During the Covid 19 pandemic, many companies are requesting that employees, where possible, work from home. If you are not used to working from home, then this maybe a challenging time. You may be used to working from a workstation where there is little or no distraction. Working from home can be full of distractions, such as children home from school, laundry that is waiting to be done or the dog that needs walking. On the flip side you may find that you are putting more hours of work in a day, as it is too easy to just carry on working past your finish time.

So how can you set boundaries?

- Get up at a regular time in the morning and follow your normal routine. It may be tempting to work in your pajamas from your sofa or your bed but you may find yourself feeling less motivated and more inclined to switch off.
- If you normally commute to work, take a walk around the block, where possible, but make sure you keep your distance from others. Use this time to mentally prepare yourself to start work.
- Confine your workspace to a specific area in the house. Make a space that is designated as your workstation in an area that is quiet, and away from other members of the family. Spreading yourself on the kitchen table will not be ideal if your family are at home as this room will be used frequently. If possible, use a spare room and if that is not an option find a corner of a room away from the main living area.
- If the day to day noise and chatter at home makes it difficult for you to concentrate, try using noise cancelling headphones to cancel out the noise.
- Go to the same designated area to work, setting yourself boundaries around the time you will spend working before taking a break. By doing this you will be setting a routine for yourself and you will be less likely to want to stop to do domestic
- Working from home may feel even more isolating should you be used to interacting people day to day.

Try to stay connected with team members, check in with each other and make the most of technology such as Zoom and Skype.

- If you find that you are stuck on a project, ask for help from colleagues. Working from home can make you feel like you need to solve the problem on your own. Asking for help is not only for work but also mental health issues – we need to continue to talk.
- If possible, be flexible. If your work doesn't have to be tied down to 9-5 then think out outside the box. Should you have children at home due to school closures, then maybe work when they are asleep. Get up early, put a couple of hours in and then work when they have gone to bed in the evening.
- Staying focused may not be easy during this outbreak. You may be tempted to keep checking the news or listening to the radio for the latest information. This will more than likely mean you lose concentration and it could even cause you to become anxious. Instead, try to set aside a time, twice a day to check the news. Maybe once in the morning and again in the evening.
- Make sure you take your breaks; these are important for mental health as well as your physical health. Because you are working from home you may find your muscles become sore as you will be working from a makeshift workstation, instead of an ergonomic setup that you may have in work. Try to make the most of the breaks and maybe go for a brisk walk, meditate or carry out a breathing exercise.
- Once your workday is complete, pack away your workstation to reduce the temptation to go back and check your emails or do another 5 minutes.
- Again, leave the house and go for a small walk to mentally prepare yourself to be present at home and not in work mode.