

The shift to working from home can disrupt work patterns, modes of communication and team dynamics. Some may enjoy and feel productive working from home, others may struggle. The COVID-19 situation may have also created additional stressors for people, and leaders are expected to be supportive of their teams at this time, while balancing the need for the continued delivery of work.

The expectations on you as a leader stay the same, however the circumstances may require you to make some adjustments and *monitoring the well-being of your team becomes even more vital than it was*. **This resource contains expectations on you as a people leader and includes tips to help you in your leadership during this time.** If you have any concerns or questions, speak to your own leader or your [local Human Resources Advisor \(HRA\)](#).

Security Requirements

- Remind your team about the requirements to maintain security while working from home. This includes creating appropriate privacy for phone calls and not taking physical copies of classified material home. Remind your teams that a work cell phone is UNCLASSIFIED so people cannot use it to discuss or send classified information. Classified material cannot be emailed via the internet or sent to unclassified personal email accounts. Encourage your team to raise any concerns with you and escalate these to your own leader if required.

Health, Safety and Wellness

- Remind your team of their responsibility to ensure their working at home space is safe and to raise concerns with you if they have them. A one page information sheet about Health and Safety at home can be found [here on the ILP](#) and information about setting up a work space can be found on the [Habitat at Work internet page](#). Share this with your team along with the NZDF COVID-19 Wellness guide. This can be found on the [ILP](#) or [internet](#).

If you are concerned about your own physical health or that of others related to COVID-19 call the 24/7 Healthline 0800 358 5453 (or for international SIMs call +64 9 358 5453) for advice. For any crisis, including medical emergencies, call 111.

If you are concerned about an individual or your own wellbeing, the 24/7 NZDF4U Wellbeing support line offers confidential support and counselling- 0800 693348 or text 8881 (this service also supports the NZDF Healthline, so demand can be high. If you end up in a queue, try texting and get them to contact you). Encourage your team to access this.

Maintain Daily Contact

- Contact each team member a minimum of once per day to see how they are, share information and touch base about work. This could be a text, 1:1 or group phone call or email. The demand for RAS tokens has significantly increased the load for RAS servers in NZDF data centres. To minimise the impact, use NZDF mobile devices for emails in preference to RAS where possible. Install the Blackberry Access app (from the Apple/Google store) to access the intranet, instead of needing to RAS in. Don't rely on email/text every day, make it a phone call at least every few days. If you don't have a same-day reply to a text or email, give them a call. If you haven't been able to contact them within a 12 hour period, then consider calling their next of kin.
- In addition to email and phone, a number of platforms can be used for keeping in touch with your team.
 - Outside of CITRIX, there are a number of applications however, they must only be used for UNCLASSIFIED conversations/information. These include Zoom (video conferencing app which

allows multiple users to join conversations), Slack (group messaging app with private channels for team members to join as required), Facetime (video calling for iPhone users) and WhatsApp (text and voice message).

- *Consider security and your team's preferences when deciding what to use. Don't create additional stress by forcing people to work out how to use technology unnecessarily. Identify someone on the team who can help others.*

Ensure your Team Take the Correct Leave

- If a member is sick and cannot work or they are caring for a sick dependent and cannot work, then they should take Sick Leave. If they have confirmed COVID-19 or 'Suspected COVID-19' and are unable to work, then they should be on C19 Isolation Leave. This must be confirmed through Healthline, Defence Health Centre or the member's General Practitioner.
- If a member decides to have a full-day off work, whether they have dependents at home or otherwise, they should take annual leave as normal.
- If one of your team is caring for a child who is well, but at home due to school/childcare closures and, because of this, they are unable to work 'normal' hours, you must generously apply flexible working arrangements (e.g. the member can work in the evenings or set parts of the day to allow for childcare). COVID 19 presents a unique set of circumstances, including a prolonged period at home with dependents. Though leaders must support flexible working arrangements for those working from home, the type and volume of outputs may differ from normal at this time. As such, leaders must take in to account each individual's circumstances when assigning tasks and timelines, without requiring leave to be taken. Despite these unique circumstances, members are expected to do their best to manage work and home life while at home.

Required Leadership Behaviours

Think Smart

- **Maintain your own resilience by taking care of yourself and role model good practice.** Take regular breaks; don't take on too much; ask for help if you need it; exercise to relax and eat well; ensure enough sleep; maintain boundaries between work tasks and home tasks. Be open with your team about where you are finding it hard to maintain resilience and share any helpful things you are doing.
- **Maintain your team's situational awareness.** When you receive information via email or meetings/phone calls, including your work and the Covid-19 situation, consider who in the team needs to know this. If in doubt, share it. In times of uncertainty and when potential isolation/worry is involved, it's best to share more than less. Remember, the team will not be getting the level of information they picked up when in the office. If they have questions, go and find the answer for them. Regularly check in with information sources such as the ILP.
- **Brainstorm with the team about how current projects/tasks can be redesigned or adjusted to allow work to continue at home.** Be clear about priorities and what parts of BAU will need to go on hold. Speak to your own leader about what their expectations of you and the team are if normal tasks or outputs cannot be delivered. Think about how you spread the load across the team.

- **Regularly seek feedback from the team about how the situation is working for them and what could be done to make it more effective.** E.g. “Considering our new way of working, what could I/we stop doing, start doing and keep doing to ensure that you can do your best work?” “What challenges are we facing?” “What do we need to change about our tasks/projects or ways of working?” There may be initial hiccups but reassure people that things will get easier.

Influence Others

- **Be aware that phone meetings and emails don’t give you the benefit of seeing non-verbal communication.** You may need to ask more questions and/or provide more structure to ensure everyone can have input. E.g. “What’s your understanding?” “I’m not sure that I am conveying my idea the best way. What have you heard me say?” “Can we please go around and everyone provide their opinion, let’s start with you Frank”. “Was there anything else you wanted to say Jan?”
- **Be aware of long ‘reply all’ emails.** They can be confusing to keep track of. Call the person or arrange a team phone call.
- **Focus on your active listening skills.**
 - Remove distractions when you’re having phone conversations
 - Listen for the tone in the person’s voice... does this match the words? (If not, gently raise this. E.g. “I just wanted to check that you are happy with this approach, I sense you might have a few more questions?”)
 - Use probing/open ended questions E.g. “When did this start?” “Do you feel comfortable with everything I’ve just said?” “What can I help you with?” “Tell me more about that”.
 - Leave longer spaces after they have finished speaking then you may do in person to ensure they are finished
 - Don’t pre-empt what the person is going to say... give them the space to talk
 - Recap what you’ve heard E.g. “It sounds like you are saying x, is that correct?” “What I’m hearing is”
 - Admit when you haven’t heard someone properly. E.g. “Sorry I missed that last point, could you please repeat it.”
- **Trust your team.** Be clear about the *outcome/output* that you expect and regularly discuss/ provide feedback on that. Manage the outcome not the process. Check in to see how people are going, but not to check that they are working. If you had trust issues with someone in your team before they started working from home, speak with your local HRA about how to specifically manage these situations.

“The best way to find out if you can trust somebody is to trust them.”
Ernest Hemingway

Develop Teams

- **To encourage the team’s buy-in, brainstorm with them to work through and agree expectations of how you will work, communicate and collaborate** during this period to ensure that your team continues to deliver the required tasks and outputs, feel engaged and can manage their ‘non work’ responsibilities such

as childcare. E.g. will you have an agreed start time and end time? When will people be available? How will you communicate and when?

- **Ensure meetings are inclusive.** Have meetings at times that align with people's other responsibilities such as childcare. Explicitly ask each team member for their views and input. Talk to the team about how giving people the space to talk is even more important when it's not in person. Monitor and constructively call out interruptions. Go back to people, e.g. "sorry Jack, did you have something further to say about x?" Be tolerant of people needing to take a short break e.g. to attend to children at home. People are balancing multiple things at this time and everyone is doing their best. Give them a few minutes to sort out what they need to and then carry on.
- **Continue to communicate the team's vision and mission** and make links between this and what needs to be delivered in the short term. Be clear where this has changed. Ask if people have any questions.
- **Establish clear boundaries and instructions regarding checking in with you and each other.** Check in's could be done by email, text, social media or phone, perhaps at a set time each day. Cover things like what the person's plan for the day is – approximate hours they will be available and what they are working on; any challenges they are facing. Ensure check in's also cover non work topics such as how people are feeling or how their family is.
- **Consider setting up mentoring and workplace buddies** e.g. within the team nominate buddies so that each person has a go-to person for technology help, support, work questions etc. This may be especially for new employees or those who are challenged by technology.
- **Encourage the team to look out for each other** and be understanding and supportive of those who have different circumstances to their own.

Develop Positive Culture

- **Maintain team norms and find opportunities to take people's minds off parts of the situation they find difficult** E.g. do the 5 minute quiz over the phone, recognise birthdays, run a team challenge. Ask the team for ideas of how team norms could be maintained in these circumstances. Create coordinated opportunities for social interaction e.g. virtual coffee (via Zoom, Facetime etc.)
- **Ensure the team maintains professional and respectful behaviours.** E.g. don't type or look at your phone when on a Zoom call, use appropriate language in texts or social media. Provide feedback to team members if you don't think their behaviour is professional.
- **Maintain the same levels of contact and access to you.** Reflect on how often you saw each other/talked when you worked in the office and how you can recreate that as a *minimum*. E.g. you may need a daily call and/or a morning check in via text. You are not going to bump into people anymore. You will need to create it. Always return phone calls. Create and respect a boundary between work and life. E.g. don't call after 1600 if that was the agreed finish time.
- **Keep up your coaching for performance and development.** Have your regular 1:1's and ad hoc catch ups (via phone). Use good questions e.g. What's challenging you? What ideas do you have? What have you tried? How did it go? Provide clear feedback.

- **Start team meetings with social connection.** Remember, you don't have the ad hoc conversations anymore so you need to replace these. E.g. 'Before we talk about work, I just wanted to hear how you all are and what you've been up to, how are you? How is your family?'
- **Be observant and offer support.** Has someone's standard of performance dropped? Does someone seem less social and patient than normal? Why could this be? Share your observations and ask them if they are OK and what you can do to help.

Helpful Comments	Unhelpful Comments
"You're not alone in this"	"X is far worse off than you"
"You are an important part of our team"	"No one ever said life was fair"
"I'm here to help and support you as you deal with this"	"Stop feeling sorry for yourself"
"Tell me a bit more about what is going on for you"	"We're all under the pump"
"Your wellbeing is important. Let's make a time to talk when we won't get interrupted and I can give you my full attention."	"Snap out of it"
	"You're in the Army/Navy/Airforce, what do you expect?"
	"Take a number in the queue"
	"That stuff is all in the past, get over it"

Mission Focus

- **Be clear if performance objectives need to change** – discuss the new expectations.
 - **Be Specific** – what the person needs to deliver;
 - **Measurable** – how will you both know it's done; and
 - **Time Bound** – when it needs to happen by.

Consider a member's experience level when setting expectations. E.g. if a member is required to do work that is not their normal then your expectations of them may be lower than for a person who does it as part of their core role. **When re-setting objectives, ask what development and support they may need to achieve this.** E.g. regular conversations with you, a phone mentor who does similar work, online reading or learning etc.

- **Provide clear expectations around tasks, logistics and routines** e.g. PT, hours of work, check in's. However, remain flexible and encourage your team to let you know, and discuss, if things need to change.
- **Maintain standards and expectations for delivery and behaviour.** Working from home is still working. While your expectations may need to be reshaped by mutual agreement (as the work may change and flexible working may be required), you can still expect to have your expectations met and the behavioural expectations of people remain the same, including team members letting you know when their situation changes and the impact of this e.g. not being able to meet agreed deadlines. Provide feedback when someone is not meeting your expectations and agree a way forward, including what support they may need from you. *Keep notes about performance just like you would normally do. Performance and Development Reporting (PDR3) will still continue.*