Business as usual

Your urgent Coronavirus checklist To ensure your team can work as normally as possible from home

How to make sure your team can work safely and efficiently from home

We are in unprecedented times.

Everyone knows the current situation is necessary to slow down the spread of the Coronavirus and help the NHS to cope.

But business owners and managers like us are also keen that we carry on driving our businesses forward.

And that means embracing remote working and data sharing, on a scale that's never been done before.

Our technicians have created a **4-step checklist,** to ensure that it's business as usual for you and your team.

Protecting your business from cyber-crime should always be your biggest priority. You've probably got security covered in your office already – all of your computers have anti-virus software; you use a secure VPN and your data is stored away safely.

But if your team starts to work from home, you're widening your exposure to potential threats. And cracks can quickly appear in your business's protection.

When preparing for a potential office shut down, you may need to provide your employees with equipment and infrastructure in order for them to complete their duties from home. When doing this, it's best to take this approach: **If it's not secure, there's no point in having it.**

If an employee requires a computer/laptop, especially if they need access to shared networks or data, it is really important they do not use a personal laptop.

For security reasons, it is better to provide your employees with a work laptop or computer that they can use strictly for work purposes. This is a great way to immediately minimise risks to your business, especially from ransomware.

Here's a quick overview of what else should be considered:

- Ensure your employees are using approved devices for work purposes only, especially if you use a VPN (Virtual Private Network, which is the safest way to work remotely)
- Educate employees on device use while at home (not using work devices for game downloads etc)
- Ensure all devices have anti-virus software
- Make sure wi-fi passwords are changed before using home wi-fi for business purposes
- Set up multi factor authentication

#1

Security

#2

Access to data

If your employees need to work from home, it's important that they are able to access everything they need to fulfil their responsibilities.

For smaller companies, it's key to make sure all data is in a location that is accessible to begin with. Because of this, you may need to reconsider how and where you are saving data and files.

We advise ensuring all data and files are kept in one secure location that is regularly backed up. SharePoint, part of Office 365 is a great way to save files and access them safely from different locations and devices.

Another thing to think about is how your employees can access business applications and how your IT support company can access your server remotely.

All of this can seem quite daunting, but here's a really easy way to figure out what your employees need and how to ensure they have it. **For each department in your business, think of all the different applications that are needed and create a list like this:**

System	How do we access?	Who needs access	Actions / Options
Email / Office 365	Online	All team members	Buy laptops for remote working
Documents	Individual devices and Dropbox	Account management team	Ensure all data is migrated over to SharePoint

Once you have done this, you can then create a list for each member of your team:

User	Device	Access Required	Actions
Laura	Laptop and mobile phone app	Just emails and phone	Set up Office 365 Teams
Richard	MacBook	Password manager and emails	Set up password manager

This is a great way to figure out exactly what applications are required, who needs them and how they can get access safely.

If your employees have to work from home because of a Coronavirus emergency, the obvious question to ask is: does your team have the equipment they need to work remotely?

With the majority of office devices being desktop, it's important to consider sooner rather than later if you need to buy laptops. Especially, as the advice is to provide employees with safe and secure work laptops, should they need to access shared networks and if your business uses a VPN.

This sort of decision needs to be thought through carefully and made in advance, to ensure that the devices required are available to buy. We are already seeing increased demand for devices, and some supply restrictions due to manufacturing issues in China.

You must also consider telephony systems. If your team requires access to an internal phone system, could Microsoft Teams (in Office 365) be a better way to minimise costs if you are already using Office 365. Or do you need to look at other systems and work phones for employees?

Here's a quick overview of what should be thought about:

- Whether you need to buy work laptops for employees?

- Do your employees have the right internet access at home?

- What telephony systems do your employees require and do they have a suitable telephone device to work from?

- Do your employees require any other additional equipment to fulfil work responsibilities at home?

Some of your employees may find working from home difficult. This is why every effort should be made to ensure your employees have an appropriate work space at home.

We do not suggest that you go out and buy everyone a desk and a chair. But we do advise that you clarify with your employees what their home working environment is and offer support where it is possible and appropriate. To ensure that they remain as focused at home, as they are in the office.

#3

Home office set up

#4

For any business owner or manager, there is always the worry that employees aren't as productive working from home, as they would be if they were in the office.

This is why clear communication, collaboration and management channels should be implemented to ensure your employees stay focused while working from home.

This could be a great opportunity to look at your current processes, with the view to improve them regardless of a Coronavirus emergency. Especially if you are part of the Office 365 ecosystem, as there are lots of applications in there that you already have access to and could use.

Here's a quick overview of what should be considered:

- Project management software
- Video conferencing
- Instant messaging / chat
- Reporting and time management
- Office 365 applications including:

  - Teams
  - SharePoint
  - OneNote
  - Planner

Communication, collaboration and management

How can we help?

Let's talk now and get your business prepared.

Trusted IT support for SME's

Trusted IT support for SME's:

Tel: 01329 630018
email: info@1stcomputerservices.com