

# »FUTURE WAYS OF WORKING

**Hybrid working is a form of flexible working, in which people spend some of their time working at an organisation's premises, and some of their time working elsewhere, often at their home.**

## What are the main benefits of hybrid working?

Many people report benefits from being able to work remotely some of the time, including flexibility, focus and better work-life balance leading to better engagement and wellbeing. There are also potential reductions in travel time and office space required. Time spent with colleagues can be focused on those activities that are best done in person with others. At its best, hybrid working means matching work to its location, and doing the right work in the right place.

## What are some of the pitfalls?

It can be more complex to organise some work if colleagues are not co-located, and to configure the spaces in the office, but the biggest risks relate to fairness and inclusion. Not all roles can be performed in a hybrid way, and not everyone has access to facilities that enable them to work remotely. Equally, those attending in person often have more direct access to information and authority than those working elsewhere. There's a danger of creating workforce that is split in many ways, and consequent lowering of trust and building of resentment with less sense of belonging. Ensure all voices can be heard.

## How can you assess whether hybrid working is a suitable option?

If a role includes tasks that can be completed successfully off site, it may be a candidate for hybrid working. Individual circumstance of the role holder, and the needs of stakeholders including other team members, all need to be taken into account to assess what proportion of time should be spent in the office, and what support, facilities and cultural expectations need to be in place.

## What should managers pay particular attention to in a hybrid working environment?

Above all, trust. You have to be able to trust employees you can't see, your team have to be able to trust each other, and your stakeholders need to trust you to deliver your service. To achieve this, be very clear that you are managing by outputs and outcomes, not hours at the desk, and set clear expectations and commitments that you follow through with consistency. Encourage activity that builds social connection. You also need to be purposeful in the way you monitor and support wellbeing and engagement, as you miss the everyday cues about how people are feeling.

## How can employees ensure hybrid working enables them to perform and thrive in their role?

Make the most of the time you have in different settings. When you go to the office, plan to maximise the opportunities for collaboration and social connection. At home, be organised to give you the focus and flexibility you need, but look after yourself: set clear standards on electronic communications so that you can be in touch but not a slave to the screen. Make sure that you tell your managers what support and equipment you need to work effectively, and collaborate with your team mates to design a system of work.