



HR

An Employer's guide to Flexible Working

HR. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS. AUTO ENROLMENT.



Since 30th June 2014 every employee has the statutory right to request flexible working after 26 weeks' service. According to latest figures, 94% of UK employers offer some form of flexible working to their employees, such as part-time; flexi-time; compressed hours; staggered hours; job sharing; term time working; and working from home. In fact, there are currently over 4 million employees in the UK who regularly work from home.

Most experts in the field believe that flex time is THE perk that offers the most gain for the least pain to employers. As long as the employee is deserving and doesn't abuse it, it can go a long way to building trusting and mature relationships with key workers, not to mention achieving a genuine work-life balance. Benefits of this type are obvious - less stress, fewer sick days and a happier, more engaged workforce.

WE'VE PUT TOGETHER 7 TIPS FOR BRINGING FLEXIBLE WORKING INTO YOUR COMPANY AND MAKING WORK BETTER FOR EVERYONE.



1

Make sure you are aware of your legal rights and obligations about requesting and authorising flexible working.

Refusing it point blank because your business "has always worked this way" is not a valid reason! If you do need to refuse a request you need to have a sound business reason. (This said, don't be afraid to say 'no' – if flex really doesn't work for your business then it's reasonable for you to refuse it.)

2

Start with a trial period. See if it works from both sides.

You could start by introducing set core hours, but giving employees some flexibility over when they start and finish. Or you might find that agreeing that an employee can work from home on an ad hoc basis is all the flexibility you need to support wellbeing.

3

Communicate!

Ensure that your employees are clear about what is expected of them. Put it in writing. Your idea of flexible working might differ from theirs.

4

Consider the role. Does it involve team working or face to face supervision?

Will this work if your employee is located at home? Remember working from home is often seen as an attractive option but it will not suit all roles or all personalities.

5

Consider the home environment.

As the employer you are legally responsible for ensuring the home office is safe. You also need to have all the systems in place to allow your employees to work effectively from home. Make the most of innovative communication technology; use online chat and have regular catch ups to maintain cohesion with the office.

6

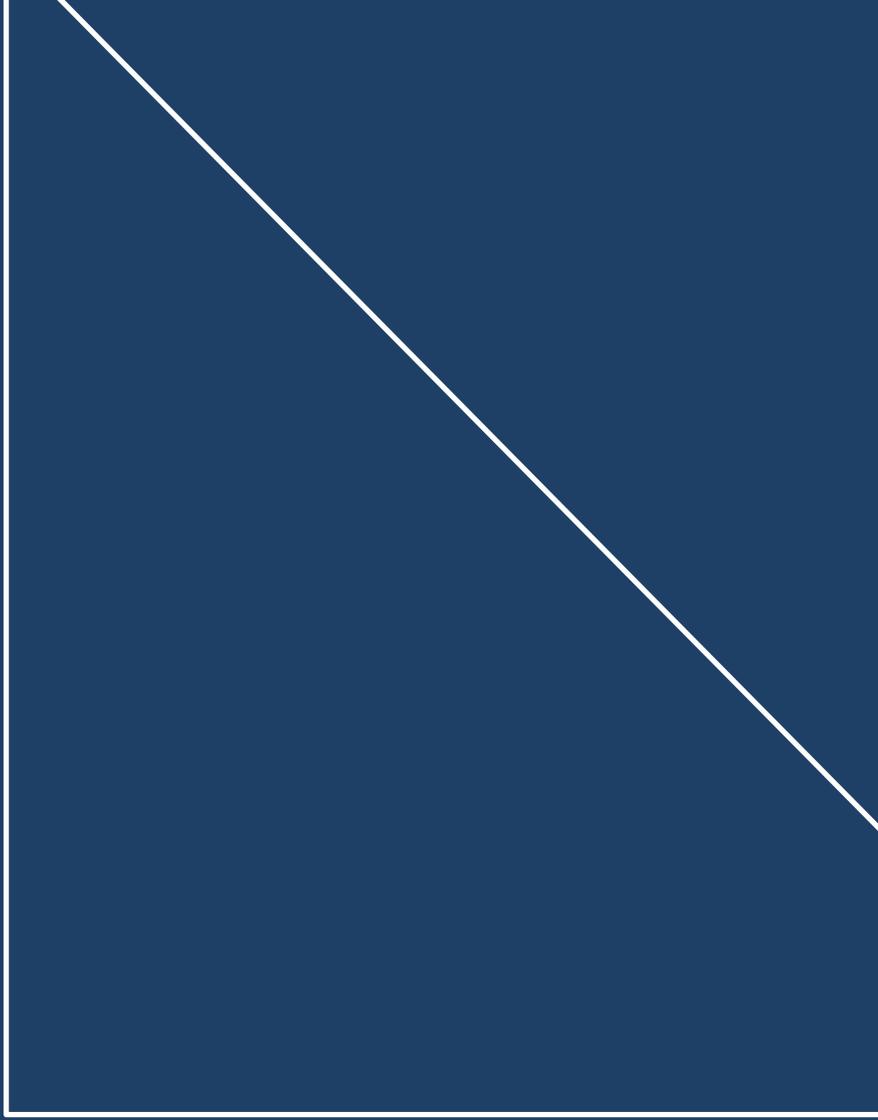
Train your managers to ensure they know how to handle working flexibly.

Encourage them to be open and honest about your policies to help address any negative attitudes that may exist within the organisation. Could there be perceived favouritism? Ensure that your managers spot and counteract reduced connectivity by having regular team building and rapport building exercises. Many people work more effectively without the constant interruptions in the office, but of course there are different distractions at home.

7

Promote flexible working as one of the benefits of working for your company. You should consider how you want your employees (and potential recruits) to view what it is you are offering.

Flexible working is a great perk of the job! Remember that by packaging it in the right way, you could create cultural changes in your business which could have a dramatic effect on wellbeing, engagement and sustainable high performance. Whilst you're at it, consider your benefits package as a whole. Are you offering what your staff actually want? When was the last time you reviewed it?



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