

# Remote Working and People with Disabilities

Implications and Thoughts

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# Remote working “The new normal?”

Jack Dorsey is often quoted as saying employees could work at home

"forever"

But less often quoted he continued

"if our employees are in a role and situation that enables them to work from home."

What Criteria do we base these decisions on?  
Are they the same for those with a disability?

# What does working for home require?

- It needs more than a video conferencing solution, its about more than Zoom !
- All of the aspects of the workplace need to be replicated across locations
- Availability of files and data – create, store, manage, retrieve and share
- Messaging and communications internally – personal and group
- Project management tools and task allocation
- Time tracking tools
- VPN and security tools
- In one company we listed 75 different productivity tools in use
- Computer, Phone, Headset, Space, Wifi/Connectivity, Printer, Scanner, Tablet, Desk, Seating
- Remote technical support and mentoring
- Assistive technologies and **accessible** productivity tools
- Traditional workflows and workarounds may no longer work for people with a disability

# Access to Assistive Technology

- The blurring of setting and context
- Most funding of AT is based upon a rationale for its use in the workplace (or for learning or independent living)
- When all of these happen in the same location, using the same infrastructure and potentially the same devices it is meaningless to distinguish between these.
- Funders will be challenged to support solutions that follow the user with wider success criteria.
- More employees may need accommodation to reduce risk of acquiring conditions.

# Not everyone can work from home

- Not all jobs are suitable for working from home.
- Remote working has become the norm for the norm for white-collar workers.
- Many people with disabilities are not working in white collar posts.
- Working from home can be an accommodation but has costs as well as benefits for the employee.
- Increasingly companies are discussing flexible or hybrid working not rigid location decisions
- Mixed dynamics may disadvantage some disabled workers.
- Mental health, isolation and social exclusion may be unacceptable costs to the community



Home working

One size does not  
fit all

Accommodations  
must be tailored to  
meet needs