

COVID-19 Remote Working: Case Studies & Top Tips

The outbreak of the coronavirus COVID-19 has impacted the way we work. The prospect of having to work from home can be a daunting prospect.

The following text outlines how a person who usually works from home, has adapted to the new COVID-19 way of working.

Please see The Council's [pages](#) for the latest information on COVID-19.

If you have any questions, queries or are looking for further advice, then please do not hesitate to get in touch at
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Introductions

Gary Bell – Paths for All

Gary Bell is a Development Officer within the Smarter Choices, Smarter Places team at Paths for All. He's located in Stirling, though has been working remotely 2 days a week since September 2019.

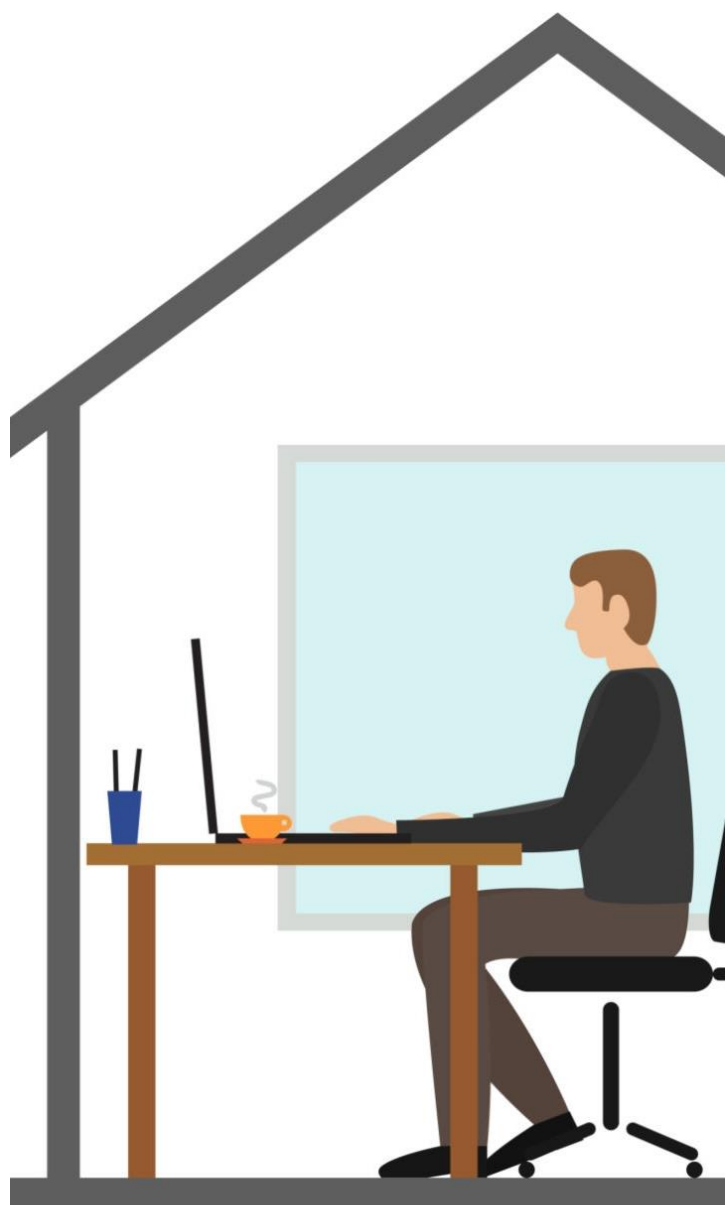
I have been working remotely now since back in September 2019 after the company moved to new offices.

As part of that move, all staff were required to 'hot desk'. I think the most surprising aspect of working from home permanently is the ease of it all - at least once you get a good internet connection set up!

In terms of working hours, it's the same core hours as I worked when I was in the office, which is the regular 9 until 5.

My favourite part of working from home is most definitely the autonomy and flexibility of doing your work. At the end of the day you are judged on what you produce, not where you are or how you got there.

Naturally the lack of social interaction is a downside, though this can be replicated through calls and messages. It is important to try and retain those daily connections with people so not to feel distanced from others.



COVID-19 & Working from Home



The biggest change that I've experienced is that I am not longer in office at all anymore, I now work at home 100% of the time, as opposed to 20/30% of the week that I used to. There is of course no travel involved in my day anymore too, whereas usually I would be on trains most days, travelling to see local authorities throughout Scotland. Those are two really big changes to my working week. When working from home ***you have to accept that there are going to be elements that you aren't going to be able to do well as you can when back in the office*** or meeting people in person, and this is fine.

Try to focus on what you can do in the now which, for example, may be things like more desk-based research. If it is possible, bring those tasks forward and use this opportunity to concentrate on completing those tasks.

Tips for Remote Working

For us Slack has been a key channel of communication [a work intranet with add-ons such as the ability to message others]. We all use this on a daily basis to keep up to date.

The company host a 'huddle' once a week where everyone gets together on Zoom to replicate what we used to do in person. These 'huddles' help us to make up for the lack of physical meetings and it has been really successful.

I think the key skill for success in home working is being task-focussed.

When you work remotely there is little value in just sitting there and being present. No one can see that. You are going to be judged based on your outputs.

The most important thing my company has done for us is provide us with the right tools to get the job done and communicate well. We all have a good laptop and an internet connection that is up to speed and can cope with the extra usage it is having to get through.

We are quite fortunate that our IT department was already prepared for this working from home period. Most of us have been working from home for a while now after an office move, so a lot of preparation had been done on that transition and getting everyone set up with the right kit.

COVID-19 & Behaviour Change

I see this as such a brilliant opportunity for change. I am a keen cyclist, so I am always out on my bike. Over the last few weeks we've seen motor traffic fall away to similar levels as in 1955. It's a remarkable change. People are now experiencing life with low car use and for most it'll be the first time they've had that in their lives. Look at how many families you see on the roads now that the traffic has eased. It's brilliant. Why can't we try to retain this?

We have to ensure that we've captured the learning of this experience. We should be keeping a record of what we were doing throughout this process and compare it to life before and after the virus. For example, now that we're all working from home permanently, has this been more, less or equally as efficient as before? If it turns out that efficiencies are remaining at acceptable levels, then why can't companies look to keep this up post-lockdown, providing that staff are enjoying it?

We really have to ensure we capture the benefits of this period, collect the data, and then use this to inform people and behaviour change strategies in the future.