

Hybrid Working Guidance for Managers and Employees

Introduction

1. Working Flexibly and Collaboration are two confirmed priorities set out in our People Plan which underpin our principles to move us to a hybrid working approach. Hybrid working enables colleagues to work partly in the workplace and partly at home. We are committed to supporting as many colleagues as possible to take up hybrid working where this suits the role that they undertake and their personal circumstances.
2. This document applies to office-based colleagues, as we already have flexible arrangements in place for our field-based colleagues who are not based at an office location. **These will be informal arrangements and the ability to work from home will always be subject to business needs.** Some roles may require colleagues to be in the workplace either full-time or at specific times. While managers will do their best to respect working from home arrangements agreed under hybrid working, they will retain the right to request workplace presence on particular occasions or where this is necessary to meet the needs of the business.
3. Flexible working covers a wide range of working patterns including hybrid working. This guidance is intended to help managers and colleagues successfully implement a hybrid working approach. It should be read alongside the department's Flexible Working Framework. Hybrid working does not exclude other forms of flexible working and does not affect an employee's ability to make a formal flexible working request.
4. We are committed to supporting managers and colleagues to deliver a truly inclusive working environment whether in an office, at home or a mixture of the two. In-line with our hybrid working principles it is expected that the overwhelming majority of eligible colleagues who wish to work flexible hours and/or have variable presence in the office and at home will be accommodated under our hybrid working model.
5. This guidance does not cover arrangements where a colleague works fully from home and their home is their contractual place of work, or where the employee is seeking to make a statutory flexible working request to change to a homeworking contract which should be dealt with under our Flexible Working Framework. There is additional guidance available in the Hybrid Working Handbook . The GPA's 'A Hybrid Approach for Smarter Working - The Playbook' also contains a variety of resources and guidance to support the implementation of hybrid working.

What is hybrid working?

6. Hybrid working is an **informal, flexible** arrangement, blending workplace and home working. The arrangements described in this guidance do not involve contractual changes to terms and conditions set out in the employment contract. Managers and colleagues will agree how to split the working week between office and home. Illustrative examples of how this could be practically applied are set out in the personas that are detailed in the Hybrid Working Conversation Tool.
7. We recognise that it will not suit every job role, or everyone's home or personal circumstances to work in a hybrid way. The option remains to come into the workplace

on a continuous basis where this is preferred. This arrangement can be reviewed at any point in future, where a colleague may later be able to work in a hybrid way.

Discussing hybrid working

8. Managers should hold a discussion with team members and new starters to consider if they wish to work on a hybrid basis, whether this can be accommodated and, if so, how best to facilitate this within the business. A Hybrid Working Conversation Tool has been developed to assist with this discussion.
9. Using the Hybrid Working Conversation Tool, managers and team members should discuss working arrangements and the level of presence required in the office, depending on their role and team requirements.
10. There is no formal application process required for hybrid working, however the manager and team member should agree how they will review arrangements going forward, and whether they keep a record, such as an email of any agreed pattern or frequency to ensure clarity on individual and team arrangements. **This will be particularly important where there are restrictions on numbers in the office due to social distancing.**
11. To support collaboration and facilitate delivery of activities best suited to working in a designated location, managers and team members should regularly discuss hybrid working arrangements as part of their ongoing work planning. Where an activity traditionally requiring attendance at a work location is required, the use of remote working technology should be fully considered and adopted where possible. Where this is not possible for the optimum delivery of objectives or outputs and employees are required to attend the workplace on a day when they would normally work from home, they should be provided with as much notice as reasonably practicable. Managers should take into account any commitments colleagues may have outside of work when determining what is reasonable notice. Managers should be sensitive to colleagues with a disability or health issue which may hinder their ability to travel to the workplace without reasonable notice being given. Managers should refer to the Conversation Tool to assist with this discussion.
12. Managers should discuss with team members the effectiveness of hybrid working arrangements. Regular discussions at a check-in will ensure previously agreed working arrangements continue to meet the needs of the business as well as any personal circumstances. There may need to be a change to hybrid working arrangements with more regular attendance in the office if there are any issues/concerns under a formal process.
13. Where hybrid working arrangements have been agreed for a colleague there is an expectation that these would remain in place where their line manager leaves post, and a new line manager is appointed. However, if the change in line management is linked to changes in duties there would need to be a review to discuss whether the existing arrangements are still suitable for the amended duties.

Designating an office

14. As moving to hybrid working is not a contractual change, employment contracts will continue to designate a single place of work. This will be the place colleagues normally attend for work when they are not working from home, which will already be stipulated on their contract.
15. All colleagues, regardless of how frequently they work remotely, will be expected to meet the cost of travelling from their home to their normal place of work and travel time will continue to not be part of working time when travelling to the designated place of work.

The role of the workplace

16. Reasons for being in the workplace may include:
 - holding face-to-face meetings with managers, colleagues, and stakeholders to build effective networks or for collaboration, generating team ideas, etc
 - reducing social isolation and socialising with colleagues
 - learning by watching, including shadowing, or working with a buddy or mentor
 - separating home demands from work
 - unavailability of access to the network at home
17. Office workplaces should be designed with collaboration, innovation, and flexibility in mind to encourage a variety of ways of working including a hybrid approach. Managers should ensure an inclusive working experience for colleagues wherever they may be located.

Leading hybrid teams

18. Colleagues working from home can feel isolated from their colleagues. When setting up regular team meetings, managers will need to consider employees' working patterns and avoid non-working days, where practicable. Full guidance to support working in a hybrid setting is available in the [Hybrid Working Handbook](#) . As a minimum, managers and team members should discuss the following:
 - how the team will keep in touch to discuss work issues and provide mutual support
 - the use of shared calendars to show availability
 - the use of collaboration tools for joint working
 - the use of using video conferencing to ensure those in the office and working from home feel equally involved in meetings
 - how the workplace is to be used e.g., for one-to-ones and team events.

Practical considerations

19. The following sections discuss issues which managers and team members will need to consider in setting up hybrid working arrangements. They should work together to identify solutions to issues. This will need to be an ongoing process and reviewed on a regular basis. This should be considered alongside the [Hybrid Working Handbook](#).

Workplace adjustments

20. Managers and colleagues should discuss any workplace adjustments already in place to support the colleague's health condition or disability. Wherever possible, adjustments should be the same both in the workplace and at home. Managers should consider whether an occupational health referral is needed to ensure replicating the workplace adjustments in the home meets the colleague's needs.
21. Managers should support requests from colleagues to work exclusively in the office if the colleague feels this is the best option for them. Managers should ensure any desk allocation scheme prioritises space for colleagues who require workplace adjustments.
22. Colleagues should discuss any change in circumstances, for example a new condition or change to their existing health condition or disability with their manager as part of the shared risk-based approach. Workplace adjustments agreed between a manager and a team member should be reflected in their [workplace adjustment passport](#). This will need to be reviewed regularly to ensure workplace adjustments and supportive measures are appropriate.
23. If, as part of a workplace adjustment, a team member needs to take home documents or print these at home, managers will need to discuss with the employee how to ensure the safe storage of these documents where their contents are sensitive.

Security

24. Managers will need to stress the importance of document and IT security including storage and transportation and outline possible sanctions if an organisation's security policies are breached.
25. Colleagues should:
 - ensure that screens cannot be viewed by others
 - ensure official conversations cannot be overheard
 - disconnect voice-activated home technology such as Alexa or Google devices in the same room
 - contact the Cyber Security team via this [Service Desk Request](#) if they have any questions or concerns
 - remember they need to comply with the [IT Acceptable Use Policy](#).
26. When working at home, colleagues should ensure that they do not:
 - divulge official sensitive, commercially sensitive or operational information to house-mates or family members
 - discuss or share OFFICIAL information with personal contacts
 - take protectively-marked documents home or print them at home unless this is part of a workplace adjustment
 - leave laptops or official mobile phones unattended and unlocked

- arrange official meetings in their home. This includes work visits from managers or colleagues unless the visit is part of the supporting attendance process or to address a wellbeing concern
- give out their home address, telephone number or other personal details to any customers, clients, or organisations in the interests of personal safety
- use a personal mobile or home phone to make business calls.

Link to [Security pages on Reggie](#)

Standard Furniture

27. To ensure that all colleagues can work safely and comfortably they should ensure that, through completion of a DSE assessment (paragraph 69), they have a suitable workstation and seating which provides adequate space and support. When considering the type of furniture and how to set this up in an optimum ergonomic way, colleagues should refer to the departmental guidance and learning.
28. Requests for a desk and/or chair are processed by Property Service using the procedure detailed [here](#). This furniture will be paid for and owned by the department.
29. The same arrangement will apply where furniture needs to be replaced due to wear and tear.
30. Where a colleague moves to a new role in ONS/UKSA, the furniture will transfer with them, and the ownership of the furniture will transfer to the new team. They should tell their new manager what furniture they have been provided with for working from home.
31. Where a colleague leaves the Civil Service, they should follow the department's advice on returning the furniture.
32. Arrangements for specialist furniture required as part of a workplace adjustment are set out in the section on workplace adjustments below.

Health and Safety

33. Hybrid working can have beneficial impacts on colleagues' mental and physical wellbeing. However, under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999, employers have a duty to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety, and welfare at work of employees, including those who are working from home.
34. The [HSE How to protect home workers guidance](#) sets out practical steps which can be taken to address the risks associated with working at home including any risks associated with [lone workers](#).
35. For colleagues who work from home on an occasional or regular basis, a full risk assessment is not required but proportionate risk assessment action must be carried out. But for contracted permanent homeworkers they need to conduct a [Homeworkers Risk](#)

[Assessment](#) (in addition to their DSE). Click the link for our policy and guidance. Further information on [risk assessment](#) can be found on the intranet and the [H&S Policy](#).

36. Managers should ensure assessments are completed, any identified actions implemented, and assessments are reviewed, as necessary. The H&S Practitioners are available to provide support and advice. Colleagues are responsible for providing relevant information regarding their home work environment and if there are any health and safety issues. Managers should take the appropriate action on any issues raised by a team member. If the home work environment cannot be brought to a satisfactory level of safety, working from home may not be appropriate and the team member should be asked to attend the workplace.
37. More information and support for managers and colleagues can be found in the Health and Safety - [the home as a workplace](#): guidance and the Introduction to health and safety guides.

Display screen assessments

38. The DSE process covers both the workstation in the office and other workplaces (including the home environment). Our guidance can be found here:
 - [Display Screen Equipment \(DSE\) Risk Assessment](#)
 - [Smarter Working](#)
 - [Homeworking](#) (for contracted homeworkers)

Fire safety

39. It is the responsibility of colleagues working at home to ensure that:
 - smoke alarms are fitted, maintained and tested at their home. They must conform to British Standards and be suitable for an individual home
 - their work area is tidy and waste materials are regularly disposed of
 - they can leave the premises easily in an emergency
 - they and others, as necessary, know what action to take in an emergency
 - they have access to a basic first aid kit.
40. For contracted permanent homeworkers, the arrangements, and controls for the above needs to be documented in their [Homeworkers](#) Risk Assessment.

Electrical equipment

41. The department is responsible for any electrical equipment supplied for use in the home. Any concerns should be reported to their Line Manager and Facilities Helpdesk or the Service Desk, as appropriate.
42. Colleagues are responsible for their own domestic electrical system (electrical sockets, wiring) and must make sure that it is suitable for the purpose it is to be used for.

43. Colleagues should routinely check that:
- electrical systems are adequate and suitable for the equipment being used
 - plugs are not damaged
 - the outer covering of the cable or wire is gripped where it enters the plug and/or the equipment
 - the outer cover of the equipment is not damaged, for example loose parts or screws
 - leads, wires or cables have no damage to the outer covering
 - there are no burn marks or staining around electrical plugs and sockets that suggest overheating
 - there are no trailing wires.

Reporting a near miss or accident

44. Colleagues do not need to report an injury or near miss suffered while they are doing anything at home that is **not related to work**, unless it is caused by departmental equipment. Any work-related accident should be reported in accordance with our [Accident and incident reporting guidance](#).

Induction

45. Managers will need to ensure the standard induction process is delivered to all new colleagues. When planning induction, managers will wish to consider:
- at what point hybrid working should be considered as the working pattern for the new team member including any personal reasons why it might not be a suitable option - **if this discussion has not taken place during the appointment process. We expect that this will normally done before a team member takes up post**
 - which elements of the induction should be done in the workplace, and which could be done from home. The corporate induction is offered entirely online so this is more relevant for business area specific induction
 - who is to conduct the business area induction particularly if the manager works in a different location
 - how to support the new team member to get to know the rest of the team
 - how best to induct the team member in the skills and technology required for successful hybrid working – the Learning Academy have developed a [useful Digital Dashboard](#) covering general IT skills
 - what furniture and IT equipment the new team member will need if they are to work from home – this will be identified by completing a Display Screen Equipment (DSE) self-assessment which is a mandatory induction activity
 - whether the new team member needs flexibilities reflected in a workplace adjustment or carer's passport.

Caring and childcare

46. Working from home can bring benefits to carers and those with school age children. It can enable the employee to work around their caring role.

47. However, it is important that managers and colleagues agree on the time required to undertake caring responsibilities within the working week. The manager should also make clear that it is not possible to combine some forms of caring and childcare with work, e.g., trying to work with an active two year old in the room. Where this is due to short-term unforeseen circumstances or alternative arrangements are not available as in the pandemic, the manager should talk through possible options with the team member such as revised working hours or the use of special leave.

Special leave

48. Managers should ensure that all team members have equal access to special leave, whether they are working in the workplace or at home. Full details of special leave are available in our [Leave Framework](#).

Expenses

49. Colleagues will not be entitled to reimbursement of expenses incurred for additional heating, lighting or other utilities when working from home under the hybrid working arrangements set out in this guidance. Tax relief was available to colleagues when they were required to work from home during the pandemic, however, the HMRC rules do not allow this to be claimed where someone chooses to work from home.

Other issues

Planning permission

50. Colleagues are highly unlikely to need planning permission to work from home as part of a hybrid working arrangement. The same applies to liability for business rates. These would only be relevant if colleagues started to make significant changes to the use of their home as a home. Colleagues can contact their local council if unsure about any changes they plan to make. The position is likely to be the same in relation to capital gains tax, but HMRC can advise further.

Insurance

51. Colleagues will need to get advice from their insurance provider before they make arrangements to work from home. You may find advice on their website. It is the colleague's responsibility to ensure that working from home does not invalidate their home insurance policy. It is unlikely to result in an increase in insurance premiums, but if it does this cost would need to be met by colleagues.
52. No additional insurance cover is needed for equipment provided by the department as the department will cover the risk provided reasonable precautions have been taken, e.g., the house is reasonably secured when no-one is at home.

Mortgage companies and landlords

53. It is colleagues' responsibility to let their mortgage company or landlord know they are working from home. Colleagues are responsible for making sure occupation of the home is not subject to conditions or covenants in their mortgage or tenancy agreement which prevents working from home.