

## Remote workers

### Successfully remote working

Over the last few years, the pandemic has shown that remote working can be adopted successfully on a much larger scale than previously thought. Working remotely doesn't have to be full-time arrangement, part-time remote working can be balanced with more standard days in a central workplace. Establishing a new 'hybrid' solution can provide long-term benefits to your company, your employees and your community.

### Podcast on remote working

Richard Plaster from Law at Work and David Bailey from RBC discuss the all-important topic of remote working. Their conversation includes: the different terms in use, the role corporate culture has played in the transition, managing performance and productivity, and more. It's certainly not a discussion to miss.

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### Remote working

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### What are some of the benefits of remote working?

Here are some of the benefits...

- Supports business continuity
- Increases employee recruitment and retention
- Uses your workspace more efficiently and could help to save money

- Contributes to your environmental goals
- Reduces the commute time, costs and stress for your team
- Helps employees balance work and home life more easily
- Increases employee productivity and job satisfaction

## **Remote Working Toolkit**

This Remote Working Toolkit is a free resource for companies who want to establish a 'new normal' way of working, providing guidelines, downloads and inspiring case studies to help you shape the best remote working solution for your business.

### **This Toolkit includes:**

1. The difference between remote working and flexible working
2. Checklist to prepare for and implement remote working
3. Top tips for managing remote working
4. Managing the wellbeing and resilience of your staff
5. Duty of care and your legal responsibility

## **1. Remote working vs flexible working**

### **The difference between remote working and flexible working**

"Remote working" and "flexible working" are two terms on everyone's lips. At the moment, they are being used almost interchangeably but they are two different concepts.

As businesses transition to find the best working model for their team and service, it's important to understand the difference.

### **What is remote working?**

Remote working, or working from home, is a work arrangement that allows employees to perform their usual job duties at an approved alternative location. Employees can work on a full or a part time basis from a remote

worksite including their home, a shared workspace or an alternate work location, within guidelines set out by their employer.

## **What is flexible working?**

Flexible working, often known as 'flexitime', is a work schedule arrangement in which employees continue to work a full day but with varied work hours outside the typical nine-to-five workday. Flexible arrangements are usually established with guidelines from the employer, including a set range of start and end times and, if required, core working hours when all staff must be working.

Flexible work schedules allow employees to balance their work and home commitments and to work the hours when they feel most productive. Many companies will have flexible working policies with staff contracts that outline the procedures for requesting and formalising a flexible working solution with an employee.

Below are the key steps you should take to prepare and implement it, along with tools and templates to help.

### **Designate someone to lead on your remote working plans**

Implementing and managing your remote working arrangements is essential. In larger organisations this will often be overseen by an HR team, with input and guidance from IT and senior leadership, however, for smaller companies, identifying one person to lead and co-ordinate activity is advisable.

### **Survey your employees**

It's useful to find out how your staff are feeling and their levels of desire to engage in or continue with some form of remote working. It can also highlight if there are any ongoing challenges that you might need to factor into

## **2. Preparing & implementing remote working**

your plans.

Download an example employee survey [here](#)

## **Conduct an IT assessment**

You need to ensure the necessary technology is in place to allow for continued remote working and your plans align with your company policies on data storage and security. Consider creating guidelines around remote computer access, availability of equipment, communications tools and virtual meeting programmes.

[Download our IT toolkit for Start-ups and SMEs](#)

## **Conduct a legal assessment**

It's important to understand the rights and responsibilities of both employer and employee when working remotely. Review your policies and contracts for:

- Insurance
- Data protection
- Health and safety
- HR

Richard Plaster, Executive Director at Law at Work has compiled a fact sheet outlining the items to consider on remote working including contracts, employees wishes, supervision, liability and location.

Download a [Law at Work Home-working factsheet](#)

## **Develop guidelines for your Remote Work Programme**

Creating guidelines helps to clarify roles and responsibilities and establish parameters. Some businesses avoid introducing formal policies for remote working, preferring to keep the option more flexible than the contractual flexible working options.

RBC have kindly put together guidelines to Building Remote Working and an editable Way of Working team charter for you to work with. The guidelines ask you what you need to consider, how to be an effective team while working remotely, what are the guiding principles for effective team work, your approach and what tasks will ensure a smooth transition with maximum engagement from your employees.

[Building Remote Working Guidelines](#)

[Way of Working Team Charter](#)

## **Communication between managers and employees**

Put in time to present the new guidelines to your team and follow up by sending out the guidelines. Also have them available for future reference in a shared folder or intranet. Transparency is key to a successful programme. Provide the opportunity for staff to follow up with you on a 1-1 basis if they have any individual queries.

Royston Guest hosts this webinar on how to lead remotely and it comes with a checklist to help leaders through to process on how to lead remotely effectively and productively.

[Royston Guest Webinar – Leading Remotely](#)

[Leading Remotely Checklist](#)

Jersey Post recognised the need pivot and to provide a more flexible way of working, where employees have the choice to meet their own particular circumstances but continue to meet the needs of the business. To achieve this, Jersey Post chose to invest in change. We've put together a case study on how Jersey Post achieved this.

[Jersey Post case study: Communicating the change to remote working](#)

## **Deliver manager and employee training**

Effectively managing remote workers is vital to the success of introducing this new way of working. Provide training for all your people to outline the technology tools, company policies and guidelines and expectations for working remotely. You might also need to support your managers and leaders with specific development on managing remote teams.

### **3. Top tips for managing remote working**

It's understandable to have concerns around long term implementation of remote working. Common concerns include:

- The lack of real-time collaboration and ability to 'spark off each other' when located remotely;
- A fear of confidential business information being misplaced or made accessible to friends and family;
- Struggling to trust staff you aren't able to easily monitor;
- Losing immediate visible control over how employees spend their time;
- Worrying about team members not finding a healthy work-life balance and boundaries;
- Fear of the perceived extra tools, policies, training and techniques needed to manage remote teams;
- Simply implementing the change in a way that is equitable and in the best interests of both the business and the employee. It can feel like an insurmountable challenge.

However, these do not need to be barriers. Here we outline some top tips for managing remote working and overcoming some of these concerns.

## **Communication**

### **Do's**

- Develop good communication and access procedures so employees are clear about meeting times and availability.

- Establish a clear system for employee progress updates e.g. weekly update on priorities for the week and a summary of work achieved at the end of the week.
- Plan meetings to suit both in-office and remote workers.
- Introduce short online team meetings.
- Develop different communication styles - be wary of how a written comment may sound without the visual cues and tone of voice to go alongside. Does it sound harsher than intended?

### **Don't's**

- Call your remote worker every hour to check on progress. Trust they are performing their role.

## **Productivity**

### **Do's**

- Manage by measuring results.
- Delegate work equitably amongst remote and non-remote workers.
- Think creatively about how work can be re-organised for remote working.
- Provide feedback in a timely manner.
- Talk to your team to find out what they might need to help maximise their productivity.

### **Don't's**

- Don't set unattainable goals.
- Don't expect perfection: some adjustments will be needed.
- Don't set unrealistic deadlines for projects.

## **Managing**

### **Do's**

- Ask for feedback on how things are going.
- Trust your remote workers.
- Be prepared if remote work doesn't work well. Be flexible if employees want to return to working in the

office full time.

### **Don'ts**

- Don't neglect problems.
- Don't require face-to-face or team meetings unless necessary. Equally, don't rely on email and chat channels and make sure you check in face to face, in person or on video call, regularly with your team and on a one-to-one basis.
- Don't feel obliged to continue the arrangement if it's not working.

## **4. Manage the wellbeing and resilience of your staff**

As an employer, you have a duty of care to your employees. Whilst this covers things like providing a safe working environment, it's not just about creating a physically safe place to work. It's important to also consider how to protect your employees' mental health.

[Duty of care and your legal responsibility](#)

[Mental Health & Wellbeing Factsheet](#)

[14 Tips on working from home Factsheet](#)

Active Chiropractic have written a blog giving their top tips for improving physical and mental wellbeing when working from home.

You can also find additional information in our [Wellbeing](#) section.

## **5. Duty of care and your legal responsibility**

### **Evaluate how things are going**

By evaluating the programme you've put into place, it's more likely to succeed. The best way to gather feedback is by talking to your team, conducting focus groups and an annual staff and manager survey to determine the impact of introducing remote working. You could include questions about communication; technology; teamwork; productivity and morale.

## Relevant Links

- > [HR Toolkit for Startups and SMEs](#)

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- > [Example of employee survey](#)

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- > [Building Remote Working Guidelines](#)

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- > [Way of Working Team Charter](#)

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- > [Royston Guest Webinar – Leading Remotely](#)

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