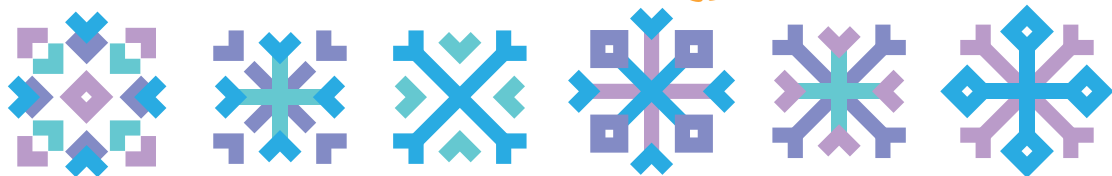


THRIVING IN WINTER





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Overview

We're still adjusting to our new ways of working, whether that's from home or with restrictions in council buildings, autumn has arrived in all its glory and winter isn't too far off, which may mean new challenges. This bulletin offers suggestions about small changes we can all make to enhance our health and wellbeing. You can read previous guidance in *[Working from Home Like a Pro](#)* and *[Managing Teams Remotely](#)*.



Virtual Meetings

On-line meetings can be exhausting. They take up more of our conscious capacity, there's often no time for reflection between meetings and there's no exercise walking between buildings.

- ❄ Make 50-minute meetings the norm as far as possible.
- ❄ If a meeting must be longer, schedule in a 10 minute break and let attendees know timings in advance.
- ❄ If a meeting falls directly after another, before you click '*accept meeting*' edit the response to let the organiser know when you'll arrive, giving yourself time to refocus.
- ❄ Get up and move after meetings, walk, stretch, try this *Quick Relaxation*, re-focus.
- ❄ Cameras on or off? Strike a balance.
 - On** - gives you clues as to how people are doing.
 - Off** - can be less tiring.Use Teams calls too, particularly for short catch-ups.





Meeting Etiquette

For large or formal meetings you can establish ground rules, such as:

- * Have an agenda and stick to it.
- * Use the '*hand*' function so everyone has an opportunity to be heard.
- * Agree how you will indicate if something is being over discussed. (remember virtual meetings can be tiring)
- * Factor in breaks if longer than 50 minutes.
- * Use the *chat* function – some people are more comfortable engaging this way.
- * If you are chairing, ask another delegate to keep an eye on the chat.
- * Agree if cameras are on or off.
- * If necessary, you can take note of attendance during a meeting by selecting:

Show participants



> Download attendee list.

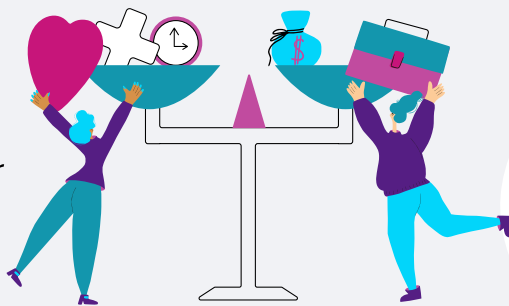


Respect your Work/Life Balance (WLB)



Don't blur the work/Life boundaries.

- ❄ What's getting in the way of a healthy WLB for you? What steps can you take to change this? Have a chat with your line manager.
- ❄ Set yourself some new rules and share with your team so that they can hold you to it.
- ❄ Switch off email alerts on your personal device when out of working hours. You're not '*on call*' all the time. There might be exceptions - agree the protocols with your line manager.
- ❄ If you do work on emails out-with working hours set the '*do not deliver before*' function: open a new message, under the red flag find '*tags*' and a down arrow, click the down arrow, under '*delivery options*' click '*do not deliver before*', insert date and time.





- ❄ Put time in your calendar for breaks and lunch. Get outside as much as possible.
- ❄ Book your annual leave and take it. If colleagues are going on Annual Leave, ask how you can share the load while they are gone.
- ❄ Have a walking meeting using audio calls. Walking activates the brain's prefrontal cortex where the complex thinking takes place for processing information, problem solving and decision making.
- ❄ Work by a window if you can, daylight helps to regulate sleep and boost alertness.
- ❄ Honour the end of the work day. When the day is done, close your laptop and put it away if it's in your living space. You might need to set an alarm as a reminder to log off.
- ❄ Importantly, be a role model, others will copy what they see.

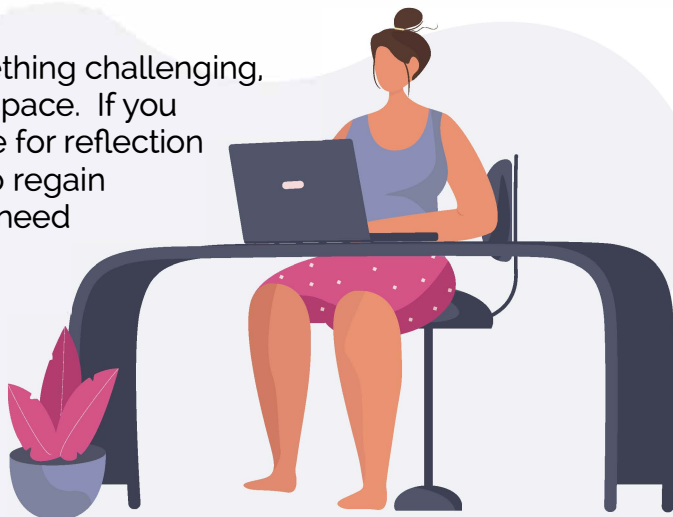


Easing the Load



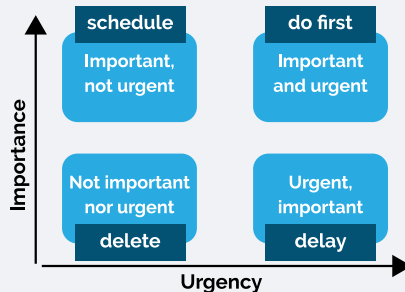
Current pandemic challenges might contribute to feelings of overload.

- ❄ If you're working from home, you'll not see cues when someone is swamped. Check in with colleagues. Look out for each other.
- ❄ Line managers - discuss workloads, be flexible.
- ❄ Introduce 1 hour Team Time each week to catch up on elearning, Inside News communications, talk about wellbeing.
- ❄ If you've dealt with something challenging, you might need a bit of space. If you can access a quiet space for reflection great, if not go outside to regain composure/reflect. No need to justify it.
- ❄ Take time to read the monthly *Wellbeing Newsletters* for tips.



❄ Working long hours may have a negative impact on your mental health, productivity and performance. Think about pacing yourself - see the pacing cycle model.

❄ Huge '*to do lists*' can feel overwhelming. Use a prioritisation matrix to plan your tasks. You may need to re-prioritise, often, that's normal. Don't procrastinate, tackle the high urgency high importance tasks first - you'll feel better if you do.





Staying Connected

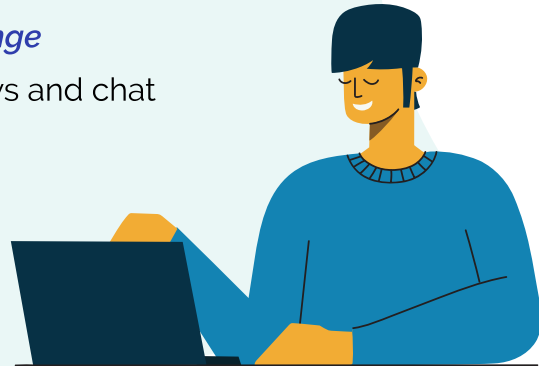
Connection remains possible, even when we're physically constrained and its key for wellbeing. Some colleagues may have difficult situations at home, staying connected with them is crucial.

- ❄ Schedule time together, virtually. Even if you feel you're doing ok someone else in your team might be struggling. Stimulation and contact are basic needs for motivation.
- ❄ Ensure information flows. Share the weekly communications round-up ahead of your team meetings and allocate each member a news item to feedback to the team.
- ❄ Hold de-briefing sessions to reflect and share your learning after an event.
- ❄ Diarise a weekly check in with your line manager where you can cover off the questions you might usually ask in person throughout the day.





- ❄ Contact corporateod@pkc.gov.uk to take part in '*rapid*' Action Learning Sets with peers - an opportunity to reflect and make sense of what's going on in your work life, hear from others, support and be supported by colleagues across the organisation.
- ❄ Schedule in a '*coffee break chat*' via Teams video link, to talk about all those work and non-work things you would normally chat about. You could also schedule your team in with another team, to hear what they're involved in, make connections with their work and yours.
- ❄ Invite someone from another team into your meeting to mix up the conversation and hear from other areas of the Service.
- ❄ Tune in to *Lockdown Lounge*
- ❄ Bring your coffee to the *Latte Lounge*
- ❄ Join the *Book Club* to share reviews and chat



Nurture Your Positive Mindset



The clocks 'went back' on 25 October which means shorter daylight hours and longer, darker evenings but having a positive mindset about heading towards Winter, may help maintain your wellbeing.

Residents of Tromsø in Norway don't see the sun from mid November to mid January yet research suggests there is no correlation of low mood with seasonality. Winter doesn't appear to have an adverse effect on residents:

'There were no significant differences in the reporting of current mental distress depending on season.'

(Johnsen, Wynn and Bratlid, BMC Psychiatry)

It seems that how you think about winter is what matters, focusing on the positives it brings and embracing it - having a positive mindset.



Try this:



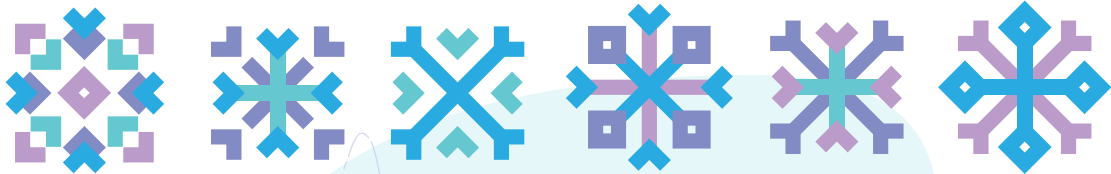
- ❄ Reframe the negative thoughts associated with winter to positive ones:

***'I'm dreading the cold, dark days that make me feel down'
to 'I'll look forward to winter with warm clothes and boots
and make the most of my winter walks'***

- ❄ When you hear your colleagues talking in a negative way, help them reframe it.
- ❄ Adapting to the new normal is essential for your wellbeing. That involves accepting the situation as it is as soon as possible. Remaining in denial will often prove stressful.

Remember, if you want to talk you can access the ***Chaplaincy Service; Coaching; Listening Ear.***





For more information
contact
corporateod@pkc.gov.uk

