



## Welcome Progress on Homeworking

Dear Colleagues

Since the outbreak of Covid 19 the CWU has been pressing Consumer to introduce widespread homeworking for customer facing staff.

We welcome the fact that Consumer has now moved significantly on this issue and has committed to large scale temporary homeworking in order to help protect advisors' health and wellbeing.

### Criteria for Homeworking

Consumer is now trying to facilitate homeworking for all those who want to take up this option. In order to become a homeworker, you will need to have the following:

- A stable broadband connection.
- A room where you can work in private where you will not be disturbed, with a desk and a chair.

You will not be required to use your own PCs, laptops, tablets or headphones, but your mandatory training must be up to date.

We have also asked Consumer to provide mobile broadband in cases where individual broadband connections are not good enough, and to look sympathetically at changes to attendances if these can help overcome practical issues with arrangements at home.

### Priority Cases

We have been pushing to ensure that those most at risk are given priority for homeworking. Consumer has now confirmed that those most at risk will be given priority in the order below. Homeworking for those in these categories should be offered homeworking before, or in parallel with, the general roll out in operational areas.

1. Extremely vulnerable – one of the 1.8 million contacted directly by the Government. All those over 70.
2. Pregnant women
3. Carers or parents of the extremely vulnerable
4. Vulnerable – those with underlying health conditions.
5. Carers or parents of vulnerable people

In addition, BT will also consider giving priority to homeworking to address other issues such as maintaining social distancing, or reduced public transport.

If you believe that you are in one of the five categories above and have not made BT aware of this fact, please contact your Line Manager as a matter of urgency.

### **Hot Desking**

We are continuing to seek an end to all hot desking. Our view is that if there are large number of advisors working from home Consumer should be able to give us an assurance that all hot desking will cease.

At the moment BT's view remains that be avoided "wherever possible", but that where it is happening the work area must be thoroughly cleaned every time that someone new uses a desk.

We will continue to press BT to stop hot desking altogether in order to minimise the risk of infection.

### **Specialist Chairs and Desks**

BT has agreed that if you have a specialist chair you can take it home if that is the only thing preventing you from homeworking. BT has said that advisors need to transport the chairs themselves. However, we have asked that assistance from BT should be considered where individuals don't have access to their own transport.

In addition, we have asked BT to consider sympathetically requests from advisors to take specialist desks home.

### **Annual Leave and Breaks**

If you are homeworking you should continue to book annual leave in line with normal processes and also take your breaks as normal.

### **Timetable**

BT is working to a timetable to roll out of homeworking in most areas is complete by early May. The roll out has already started so look out for further information on your site.

## **Contact the CWU**

The Union remains here to keep you safe and assist you through this difficult time.

If you have concerns or need assistance if at all possible, please contact your local rep or Branch. If you don't know which Branch you are in you can find out via [www.cwu.org/contact-us](http://www.cwu.org/contact-us).

Alternately you can email [covid19-tfs@cwu.org](mailto:covid19-tfs@cwu.org) - however, please be aware that that there will probably be a delay in responding as our own resources are also depleted.

We are here to help. Keep Safe