May 2022.

This survey found that 84% of respondents agreed that working remotely increased productivity and 79% agreed that working remotely reduced their work-related stress. Remote working can suit some employees but it can also present challenges. To ensure everyone gets the most from this arrangement, all risks associated with remote working must be assessed including psychosocial risk. For more information on this please see Information Sheet No. 4.



Benefits of Remote Working

- Increased productivity
- Increased autonomy and flexibility
- Better work / life balance
- Improved motivation
- Reduced commute times

Challenges of Remote Working

- Isolation and lone working
- Intensification of work
- Lack of face-to-face interaction
- Conflicts between private and working life - remembering to switch off from work



The HSE is supporting Blended Working through its Blended Working policy. Managers can contact [HR](#) to discuss the Blended Working Policy. For more information on Blended Working please visit the [NHSE](#) website where you will also find a copy of the Remote Working Risk Assessment Form and associated information.

CONTACT THE NHSE



1800 420 420

Monday to Friday
10:30am - 12pm & 2pm - 3.30pm



To log an online request for health and safety information, advice or support please click [here](#).

