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of the Flexible Working Taskforce

CIPD
*Championing better
work and working lives*

HYBRID WORKING

Practical Guidance



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Please Note: This guide has been developed by independent members of the Flexible Working Taskforce. It is not government guidance.



WHAT IS HYBRID WORKING?

Hybrid working is a form of flexible working where workers spend some of their time working remotely (usually, but not necessarily, from home) and some in the employer's workspace. Information on other forms of flexible working is available from the CIPD [here](#).

Hybrid working can be undertaken in conjunction with other forms of flexible working including time flexibility. Although some workers will have worked remotely prior to March 2020, the extended period of enforced homeworking during the global pandemic has led to considerable interest in new ways of working, including hybrid or blended work.

Hybrid working is likely to take many forms depending on the organisation and the nature of work being undertaken. Figure 1 shows examples of possible working patterns:



Figure 1

THE CASE FOR HYBRID WORKING

For those organisations that are able to accommodate staff working flexibly between locations, hybrid working can offer benefits to employers and workers alike. With rising interest among workers in blended ways of working, offering hybrid working could be key in attracting new talent. Hybrid work can also benefit workers through helping them to achieve greater work-life balance, reducing the costs of commuting and providing autonomy about how and where they work.

Employers can benefit from increased productivity (a significant majority of employees **reported** that when working from home they are at least as - if not more - productive) and increased staff engagement and motivation.

Hybrid work can therefore deliver the benefits of remote working whilst still also allowing for the social and collaborative advantages of working together with colleagues in the workplace.

At the same time, it is important to recognise that hybrid working may not work well for everyone. There may be certain roles or tasks that require staff to be co-located (i.e. working in the same physical location as colleagues) in order to be carried out effectively and individuals who do not want to work remotely for personal or work-based reasons. Organisations should therefore view hybrid working as one of many possible ways of working – and if hybrid working is not practicable, other forms of flexible working may be e.g. time flexibility.

TOP TIP

Providing hybrid working can be key in attracting new talent.



IMPLEMENTING HYBRID WORKING

The first step for organisations who wish to adopt hybrid working is to define what hybrid means for their specific context. This should take account of organisational or strategic goals and include input from the workforce on both the organisational considerations and potential benefits to workers. The idea to introduce hybrid working may have been suggested by the workforce through a trade union or other representative group, so they may be included in the process from the beginning. The output from this process would include information on what forms of hybrid working will be available and what roles will be eligible to undertake it. Additional areas for consideration prior to implementation include:



- The development of hybrid working principles or policies, clearly setting out responsibilities and expectations, eligibility criteria, and, where appropriate, guidance on applying for hybrid work.
- Whether to introduce hybrid working as a pilot/trial period, as a contractual change to the terms and conditions of employment or whether an informal, non contractual approach is more appropriate. Where a pilot or trial is undertaken, a criteria for measuring and determining success should be set out.
- Introducing or utilising existing mechanisms for worker voice, seeking input from workers, trade unions (including through existing collective bargaining structures) or other representative groups on their perspectives on hybrid work and the organisation's plans.
- Preparing people managers and workers for the transition to hybrid working – learning lessons from the recent remote working period whilst recognising the key differences between fully remote and hybrid work.
- Reflecting on cultural readiness for the transition to hybrid working – and identification of possible barriers to success.
- Reviewing relevant policies, procedures and systems to ensure that they are ready for hybrid work and identifying where changes need to be made.
- Considering how hybrid working will align with other forms of flexibility such as time and schedule flexibility.
- Reviewing the current and potential future equality implications, in particular on groups with protected characteristics.
- Determining what benefits or support will be provided to hybrid workers, including issues such as expenses or the provision of equipment where appropriate.





- Acas has produced guidance on hybrid working, including information covering introducing and planning for hybrid working, creating hybrid working policies and consulting on hybrid working. The guidance is available [here](#).
- Guidance from the CIPD on planning for hybrid working and assessing roles for hybrid working is available [here](#).
- Information from the CMI on avoiding hidden problems relating to flexible and hybrid work is available [here](#).
- The charity Working Families provides a set of free resources for managers on how to create **flexible teams**.
- Timewise, a flexible working consultancy, provides the following practical resources for organisations:

[How to make a success of hybrid working](#)

[Hybrid Working Checklist](#)

[Tool for running a Team Session](#)

- Guidance from Make UK for employers on the latest issues associated with home and hybrid working, available [here](#).



PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

Leaders and managers have a significant role to play in the transition to hybrid work as well as its future success. Leading and managing hybrid teams requires an adaptation of approach: whilst an entirely new management skill set is not required, some aspects of day to day people management (such as communication, relationship building and performance management) will become more important than ever before.

Depending on the approach taken to implementation, managers may be required to manage requests for hybrid working. They should be trained and supported in doing so, with clear guidance on relevant employment law. The CIPD has produced guidance available [here](#) on assessing roles for hybrid working.



TO SUPPORT THEIR PEOPLE MANAGERS, ORGANISATIONS SHOULD:

- Provide training on assessing and managing hybrid working requests fairly and consistently, including relevant legislation on flexible working and discrimination.
- Raise awareness of the benefits of hybrid working, as well as any organisational policies and approaches on hybrid working.
- Support people managers with developing the skills necessary to lead and manage hybrid teams, including performance management, communication, collaboration, inclusion and wellbeing. The introduction of hybrid working could be a big cultural shift for some managers and there will be a learning period whilst new hybrid working patterns settle.
- Provide advice and guidance on establishing and agreeing new ways of working and communication at team level, including clear information on the level of autonomy over establishing hybrid working patterns.
- Train managers in flexible working job design and how to organise and structure activities to allow for hybrid working patterns.
- Support managers in building trust and creating teams in which hybrid workers can flourish and everyone can benefit.



PEOPLE MANAGERS OF HYBRID TEAMS SHOULD CONSIDER:

- Agreeing principles for hybrid working at a team level, in line with any organisational policies and procedures. Principles should be inclusive and flexible to avoid the risk of discriminating against workers with Protected Characteristics.
- Working in partnership with workers to identify the most effective way of undertaking hybrid work in their specific context.
- Discussing and agreeing ways of communicating within a team including hybrid workers. This should include identifying appropriate technology for communicating and collaborating, how to ensure effective knowledge sharing and how and where to meet – in particular when to communicate in person and when to communicate virtually.
- Determining how hybrid work will take place in practice, including the level of autonomy individual workers have to decide when and where to undertake their work. This could include introducing rotas or managing schedules to suit the nature of the work.
- Supporting workers with achieving good work-life balance whilst working remotely – managers should familiarise themselves with how hybrid work can both support and detract from wellbeing depending on how it is managed and supported.
- Ensuring that every team member has clear objectives and understands how their performance will be assessed and measured. Note that when performance cannot be easily observed, there may need to be particular reliance on metrics, outcomes and results.
- Ensuring that team members are aware of how to conduct safe data sharing while working remotely. The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has developed guidance to support compliance [here](#).

The following tips can help managers to manage hybrid workers effectively:

- 1.** Ensure that they are familiar with organisational policies and procedures.
- 2.** Think about the design of jobs and the structure of weekly or daily tasks. Reflect on what needs to change in terms of systems, processes or activities to support hybrid work.
- 3.** Encourage team members to think about where and when they are most productive and tailor their working days and time accordingly.
- 4.** Provide clarity to the team on their level of autonomy relating to hybrid working. For example, are individuals allowed to schedule their own hybrid days or are there reasons why they may be required to work a specific number/pattern of days?
- 5.** Talk to individuals about their working styles and preferences relating to remote and hybrid work. Have ongoing dialogue and keep arrangements under review if circumstances change.
- 6.** Encourage workers to disconnect meaningfully when working remotely, taking proper breaks and managing their digital wellbeing.



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7. Manage individuals' workload effectively through agreeing realistic objectives, providing constructive feedback and joint problem solving to resolve issues which might cause people stress or to work excessive hours.

8. Be clear about their own availability and hybrid working schedule, including when and how to schedule time with them.

9. Schedule regular 121 time with every team member – either virtually or face to face. Use this time for feedback, operational updates and checking in.

10. Encourage social connections between the team to support effective relationships.

11. Share team working patterns to provide clarity on who is working where and when.

12. The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has been clear that, if employers do use systems to monitor staff remotely, they should be explicit with staff as to why and what they are implementing.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



- The CIPD has produced a guide to supporting hybrid working for people managers available [here](#).
- CMI have produced a guide on Hybrid Collaboration: 8 best practices. View [here](#).
- Timewise have produced a line manager's guide to supporting flexible working in your team: From Crisis to Opportunity: Redesigning the workplace. View [here](#).
- The charity Working Families provides a set of free resources for managers on how to **establish working protocols**.
- The ICO advise that any surveillance of an employee needs to be necessary, justified and proportionate. Employers must ensure that there are notices, or other means, to clearly inform employees about the nature and extent of surveillance and its purpose(s). Guidance is available [here](#).



RECRUITMENT & INDUCTION

Recruiting for hybrid workers has two distinct but equally important elements:

- Adapting the recruitment approach, processes and systems, including advertising, job design and selection methods.
- Hiring workers who have the skills to work successfully in a hybrid context. These skills include communication, collaboration, organisation, digital literacy and time management.

Successful recruitment of hybrid workers will require organisations to review and address both of these elements. The opportunity to work in a hybrid way, possibly combined with other forms of flexibility, is likely to be a key part of talent attraction and retention in the future.



WHEN UNDERTAKING RECRUITMENT FOR HYBRID WORKERS ORGANISATIONS MAY WISH TO CONSIDER:

- Specifying hybrid working opportunities in job advertisements and determining an organisation-wide position to ensure consistency of approach.
- Providing clear information to candidates during the recruitment process about the opportunities for flexible and hybrid work and, wherever possible, providing specific information about the types of flexible working available. This will help to support the candidate experience, prevent discrimination and encourage conversations around the options available.
- Providing guidance for recruiting managers on discussing hybrid work (and other forms of flexible work) during the recruitment and selection process.
- Specifying an appropriate platform for virtual interviews that both provides a good candidate experience and is accessible to everyone.
- Developing appropriate induction experiences for hybrid workers, providing guidance to managers on how best to undertake and support this period of employment.



WHEN RECRUITING NEW HYBRID TEAM MEMBERS, MANAGERS AND RECRUITMENT TEAMS SHOULD:

- Review the job description and job design prior to advertisement, asking themselves what opportunities are available for hybrid and other forms of flexible working.
- Use a simple technology solution when conducting virtual interviews; ideally one that most people will be familiar with to make the process as easy and fair as possible for everyone. Make reasonable adjustments (compliant with the Equality Act 2010) where necessary and consider the accessibility of any technologies used.
- Consider including both a face-to-face and virtual element, as any successful candidate will need to be effective in both spheres.
- Prepare interview questions that will assess skills for hybrid work, such as communication, collaboration and relationship-building.
- Proactively discuss opportunities for flexible and hybrid work with the candidate.

INDUCTION

Induction is a key part of the worker experience, and can influence how well the new starter engages with both their new role and their employer. It begins from the point at which an offer is made and accepted, and incorporates the entire joining experience, taking into account learning about the role, understanding the organisation and its culture, and building relationships with new colleagues.

Most organisations will have a corporate induction process or programme: this will need to be adapted to take into account the needs of hybrid workers. These specific needs include:

- **Understanding organisational culture.** It can take a little longer for new workers to understand organisational culture when working remotely – and to feel like they belong. Whilst inductions often address issues like vision, strategy and aims, workers will also need time and support to engage fully with the organisation.
- **Adapting to the nature of hybrid work.** Although many people have worked remotely during the global pandemic, hybrid work is not the same, and nor is it the same as workplace-based. Part of induction needs to include supporting workers to work in a hybrid way, and in the particular way that the organisation is operating its own hybrid arrangements.
- **Providing enhanced support to new starters** during their early weeks and months, recognising that the valuable learning opportunity to observe culture, colleagues and activities in person is naturally reduced by hybrid work, and must be intentionally replaced with new learning opportunities and ways to transfer knowledge.

WHEN INDUCTING A NEW HYBRID WORKER, MANAGERS SHOULD:

- Consider the level of experience that the individual has with remote work. If they are inexperienced, build appropriate support and training. This is especially important with early career professionals such as graduates and apprentices.
- Share any policies on hybrid or remote working, as well as any local team rules or principles, so that the worker knows exactly what is expected of them.
- Support the new worker to identify the most appropriate balance between the workplace and home, as well as how to structure their work accordingly. Take into account which work tasks can be best undertaken independently and where value will be gained from being co-located. Help them to make sure their time in the office is meaningful.
- Facilitate early meetings (virtually or in-person) with colleagues, customers or key stakeholders. Build in some social connection as soon as possible. These activities will help to build personal connections.
- Provide a mentor or buddy for the new starter to go to with quick questions or for guidance on everyday tasks and activities.
- Ensure the new starter has all the technology equipment they need to work effectively from their first day, including access to systems, shared online spaces and meeting platforms.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- CMI has produced Top Tips for Successful (virtual) onboarding. View [here](#).
- The problem with losing 'osmosis learning' - BBC Worklife. View [here](#).



INCLUSION & FAIRNESS

For hybrid working to be a success and deliver upon its potential benefits, it must be implemented with concern for inclusion, equality and fairness. In this context, fairness includes fair access to hybrid working opportunities, equality of treatment between hybrid and non-hybrid workers, and consistent, transparent decisions relating to hybrid work.

It is also important to recognise that not everyone will want to, or is able to, work in a hybrid way depending on their particular role and personal circumstances. Part of ensuring inclusion and equality in hybrid work is taking into account people's individual working preferences and personal circumstances, creating a level playing field regardless of whether workers are working remotely or in the workplace.

Hybrid working has the potential to increase inclusion, especially through opening up job opportunities for disabled people, those with long-term health conditions or caring responsibilities, or others who may find it more difficult to commute or work for the whole time in an office or other workplace environment. Hybrid working may also amount to a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act 2010. More information on reasonable adjustments is available from the Equality and Human Rights Commission [here](#).

However, previous research has shown that remote work can have unintended consequences for those who are in the workplace less frequently. This can include fewer opportunities for promotion and bonuses. Prior to the pandemic, working flexibly, including from home, was often subject to stigma, along with unsubstantiated beliefs that those who did so were less committed or motivated. The desire to work from home is also not a homogenous one: women, for example, are more likely to want to work from home (or to work from home for more days) leading to concerns of gender imbalances. Having more people work in a flexible way across the organisation can help to reduce this stigma and therefore the imbalances in experiences of work such as access to promotion.



TO ENSURE THAT HYBRID WORKING IS INCLUSIVE AND FAIR, ORGANISATIONS SHOULD:

- Determine clear and transparent policies and principles about eligibility for and access to hybrid working, and establish systems to monitor decision making and access.
- Acknowledge the potential benefits of hybrid working for workers with long-term health conditions and caring responsibilities, and disabled workers. Ensure reasonable adjustments are provided whether a disabled worker is working remotely or in the workplace. Recognise that while hybrid working can be a reasonable adjustment for some disabled workers, not all disabled workers will want to work remotely.
- Provide training to people managers on the potential equality and inclusion impacts of hybrid work, including issues such as flexibility stigma.
- Establish systems to monitor the ongoing impact of hybrid work on people processes including recruitment, retention, reward, recognition and promotion to ensure that those undertaking hybrid work are not excluded or experiencing other negative impacts. Monitor data on those with protected characteristics to prevent discrimination and disadvantage. Where any negative impact is identified, the organisation should take steps to address it.
- Actively promote and improve access to other forms of flexible working for workers who are unable to undertake hybrid work due to the nature of their role or personal circumstances. Note that hybrid workers may also want to work flexibly in other ways.
- Assess organisation-specific risks relating to equality and inclusion and develop an action plan to ensure that hybrid working supports inclusion and does not detract from it. Include inclusion in every aspect of hybrid working implementation.
- Be prepared to have a flexible approach to hybrid work in practice. Blanket policies, such as minimum requirements to attend the workplace, may inadvertently disadvantage some groups or amount to direct or indirect discrimination.

TOP TIP

Make sure to take into account each individual's working preferences and personal circumstances, when considering hybrid work options.



There is the potential for certain inequalities to have developed amongst workers. For example, some workers may have taken on additional caring responsibilities, taken time away from work, or faced additional pressure on their own time and health. Some workers remain vulnerable or have ongoing health problems as a result of long COVID. Organisations should therefore seek to identify where this may have occurred and develop an action plan to address this.



PEOPLE MANAGERS CAN SUPPORT INCLUSION AND FAIRNESS BY:

- Not making any assumptions about who does or does not want to work in a hybrid way, and having conversations with their teams about working preferences.
- Using clear and consistent criteria for decisions on access to hybrid working, based on work activities, roles and individual circumstances, and following any organisational policies and principles. Note that being consistent does not mean treating everyone the same.
- Being transparent around decisions.
- Discussing other flexible working opportunities with those who are unable to undertake hybrid work.
- Ensuring that everyone has an equal voice, wherever they are working. Holding meetings online by default can help to avoid presence disparity (an unequal experience of meetings perceived by those attending virtually while other colleagues are co-located).
- Taking steps to ensure equality of opportunity for learning and development and reward and recognition, regardless of where and when people work.
- Being aware of their own potential for unconscious bias, especially bias towards those they work with in greater physical proximity.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- The CIPD has produced guidance available [here](#) on holding meetings with hybrid teams, including tips on ensuring fairness and inclusion.
- Hybrid work may amount to a reasonable adjustment for disabled employees. More information is available from Scope, [here](#).
- CMI research with the Work Foundation on Making Hybrid Work Inclusive, Available [here](#).



HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLBEING

Employers have health and safety responsibilities to all employees, irrespective of where they are located.

Hybrid work can support health and wellbeing, helping workers to manage their caring responsibilities, reduce long and stressful commutes and have more time for activities that enhance their lives. Individuals who work flexibly can have more control over their working lives, which supports enhanced wellbeing and can help to reduce stress.



WORKING REMOTELY CAN BRING WITH IT A NUMBER OF WELLBEING CHALLENGES, INCLUDING:

- The ability of employers to ensure workers have a safe working environment, where risks are reduced so far as is reasonably practicable.
- The potential for a poor homeworking environment or ergonomics, leading to musculoskeletal issues, for example.
- Digital presenteeism (workers feeling like they have to be always available online).
- Work-life balance difficulties such as working longer hours or blurred boundaries between work and home.
- Isolation from colleagues.

Hybrid work should be introduced in a way that reduces the potential impact of these challenges. Strategies need to be employed to ensure hybrid work supports health, safety and wellbeing rather than detracts from it.



ORGANISATIONS SHOULD CONSIDER:

- Continually reviewing the ongoing external environment and adapting to changing circumstances to ensure the health and safety of their workforce.
- Providing training to people managers in wellbeing and mental health, including how to spot signs of poor wellbeing or overwork, and how to have wellbeing conversations.
- Reviewing policies and ways of working to ensure they do not inadvertently encourage or reward presenteeism. This may include policies on performance management, sickness, reward and recognition.
- Providing advice and training to workers in managing work-life balance, establishing boundaries and digital wellbeing, with particular reference to remote work.
- Setting up systems to conduct risk assessments for remote working and conducting these with health and safety representatives.



PEOPLE MANAGERS OF HYBRID TEAMS SHOULD:

- Review the particular context for their team, such as the nature of the work or work demands, and identify the specific wellbeing challenges that might arise as a result of hybrid work.
- Talk to their teams about how to undertake hybrid work in a way that supports wellbeing rather than detracts from it.
- Ensure team members follow any organisational requirements and policies relating to risk assessment of the home working environment and establishing safe systems of work when working remotely.



The following tips can help managers to support health and wellbeing in the context of hybrid work:

- 1.** Check in regularly with hybrid workers about their wellbeing and how they are managing their remote work to ensure it supports wellbeing.
- 2.** Promote any organisational wellbeing activities and support on a regular basis – this can help to create an environment in which wellbeing is seen as a priority.
- 3.** Support workers in managing screen time by ensuring good meeting discipline, such as shortening meetings, building in breaks and using other methods of communication to avoid too many meetings.
- 4.** Encourage workers to take regular breaks when working from home and tackle any sign of overwork or digital presenteeism.
- 5.** Set a good example for hybrid work and wellbeing – this will encourage workers to take their own wellbeing seriously.
- 6.** Urge team members to share ideas for wellbeing and how they manage their wellbeing when working remotely.
- 7.** Review workstation suitability and take steps to address any potential risks.
- 8.** Manage individual workload effectively through agreeing realistic objectives, providing constructive feedback and joint problem solving to resolve issues which cause people stress or to work excessive hours.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Guidance from the HSE on supporting homeworking is available [here](#).
- The CIPD has resources on mental health for people managers [here](#).
- Acas guidance on health, safety and wellbeing when working from home is available [here](#).
- TUC guidance for reps on how to conduct a home risk assessment is available [here](#).
- The charity Working Families provides a free resource for senior leaders and managers on remote and homeworking health and safety [here](#).
- CMI guidance: Ten ways leaders can reduce workplace stress. See [here](#).

SUMMARY

Hybrid working at scale is a largely new and untested concept. Lessons about hybrid working will be quickly learned, and organisations should be prepared to adapt their approach. Organisations should therefore consider:

- Providing training to people managers on how to manage hybrid teams effectively and support hybrid workers. Such training should include performance management, remote communication, collaboration and relationship building, as well as the other topics discussed in this guidance.
- Reviewing HR processes and procedures across the whole employment lifecycle to ensure they support hybrid working in practice, whilst also enabling inclusion and wellbeing.
- Undertaking ongoing listening activity with workers, managers and worker representatives, such as trade unions or work councils, to understand the early lessons of hybrid, paying particular attention to whether hybrid working is delivering the anticipated benefits to individuals and the organisation.
- Keeping any hybrid working policies and principles under ongoing review, developing them as necessary. This should include the impact on workers with protected characteristics, and ensuring that action is taken to address any negative or unintended outcomes of hybrid work.

Finally, organisations should be mindful that hybrid working is just one form of flexible working: workers often also desire time flexibility, and benefits can also be realised by providing this, both for workers and the organisation itself.

CASE STUDIES & FURTHER READING

Flexible working consultancy Timewise has produced a number of case studies from organisations who have already begun to implement hybrid work.

- [Insights from local authorities](#)
- [Case Study One](#)
- [Case Study Two](#)
- [Case Study Three \(construction\)](#)

Professional associations, CMI and CIPD, who have already begun to implement hybrid work, have produced case studies to support this.

- The CMI has produced leadership [case studies](#)
- The CIPD has produced hybrid working [case studies](#).

FURTHER READING

The following research, report and thought leadership articles provide further insight into hybrid working:

- Chartered Management Institute: [Better Managers Roadmap](#)
- Chartered Management Institute: [Management Transformed](#)
- Harvard Business Review: [How to do hybrid right](#)
- [Flexible First toolkit](#)
- Microsoft – [the next great disruption is hybrid work](#)
- MIT Management Review: [Four Principles to Ensure Hybrid Work Is Productive Work](#)
- MIT Sloan Management Review: [What Happens if ‘Absorbing by Observation’ Disappears?](#)
- McKinsey: [It’s time for leaders to get real about hybrid](#)
- Work after lockdown: [research into working from home during Covid-19](#)
- Working from home during the Covid-19 lockdown: [Changing preferences and the future of work](#). University of Birmingham & University of Kent

This guide has been developed by members of the Flexible Working Taskforce and written by Gemma Dale, Lecturer, Liverpool John Moores University, who was commissioned by CIPD on behalf of the Taskforce. The majority of the links to additional resources included within this guide have been produced by members of the Taskforce.

- Acas
- Age UK
- British Chambers of Commerce
- Cabinet Office
- Carers UK
- CBI
- Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
- Chartered Management Institute
- Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Department of Health and Social Care
- Equality and Human Rights Commission
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Government Equalities Office
- HM Treasury
- Institute of Directors
- Make UK
- Recruitment and Employment Confederation
- Scope
- Timewise
- TUC
- Working Families