Temporary home working

As an employer, you have the same health and safety responsibilities for home workers as for any other workers. When someone is working from home, permanently or temporarily, as an employer you should consider:

* How will you keep in touch with them?
* What work activity will they be doing (and for how long)?
* Can it be done safely?
* Do you need to put control measures in place to protect them?

For the majority of home workers, the work activities will be low risk, but they are potentially alone with no direct supervision or anyone to help them if things go wrong.

Employers should make arrangements to keep in touch with lone workers, including those working from home, and ensure regular contact to make sure they are healthy and safe. If contact is poor, workers may feel disconnected, isolated or abandoned. This can affect stress levels and mental health.

Employers will need to be flexible with their home working teams to allow them to work whilst potentially taking care of children who are off school and other family members. Allowing this trust and flexibility will promote improved mental wellbeing and reduce the stress on team members.

A home working safety information leaflet has been prepared to assist employees with an awareness of the risks and the steps they can take to keep safe. Issuing this to all employees will also assist the employer with their responsibilities. When speaking to home workers cover the points in the leaflet and address any concerns that employees have.

If home working becomes permanent, a more formal approach with documented risk assessments will be required.