

Home and hybrid working policies

1 . Creating or updating policies

As an employer, you should create a policy for working from home or hybrid working. A policy can help you to consider requests and explain the process to your employees.

You should also:

- update any related policies or procedures
- regularly review your policies and check if they can be improved
- consult your employees and their representatives
- check whether you need to make changes to employment contracts

What a policy is

A policy is a document that:

- outlines how things work
- sets flexible limits

This allows managers and employees to discuss and agree specific arrangements.

For example, Sal's employer has a hybrid working policy that says employees can usually work remotely up to 3 days per week. Sal wants to work from home 4 days a week.

Sal discusses it with their line manager who explains the policy. Their line manager agrees they can work from home every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. They both agree to review how it works.

Outlining how things work

You should explain how someone can request working from home or hybrid working, and how you will respond.

You should include in your policy how to introduce, set up and support an employee.

Setting flexible limits

A policy should say what types of working from home or hybrid working are available in your organisation.

It should also say how:

- roles will be assessed
- you will consider employee needs
- decisions will be made

For example, an employer has a policy that says staff can work remotely. It allows flexibility – they can work from home or from a coworking space agreed with the employer. It says staff are not allowed to work in public places, and explains this is for security reasons.

Review and consultation

You might need to review things because of changes to the needs of:

- the organisation
- individual employees

You might also be reviewing the outcome of a trial period.

For example, an employer agrees with their staff to try working from home for a trial period of 6 months. It works better than expected, so they agree to offer it more widely.

You should regularly review your policies and consult your employees and their representatives. Discuss how things are going and if any changes could be made.

[Find out about consulting employees and their representatives](#)

Making changes to employment contracts

When you're creating or updating a policy, you should check whether you'll need to make a change to employment contracts.

Things to check in a contract include:

- where it says employees work
- what hours employees work
- how employees will be managed

For example, you might not need to change an employee's contract if it says that you can decide where they work. You might need to change the contract if it says their workplace is a specific address.

[Find out more about making changes to employment contracts](#)

If you do not need to change an employment contract

If you do not need to change a contract, you should:

- agree any arrangements with staff
- put in writing what's been agreed, for example in an email or letter

For example, an employee asks their manager about working from home. This is so they can support an elderly relative in the time they would usually spend commuting. The employee agrees to a temporary change that will allow them to work from home 2 days a week for a period of 3 months. The manager confirms this in an email.

2. Treating staff fairly

Treat staff fairly and equally. Do not disadvantage anyone who is working from home or hybrid working.

Wherever an employee is working, you should give them access to the same:

- support – including access to their representatives (for example, a recognised trade union)
- opportunities – for training, development and promotion

Do not give people better or worse jobs depending on where they work.

Line managers should communicate regularly with everyone they manage. An employee should not miss out on anything because of where they work.

For example, schedule meetings or use technology to make sure everyone can take part in conversations and activities.

Discrimination and the law

You must not discriminate against anyone when you're making decisions about home and hybrid working.

Discrimination means treating someone 'less favourably' than someone else because of these 'protected characteristics':

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

For example, an employer accepts a hybrid working request from a male employee who has children. The employer refuses a similar request from a female employee because they assume she'll be distracted by her children. This is 'direct discrimination' based on sex.

You must not implement a policy or rule that's the same for everyone but has a worse effect on someone because of a protected characteristic.

This is unless there's 'objective justification'. This is when an employer can prove a legitimate need for less favourable treatment.

For example, an employer does not allow anyone in a particular role to work from home. This disadvantages an employee who is disabled and finds it difficult to travel to the workplace every day. The employer does not have a good business reason for this decision. This is 'indirect discrimination' based on disability.

If an employee is disabled, you must make reasonable adjustments when they are in the workplace and working remotely.

It's important to understand what the law says about discrimination, so you know your responsibilities. Find out more about:

- [objective justification](#)
- [discrimination and the Equality Act 2010](#)
- [reasonable adjustments](#)

3. Arrangements

You could have different arrangements depending on the role and the needs of your employees. Discuss with them:

- which roles can and cannot be done from home
- who may or may not want to work from home
- any concerns and how best to handle them

For example, you might need some roles based full-time in the workplace. Some might work 3 days in the workplace, 2 days remotely. Others might work from home most of the time, coming into the workplace only occasionally.

Think about how employment contracts might be affected and consult with your employees and their representatives.

Considering employees

Discuss your employee's needs, and consider how you can support them.

For example, consider:

- any [reasonable adjustments](#)
- their home working environment
- any caring responsibilities
- other flexible working needs

Avoid generalising or making assumptions.

For example, Sam is a wheelchair user. Their manager thought they might prefer to work from home to avoid public transport. But Sam is worried about being isolated and would prefer to come into the workplace.

Considering roles

Think about whether work could be done remotely or if it needs to be done in the workplace. For example:

- if technology could help
- how teams communicate
- if there are any concerns about health and safety, and how to address them
- why a task needs to be carried out in the workplace

Think about how important it is for work to be done at a specific time. For example:

- if there are core times that employees need to work together
- how often should teams meet in person
- if a client or stakeholder expects meetings or work to be done at specific times
- how you manage the maximum number of hours an employee can work
- how you encourage employees to take rest breaks

Find out more about:

- [the maximum hours an employee can work](#)
- [rest breaks](#)

Considering practicalities

As you consider where and when work could be done, you should think about how that affects other practical issues – and ensure you cover these in your policy.

4. How to structure a policy

Create a policy that explains how working from home or hybrid working is addressed in your organisation. Outline how things work and set limits, but allow flexibility.

Policy introduction

The first section of your policy should explain the basics.

Opening statement

Set out your commitment to flexible working, with the aim of meeting the needs of both the organisation and your employees.

Explain that other types of flexible working (such as amended hours) are not automatically part of an agreement on working from home or hybrid working.

Say who the policy has been agreed with – for example, in consultation with a trade union or group of employee representatives.

Review

Your policy should be regularly reviewed.

Explain the review process:

- when or how often it will happen
- who will be involved
- what it will consider
- what the outcomes might be
- how it will be communicated

Definitions

Define the words or expressions you will be using. Explain what they mean for your organisation.

For example, define:

- working from home, or homeworking
- hybrid working

What's available

Explain what types of working from home or hybrid working are available in your organisation.

For example:

- home as the main place of work
- splitting work between home and the office
- a base at home to travel to customers or different premises
- the office as the main place of work, with occasional working from home
- working in a co-working space

Set out:

- where an employee can work
- where they might need to attend – how frequently, for how long, and for what reasons

Explain that these are limits that you will generally follow, but you will consider requests outside of these limits depending on an employee's circumstances.

Requests

Explain how employees can request to work from home or change where they work.

Ask them to apply in writing and to explain why they are making the request – for example, if they are a disabled person asking for a [reasonable adjustment](#).

If you want them to submit a formal flexible working request, refer to your flexible working policy.

How decisions will be made

You should explain how you will assess things and how you will respond to requests.

Suitability of the role

Explain how you will assess:

- whether the role is suitable for working from home or hybrid working
- when, where and how work can be done

Eligibility

Explain which employees are eligible. Be careful that you do not directly or indirectly discriminate.

Examples of eligible employees could include those who:

- request it as a [reasonable adjustment](#)
- make a formal flexible working request
- work for you for a minimum amount of time
- complete their training
- pass their performance review

Working environment

You should assess whether the home (or other location) is suitable for work.

Explain the requirements, for example:

- health and safety
- security and privacy
- a suitable internet connection

Explain how the assessment will be done, for example:

- who will do it
- how it will be done
- if or when access will be needed

Decision making and communication

Set out a transparent and fair process:

- who will make the decision
- what steps they will follow
- how to appeal (if you have an appeals process)

State how you will communicate the decision and any next steps.

Other important practicalities

Explain things that are specific to working from home or hybrid working, and refer to other policies where appropriate.

Health and safety risk assessments

You should carry out a risk assessment before approving any request for working from home or hybrid working.

Explain:

- how this will be done
- what will happen if it identifies concerns – including who will make and pay for changes, and how quickly those changes will need to be made
- what will happen if concerns are not addressed – reserve the right to refuse the request

Set-up, costs and expenses

Explain the process for setting up working from home or hybrid working:

- what will you provide – for example, furniture, phone, broadband, printer, fire extinguisher, paper
- what do you expect the employee to provide – for example, heating and lighting
- who will pay for any installation and other necessary costs – and, if required and agreed, how to claim for these costs

State whether you will contribute towards costs – for example, heating and lighting or any other expenses. If you will, explain:

- how much
- what can be claimed and how
- what is taxable

Explain, for any necessary equipment:

- who it belongs to
- who is responsible for maintaining or moving it – and how this will be done
- whether it can or cannot be used for personal use

Tax

Explain how working from home might affect your employees' tax. They might be able to claim tax relief for working from home.

[Find out more about claiming tax relief on GOV.UK](#)

Mortgage, lease and insurance

Explain what your employer's insurance covers – it should cover work property and a claim by a third party.

Ask the employee to:

- tell their mortgage provider or landlord, and home insurer, that they intend to work from home
- check there isn't anything in their mortgage agreement, lease or home insurance that prevents them from working from home
- check with their home insurer that they are covered if work equipment causes damage, and for a claim from a third party – as their employer, you should say you will pay the extra cost if they have to pay more for this

Employer access

Explain how frequently and in what circumstances you might require access to the home. For example:

- initial set-up
- maintenance of equipment
- health and safety risk assessment
- electrical equipment testing

Moving home

Explain what will happen if someone who is working from home wants to move.

Performance management

Explain how employees who work from home will be managed consistently with office staff, and given the same opportunities for training, development and promotion.

Refer to relevant policies, for example:

- communication
- health and safety
- monitoring and performance
- sickness and absence
- team working
- training, development and support

Make sure that employees are clear about their hours and the core hours when they should be at work.

Security

Explain how staff working from home should store and transmit documents and information.

More about working from home and hybrid working

We have further detailed advice on:

- requests

- health, safety and wellbeing
- how staff are managed

[Find out more about working from home and hybrid working](#)