

**2nd Ed.** Contains  
an extra section for  
parents working at  
home with kids

# Transition to Working from Home

A practical guide to a  
productive virtual workplace



# Foreword

There are many benefits as well as challenges to working from home. No commute to work. No dress code. No talk of the coronavirus! (\*hold cough\*) But is your organisation fully equipped to transition from one central office space to multiple isolated workplaces?

Team members from Ad Esse have collaborated to write this guide for working from home without losing productivity. It's full of practical solutions for both business owners & employees to develop a virtual workplace - quickly & efficiently.

This is the **second edition** of the 'Transition to working from home guide'. After feedback and school closures, we realised that a vital section was missing from this document - **'How do I work from home with kids in the house?'**

*Ad Esse are a team of specialist business transformation consultants, who have operated as a virtual company for over 15 years. Choosing to work with organisations who have a social purpose, Ad Esse wanted to aid businesses in overcoming the pressing challenge of homeworking caused by Covid-19.*

**How do we stay  
connected as  
a team?**

For many organisations in the UK, working from home has never even been considered as an option. Therefore, the infrastructure is not in place for homeworking staff. Perhaps you're thinking, where do we start? And, how do we get there quickly without breaking the bank? Our Directors, Rhiannon Gibbs & Gurdeep Gahir (G) have recommended proven practical advice that has been developed and refined over the course of 15+ years.

# Daily meetings

Anyone who has ever worked with us knows that we are passionate about Information Centres (ICs) and daily meetings. Whether virtual or not, we find these two things boost productivity and focus like nothing else we have ever seen. **Here are Rhiannon's top tips for daily meetings:**

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1

Set a time in your diary. We do ours at 8:30am every day. Create a recurring diary appointment with the link to the virtual meeting room.

2

Google Hangouts and Microsoft Teams are perfect for these meetings. Check out the functionality of your existing systems before incurring additional cost of new ones.

3

Keep the meetings to a maximum of 10 minutes. This is helped by having someone coordinate the call - ideally this should be someone different every day.

4

Everyone that is free should attend (if you're off or on another call then it doesn't matter, there's another virtual meeting tomorrow).

5

Have the virtual meetings supported by something visual - this could be a checklist, information or data (ideally an Information Centre - visit our website for more information). Our Information Centre is built using Google Sites and Kanban Flow, but it could be a word document, MS teams page, Trello board etc.



If you are a team that thrives on informal group discussion or are one of those people who chips in with advice when you overhear a colleague saying something, then set up an ideas Kanban board to capture ideas. Trello or Kanban flow are free versions.

Have set points in the day when you can dial in or video chat as a group to share ideas and collaborate.



**Becky Mitchard** | Consultant

# Regular Check-ins

Seems obvious, but other than the daily meeting, try to check in with your team throughout the day and keep it as natural as you would in the office. Try not to default to email all the time. Often it's much quicker to call your colleague and chat to them, than to compose an email and then deal with the reply. Use a variety of approaches to stay in touch and try and stay in tune to what your colleagues prefer. Some people like to use instant chat, some video calls, some voice calls, some text messages.

G continues to say that as an owner, it's important to understand that different people are more productive at different times of the day.

Be less worried about whether people are 'logged in' (unless they have to be) and more concerned about whether they are producing the right outputs.

“Make sure you have regular catch ups with colleagues, even a phone call to check on each other's wellbeing as well as work conversations.”

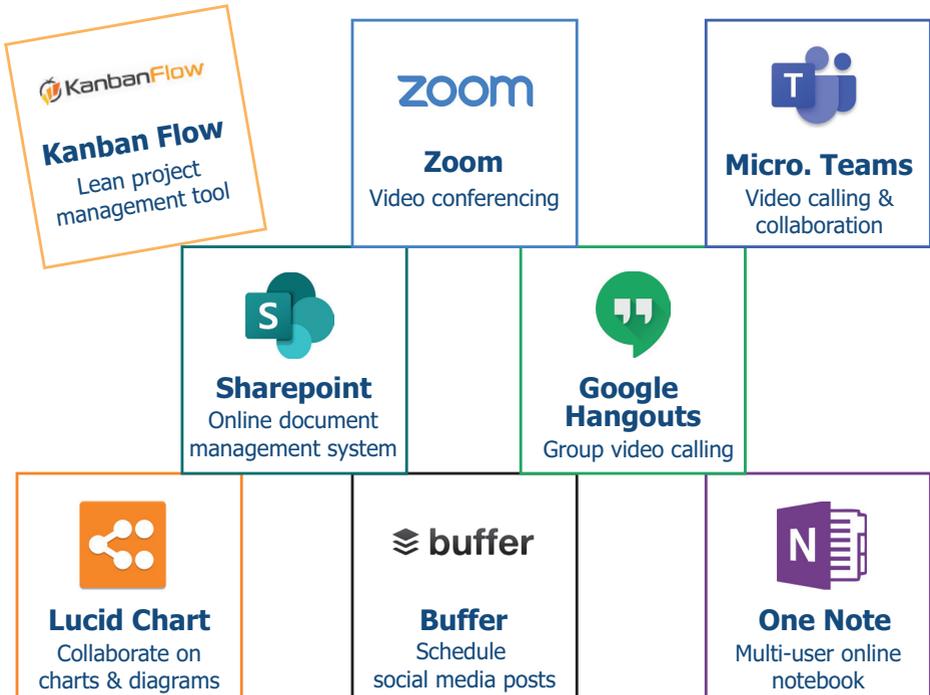
**Emma Angier** | Accounts

# Having the right equipment

On the surface, all you need to work from home is a good broadband connection and / or access to a phone. Make sure staff have all the tools they need to be able to work effectively...this might mean a small investment, but the cost is no doubt less than a non-productive staff member! As a business owner, staff productivity whilst working from home is the priority. Daily meetings and regular communication can be done virtually and are still effective. Suitable equipment will make life a lot easier and ultimately accelerate virtual productivity.

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## Tools of the trade



**How will I  
get any work  
done?**

As an employee, it can be tough to transition from a social office environment to disciplining yourself to work (yes, actually get work done) from home. We asked a few of our team members for their hints & tips for boosting productivity at home.

# Structure your day

One of our Consultants, Adam Davies recommended structuring the day and sticking to your plan. Write down, or at least consider the purpose of the activity. Be clear on what the desired output or outcome is, because this will help to keep things on track and focused. Use calendar reminders and set up meeting invitations - do not rely on people to remember!

Adam continues:

For example, phone calls / interviews. Do not tell people you will call them in the morning or afternoon, be specific and allocate a time slot and set up a meeting and reminder. Understand what you need from the call and write down topics and key discussion points to keep the questions focused on delivering the answers you want.

“Structure your workload and get the best out of the day. Don’t forget you will have no travel time, so more time at home! And of course, you will be saving on your travel expenses!”

**Alison Ramsey** |  
Marketing & Events



Fix your start time for the next day of working before you finish your current day. Go for a walk around the block before you start your day - helps clear your head before you begin work. Make sure you phone/skype someone every day for at least ten minutes. Have a lunch break and move away from where you are working. Don't switch the TV on until you have finished for the day!



**Philippe Lacey** | Founder

# Keeping focused

Our Consultant, Becky Mitchard recommended the Pomodoro technique to focus on tasks. As Becky explains:

Set a timer for 25 minutes, then take a break for five, and then repeat 'Pomodoros' until you have completed your task. Afterwards, take a longer break. It's highly likely you'll get through tasks quicker away from the disruptions that come with working in an office. Use the time you recoup to watch an inspiration boosting TED talks, read a bit of a book, get a breath of fresh air or just make a cup of tea and reflect!



## Pomodoro Technique

### Keeping focused

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# Set your workspace

“Try to work in a room other than your bedroom or living room. You don’t want to start associating those spaces with work. So find somewhere more neutral and you can keep work and leisure separate.”

**Stoffer Bruun** | Consultant

“Find an environment that isn’t filled with distractions, whether this is the armchair, the local coffee shop (when this is okay of course) or in a home office.”

**G** | Director

“Set up a workspace & designate your working hours so that you differentiate between work & home time.”

**Emma Angier** | Accounts

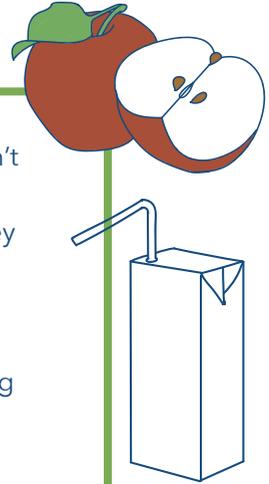
**How do I work  
at home with  
KIDS IN THE  
HOUSE?**

For many parents, the challenge of working from home is made increasingly difficult with kids in the house. Juggling conference calls and childcare is a challenge, but the parents at Ad Esse have shared their top tips to help.

**\*\*Disclaimer: We are not Mary Poppins\*\***

# It might not work perfectly, but it's a start!

Snacks, snacks, snacks...kids can eat can't they?! We keep snacks (mostly healthy) accessible so they can grab them as they need. The most common disturbance I get otherwise is "dad I'm hungry." I also make a point of eating lunch with my children. They want my time and getting it over lunch means they're less likely to seek it while I'm working.

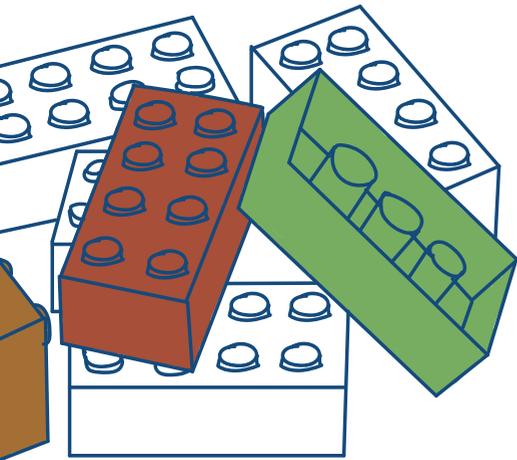


If you can, work out a schedule with your partner so at least one of you is with the kids while the other is working - take turns basically. Our preferred 'shifts' are 6am to 12pm and then 12pm to 6pm. I also tend to work once the kids are in bed.

Always plan the day for the kids and make sure they do plenty of different things. The less bored they are the less likely they will disturb you while you're on a conference call. Activity books and lego are winners in our household - they could keep me entertained for hours, let alone the kids.

Be honest with clients / customers / colleagues about the kids being in the house. We're human, people will understand, especially at times like these, and most kids actually lighten the mood and add some reprieve to virtual meetings... as long as they're not trying to constantly chair it!! A quick hello to satisfy their curiosity normally does the trick. They soon realise it is not entertainment.

Make sure you have an area you can call your work space and make sure your kids know about it. It can be the armchair near them, in a separate room, or a home office. As long as they know that you're working while you are there, they are less likely to disturb you.



Can I say stick them in front of the telly in another room?! We have limits on how long they can watch, but if I'm on for an hour-long meeting, then you're likely to find my two in front of the telly watching Power Rangers or something Marvel / DC related.



Don't be afraid to take short breaks if you can. The odd five / ten minutes does wonders for them and it will for you too. When working from home, you do not have the usual office banter or catch ups, so a short break messing around with the kids can help keep you of healthy mind.

**Why not try the Pomodoro technique mentioned previously in this guide?**

# Summary

It does take a bit of time to adjust to working from home, but the team at Ad Esse find that the benefits are enormous for everyone - more time with our clients, wellbeing for staff and greater productivity. Daily meetings, regular catch ups and suitable equipment will ensure a productive virtual workspace. The top tips from our team include structuring your day, focusing on tasks and defining your workspace. We hope that this will smooth over your transition to working from home.

If you have any queries or just fancy a chat, ask the Ad Esse team. We're always happy for a catch up on **01164 788 258** or email **hello@ad-esse.com**.

We're also seriously social on LinkedIn and Twitter. Let us know how you're finding working from home.





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