

BALANCE WORK AND LIFE



Top tips to create a more flexible working environment

Know the law

Get familiar with your organisation's obligations under the legislation. Any employee can request flexible work arrangements, and employers must respond in writing within one month. The grounds for refusing a request are limited and specified.

Develop a robust business case

Identify relevant statistics and research to understand the benefits of flexible work practices and build a strong rationale, specific to your organisation's business drivers. Consult with key stakeholders and work through their concerns. Use the business case to secure necessary approvals and buy-in from the team.

Consider flexi-hours

Having employees who start and finish earlier or later in the day can make a positive difference to travel time, job satisfaction and customer service levels with little or no disruption to operations. Other employees may be keen on flexi-hours to better fit in activities such as exercise, study or time with family.

Offer other flexi-time options

To attract and retain employees from the widest possible talent pool, investigate more innovative alternatives including compressed working weeks, job-sharing or job-splitting for part-time positions, phased retirement or return-to-work, and term-time working.

Flexi-location

Working from home can be more convenient and more productive. Agree details about availability, caregiving responsibilities during work hours, performance expectations and monitoring, plus attendance at key events. Then review the arrangement, and adjust as necessary.

Make it mobile

To help with future-proofing, when your hardware and software is up for renewal make mobility a factor in your procurement decisions. Consider purchasing laptops instead of desktop PCs. Use technology to allow remote access to email, files, documents, collaboration, virtual meetings and the internet.

Remote controls

Invest in appropriate security measures and insurance if you have employees working offsite. Think carefully about how you will meet your health and safety obligations when employees work offsite. Decide on who will provide, maintain and pay for hardware, software, office equipment and consumables.

A time to meet

Consider fixing core hours or days when all employees need to be in the office. Team meetings and other key events should be scheduled during these core times to ensure everyone is included in critical discussions and decisions, and valuable time face-to-face with colleagues is routinely available. Conferencing tools such as Skype and FaceTime are good back-ups. options.

Set the tone

Introducing flexible work practices and investing in the infrastructure to enable it will come to nothing if the workplace culture doesn't support it. Active encouragement must come from the top, supported by policy and practice. Most importantly managers need to understand the business case and model flexible working. When assessing requests for flexible work arrangements, start with YES!

HOW WE CAN HELP

If you have questions or need advice about flexible work practices please get in touch. We can give you access to useful resources including policy templates, local and overseas research, articles and case studies.