**Guidance note - Staying connected effectively during COVID**

A number of employees have been asked to work at home remotely during COVID. Working remotely is not easy, creating the right environment and feeling part of the team are very important. It is also vital to stay connected and to mix work discussion, social chat and to do wellbeing checks with each other. This also follows Hanover’s core values.

It is important to use the below guidance alongside the working at home top tips document which covers the importance of wellbeing.

**Remain connected**

* [Remain visible within your team as you work from home](https://breakoutiq.com/2020/03/18/8-work-from-home-tips-for-first-time-remote-employees-breakoutiq/#1)_Remain_visible_within_your_team_as_you_work_from_home) – this can recreate the office culture. You don’t sit in the office and not speak to others.
* Working at home can be lonely at times, take responsibility to keep in touch with colleagues.
* [Enjoy the advantages of working from home](https://breakoutiq.com/2020/03/18/8-work-from-home-tips-for-first-time-remote-employees-breakoutiq/#8)_Enjoy_the_advantages_of_working_from_home) but stay disciplined.
* Have a goal to make a new connection in the business/ team each week.
* Use WhatsApp groups or Microsoft Team chat to keep in touch with colleagues – remember they may be feeling the same as you and will want to connect.
* Using these online chats can also be fun. They allow you to stay in touch but also to add pictures or emoji’s to make conversations fun.
* Get involved in meetings and if you feel there is not enough communication in the team or with your manager then speak up and ask for scheduled time to chat.
* Hold regular meetings - the more you communicate with colleagues, the more connected to the team you will feel.
* Create a daily commute. Usually you would prepare for work on a commute by listening to music, calling others etc. Set up a commute and do the washing, put the dishes away etc. so chores are done before work time.
* Keep close relations with friends and family. Keep scheduling these family times during your week as it is important for home to not just become a work space.
* Having work best friends improves productivity and happiness, if you are remote call a few people regularly and chat.
* Be positive in your discussions, talk about the future, new ways of working, the time you have saved by doing things differently etc.



* Plan in lunches with team members. You may normally spend time at lunchtime chatting to colleagues – don’t lose that from your weekly routine, schedule a lunch and rate the plates for fun!
* Remember that all members of your team will have the same work life balance challenges with working remotely… so discuss these.
* Dedicate time to your family – schedule a walk with them or plan lunch with them. Working remotely can feel strange being if you are in the same building and not interacting.
* Observe holiday time – do not be tempted to go to your work space or check emails.
* Pack away your equipment if you can at night to maintain a home / work balance.
* Get to know your neighbours – you will see them more, say hi and smile – this will bring positivity to your day.
* Get to know the news and what’s going on in the world – again this can help you feel less isolated.
* If you walk during your breaks get to know nature, take in some sunshine and invest in calm time which can help a lot instead of rushing to the shop which you may do at lunchtime in the office.
* Keep up the wellbeing exercise/ mediation/ cooking etc. – whatever works for you.
* Be positive – this builds morale in the team and will help with wellbeing overall.