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Esteem MAT
ICT and Working from Home

The outbreak of the Coronavirus Pandemic and the subsequent lockdown has placed everyone under a great deal of stress. We all have to cope with new ways of doing things, new schedules and added burdens. Many of our colleagues are now forced to work from home for all or part of their working week and this has added new challenges.

If you are one of those who is now working from home you will probably be using an online collaborative platform like Office 365 or using remote access to your work's network through a VPN (Virtual Private Network). Whatever system you are using it is worth remembering some of the basic safety and security practices and procedures.

Even though the work settings may have changed the work we do is still the same and carries the same level of professional responsibility. All the policies we are familiar with are still in force and should be strictly adhered to:

- Acceptable use of ICT equipment
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Data Protection and GDPR

The issues regarding portable IT hardware (such as laptops) that we are also familiar with have not changed:

- Do not leave IT equipment unattended where it can be easily seen and easily stolen.
- When travelling by car, keep your laptop hidden and if you leave your car unattended, make sure that your laptop is stored safely in the boot and out of sight.
- When you have finished working store your equipment safely and securely.
- Turn your laptop off to protect it from overheating in a laptop bag
- When working keep the laptop air vents unblocked to prevent overheating.
- Ensure that all person-identifiable information is held securely and that confidentiality is respected and safeguarded online and offline.
- Always encrypt removable media and USB memory sticks.
- Do not transfer any data onto devices not owned by your workplace.
- NEVER tell anyone else your password/s and do not share account or login details.

While working from home there may be the added temptation to let others use your laptop to access the internet, watch videos, play online games etc. The short answer is DON'T!

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Never lend your work equipment to anyone else or let anyone else use it. You are responsible.

Unfortunately there are people in this world who are using the current situation to their own malicious ends. ***Phishing is the use of social or psychological means to manipulate people into giving away personal information or information regarding their organisation so that criminals can access bank, social media or network accounts for the purposes of blackmail, theft or other criminal activity.***

Below is some information regarding Phishing from the national Cyber Security Centre.

Information from the National Cyber Security Centre:

Spotting email scams linked to the coronavirus

Cyber criminals are preying on fears of the coronavirus and sending 'phishing' emails that try and trick users into clicking on a bad link. Once clicked, the user is sent to a dodgy website which could download malware onto your computer, or steal passwords. The scams may claim to have a 'cure' for the virus, offer a financial reward, or be encouraging you to donate.

Like many phishing scams, these emails are preying on real-world concerns to try and trick people into doing the wrong thing. Please refer to our guidance on dealing with suspicious emails to learn more about spotting and dealing with phishing emails.

For genuine information about the virus, please use trusted resources such as the Public Health England or NHS websites.
What to do if you have already clicked?

The most important thing to do is not to panic. There are number of practical steps you can take:

- *Open your antivirus (AV) software if installed, and run a full scan. Follow any instructions given.*
- *If you've been tricked into providing your password, you should change your passwords on all your other accounts.*
- *If you're using a work device, contact your IT department and let them know.*
- *If you have lost money, you need to report it as a crime to Action Fraud. You can do this by visiting www.actionfraud.police.uk.*

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Attached to this email is also a document regarding general cyber security and safety.
It is only brief and well worth reading.

In short, to prevent any kind of phishing, virus or malware:

- Don't open any links in emails you are not expecting.
- Do not give out or enter any account details, email addresses, usernames or passwords into links opened in an email.
- Beware of free offers or free access to sites or services.
- Do not attempt to install any Apps or other software or plugins – no matter how tempted you are!
- If you have to close any web browser because you think you may have opened something or something has opened – hold down **Ctrl**, **Alt** and **Del** and go to **Task Manager**. Under **Processes** find the web browser you are using. Right Click on the browser process and then click on **End Task**. You may have to do this a number of times depending on how many windows are open – **you have the power**.
- If in doubt ASK your manager or IT Department.

When working from home make sure you don't forget the most important thing; **look after yourself**. There are some basic rules we should all adhere to for our basic health and comfort such as taking a break after every 25 or 30 minutes or by getting up and walking around for a couple of minutes and letting your eyes rest after a few minutes of work by looking at something other than your monitor.

We will keep you updated as things progress and make you aware of any new developments. Until then, your line mangers, SLT, governors and colleagues are all here to help – you may be at home but you're not alone!

Esteem MAT IT Dept.