

# COVID-19 Virus Pandemic Factsheet

## Flexible Work Arrangements Information

This factsheet serves as a reference for managers and team members involved in or affected by the COVID-19 virus pandemic who may need to consider flexible work arrangements to manage infection risks, support social distancing obligations, care responsibilities or preserve service delivery continuity.

### Flexible Work Arrangements

You can use the Department of Health's [guideline for Flexible Work Arrangements](#) to inform decisions and options around flexible work arrangements generally. However, in a pandemic environment, additional considerations may come into play for these important options as they can help with business continuity, service delivery integrity, and most importantly, workplace and community social distancing obligations.

### Working from Home (or Home-based Telecommuting)

For staff who are unable to attend their normal place of duty (for a variety of reasons for example, caring for a sick or self-isolated family member, personal pre-disposition to risk of infection, or in self-isolation themselves but not sick), home-based telecommuting may be a useful alternative to being unavailable for duty.

The option of working from home brings a number of advantages:

- Keeping team members in communication and up to date with how the pandemic is affecting their work area
- Preserving access to key knowledge, skills and resources to support the pandemic effort
- Allowing staff who may otherwise have been on care leave, exposed to infection risks or in self-isolation to remain productive
- Reducing the number of staff present in the workplace at any given time, and therefore freeing up valuable space for other clinical or clinical support functions and activities.

Taking an open approach to managing flexible work arrangements will help Metro North respond to service delivery challenges during the pandemic period.

Staff who are approved for flexible work and requesting external access (to work from home or a location external to their current workplace) will need to work through a flowchart with their manager to decide on the minimum viable digital products they require. To assist in understanding the type of access and resources staff and managers in suitable roles may require to support working from home, Digital Metro North has created a [working from home](#) webpage that can readily be accessed from any location. Resources include:

- a flowchart to identify which external access options may best suit staff need
- a preparing to work from home checklist
- quick reference guides on how to access and use remote access tools.

Team members who are in self-isolation or caring for someone who is in self-isolation, or looking after children if their school or childcare centre has closed (but are not sick themselves), may be able to use home-based telecommuting as a way to remain productive, observe social distancing measures and to help Metro North respond to the pandemic.

Some best practice tips and additional obligations for home-based telecommuting:

- Familiarise yourself with the [Flexible Working Arrangements](#) guidelines and resources
- Complete the [Telecommuting Safety Checklist](#)
- Set and regularly communicate clear expectations with your team members on what work and which deliverables they have to undertake while telecommuting from home
- Use telephony and teleconferencing options to conduct regular team meetings and updates

- Encourage regular and frequent communication with and between team members
- Check-in with your team members around their wellbeing
- Set up a telecommuting roster for your team so that people can rotate – for example, two weeks in the office and two weeks at home
- Have the office based team members access any enterprise systems on behalf of your team members at home and use email to share this information
- Share links to common resources / place shared working documents on Microsoft Teams or OneDrive to make access easier while working at home
- Encourage your team to come up with ideas on how to make home-based telecommuting a success for your team and preserve service delivery and business continuity for our patients and consumers
- Regularly review your telecommuting arrangements with your team to make sure they're working, everyone is treated fairly and happy and for further 'tweaking' where necessary in response to the evolving situation.

For further information and advice on responding to or managing COVID-19 related issues affecting your team members' or your employment in your current situation, please contact the HR team directly through

Email: [MetroNorthHR@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:MetroNorthHR@health.qld.gov.au) or by calling 3647 2819

At all times, [Benestar](#), our Metro North Employee Assistance Service is available for support should you need it.

Please note that factsheets and supporting information will be regularly updated to respond to emerging circumstances and information. Once printed, this document may no longer be current and you should recheck information through the Metro North COVID 19 Intranet page at <https://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/metronorth/coronavirus>