

A modern office lounge with large windows, colorful armchairs, and people working on laptops. The ceiling features a grid of wooden panels with recessed lighting. The floor is a mix of wood and blue carpet tiles. A red text box is overlaid on the right side of the image.

A Guide To Working Anywhere

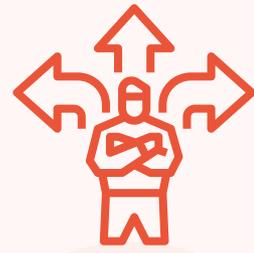
**HOT
BOX**

A guide to working anywhere

In a post-pandemic world, we want to work anywhere. That means better workplaces that meet two challenges – employees' desire for flexible working and companies' requirement to respond nimbly to customer needs and business opportunities.

Hybrid working models that combine both on-site and remote working are undeniably popular with employees and gaining traction with employers, too.

A recent report on the future of remote working from [McKinsey](#) indicates 52% of workers would prefer a more flexible post-pandemic working model.

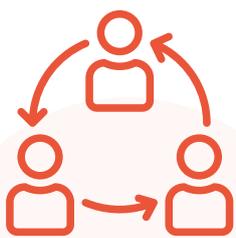


52%

**OF WORKERS
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69%

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IN AN OFFICE AT LEAST THREE
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34%

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WITH COLLEAGUES**

A [survey by Morgan Lovell](#) suggests 69% of workers want to work in an office at least three to four days a week, and reports that social contact was missed most by 67% of office workers working from home, while more than a third (34%) missed the chance to collaborate with colleagues.

Certain high-profile businesses like [Goldman Sachs](#) have determined working from home is not sustainable. But many employers, including [Standard Chartered Bank](#), [Capita](#), [Nationwide](#), [Nokia](#) and [Deloitte](#), support the idea of working remotely. Research from the [BBC](#) shows 43 out of 50 major UK firms are willing to embrace hybrid working.

Improving productivity

Businesses that embrace hybrid working believe it could lead to optimised productivity and output, a better quality of work, and improved creativity and collaboration.

Indeed, some workers argue working from home (WFH) has made them more productive. A study commissioned by **Theta Global Advisors** shows over half (51%) of British workers agree the quality of their work or productivity improved during the pandemic due to increased employer empathy, flexibility and working from home.

In comparison, nearly **40% of Brits** say an enforced return to pre-pandemic office norms would hinder their performance.



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Defining and communicating goals

With a clear plan, organisations can turn the potential productivity and efficiency benefits that can result from hybrid working into a reality, but they need to be sure that they communicate their plans early and clearly to employees.

Sarah Moore from business management consultant Baker Stuart said: “It’s important to understand what the organisational goals are, as well as the needs and perceptions of the people within an organisation. Then, companies can create a high-level understanding of how, where and when people work in the future – within which the framework of hybrid working will sit.”

But how should businesses go about this, and what are the challenges employers and employees face as we plan for post-pandemic working?

What is hybrid working?

Hybrid working (or blended working) means some employees work from a central office hub while others work remotely, either from home or another location, like **flexible workspaces**, cafés and hotels.

Flexible workspace expert Rob Strachan from **FlexiSpace Marketing** explained: “Hybrid working is all about providing physical environments and different technologies to make sure people can do their best work. That varies by individual and task. With hybrid working, you’re taking flexibility further by ensuring control of choice over a range of locations, spaces and virtual spaces to get the best outcome for everybody.”

Companies operating a hybrid-working model offer employees different combinations of days and workplaces to make being able to work outside the main office a reality.

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Rob Strachan, FlexiSpace Marketing



Spaces, Avebury Boulevard, Milton Keynes

Hybrid working challenges

Clearly, hybrid working throws up challenges that employers specifically must embrace, like creating policies about what hybrid working means for their workers, providing employees with access to professional workspaces in remote locations, and ensuring their wellbeing doesn't suffer.

Equally, however, it is a two-way street that offers employees choices about where they work, which means they must take more responsibility for organising themselves and staying productive.

We've written this guide for employers and employees, with seven steps to help make this 'new way of working' successful for both parties.

Employers



1. Set out your vision and communicate

Before you embark on hybrid working, you need to tell the workforce what you've planned, clearly outlining your workspace needs and flexible working practices.

Yet, according to communications specialist **Poppulo**, research by **McKinsey** shows 68% of companies haven't communicated a clear vision for post-pandemic work, creating "serious negative consequences on employee productivity".

In contrast, where organisations have communicated more specific policies and approaches, employees are nearly five times more likely to report **increased productivity**, according to the research.

So, it's vital to devise a formalised communications plan, avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach. It will need to address the different needs of employees going back to an office environment and those returning to a mobile way of working (on the road) and consider whether the return to work is taking place in phases and how it differs by role, region or country.



Spaces, Oxford Circus, London

2. Set up and manage expectations – create a hybrid working policy



It's advisable to write a **hybrid working policy** to clarify and define the ground rules for any employees working this way. Doing so will avoid potential confusion about how your version of a hybrid working model will operate realistically.

The policy should include a definition of the basic concept of hybrid working, how many days a week employees can spend remote working depending on their role and team, who is eligible for it and your expectations regarding flexibility from employees.

It's essential to set out how the division between attending work and working remotely will operate practically and clearly describe the working arrangements for workplace attendance.

The policy should also provide guidance on the practicalities of remote working for staff – for example, around areas such as maintaining wellbeing, reporting sickness and absence or IT and security – and explain how the hybrid working model sits alongside existing rights to request flexible working.



3. Consider how accommodation will work

If employees work from home five days a week, you'll still need to deal with the practicalities of bringing them together for collaborative work such as brainstorming and pitching to clients.

"HQs will still be there in the future, but they'll be smaller," predicts Mark Dixon, founder and CEO of the world's largest flexible workspace provider, IWG. "You'll have a central building where you bring together your team from time to time to get them to imbibe the company culture."

With fewer team members coming into the office, you will need different ways of accommodating people from disconnected locations to ensure they are productive, efficient and workflow and communications are enhanced.

Ultimately, however, the hybrid work model promises exciting opportunities for firms agile enough to embrace it. "It gives companies the financial flexibility to invest in their staff and in growing the business, instead of the buildings from which they operate," says Dixon, with spectacular benefits for employees and employers alike.

Some companies have introduced entirely flexible workspace – reconfiguring their offices with shared and ad-hoc desks. Others have opted to sell their offices and rent serviced office space from workspace providers such as IWG brands **Regus** and **Spaces, WeWork, Fora, Orega** and **Landmark**, giving employees access to co-working spaces when they need them.

4. Research desk-booking tools

Using a desk-booking tool can help you overcome challenges around booking space when there are fewer desks in the office. While you're considering accommodation needs, research the best desk-booking apps to make it easier for employees to be sure of a desk when they arrive on-site.



A **desk-booking app** like Sedes, combined with innovative technologies, can simplify everyone's diaries, improve productivity and give employers just one invoice to pay per month instead of multiple expenses.

It offers you a measure of control over space and capacity, which helps workspace sanitation and reduces workspace density, which is particularly useful while Covid-19 is still with us.



5. Develop a clear desk policy

If you have reconfigured your main office, meaning fewer and shared desks, you need to put a clear desk policy in place or risk disorganisation and chaos.

A clean desk policy makes it more practical for staff to touch down anywhere they want in a way that suits how they want to work, making the workplace more dynamic and productive. It also helps to maintain data security.

Providing secure storage such as lockers ensures team members can store their possessions safely. Get your HR team to organise lockers or add to their numbers if you already have them.

You'll also need to give employees suitable work tools – such as an agile workbox, agile workbag or **backpack**, which help them organise their work and personal things and keep them separate when moving items back and forth between a locker and a hot desk or a meeting.

6. Check and secure use of mobile technology



Before your employees return to work, you need to make sure their technology is up to the job, and privacy settings are robust.

While IT teams have helped people work from home during the lockdown, employees now need to move from one place to another and 'plug in and play' with ease and security wherever they go.

A survey of UK businesses by **Samsung** showed the security risks of employees using their own personal, unprotected mobile devices is now a genuine and significant concern. Yet, 30% of businesses don't have enough secure devices to give to every employee that needs them.

Joe Walsh, Samsung's Director of B2B, recommends creating an integrated security platform that encompasses all IT needs for remote working and WFH. Vitally, it includes solutions such as **Enterprise Mobility Management (EMM)** systems to enable secure use of personal mobile devices where required.

7. Create a wellbeing policy

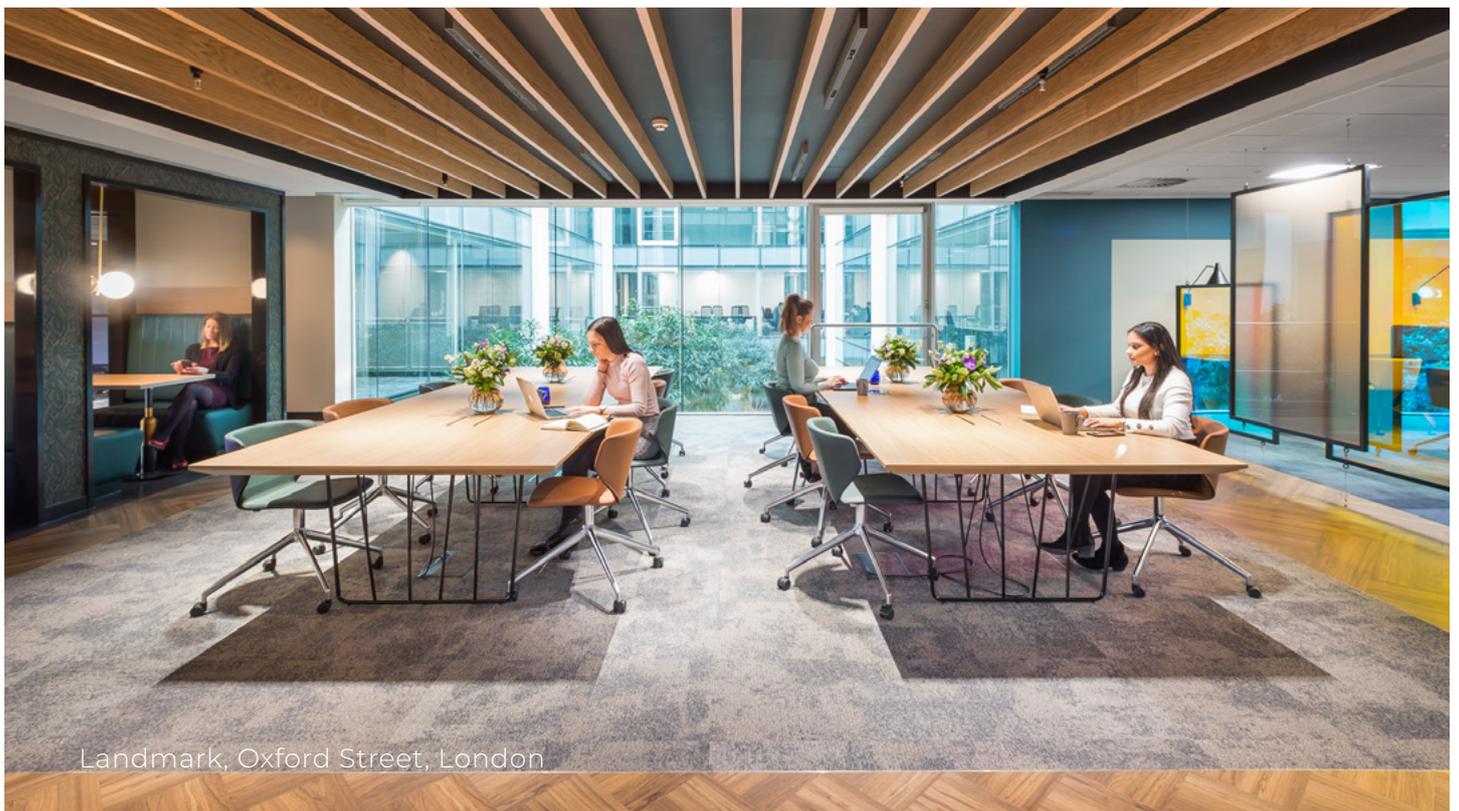


One of the downsides of hybrid working, mainly when working from home is thrown into the mix, is the blur between home and work life.

Business leaders must support hybrid workers. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (**CIPD**) recommends putting health and wellbeing front and centre, ensuring employees are not overworking and reminding them about the importance of maintaining their physical and mental wellbeing.

CIPD's Head of Public Policy, Ben Willmott, said businesses need to "focus more on equipping managers with the people management skills they need to manage and support home and remote workers".

A good wellbeing policy should include effective people management and knowledge sharing, ongoing access to career development, reminders about taking breaks and exercise for wellbeing, and other practices such as compressed hours and flexible start times.



Landmark, Oxford Street, London



The Foundry, Hammersmith, London

Employees



1. Stay home for ‘focus’ tasks and use the office for collaboration

Choosing the best place to work – in the office or remotely – depends on the task at hand and how you prefer to operate. For example, it might be that you work better with a buzz around you or perhaps in complete silence, with or without music, or sitting in a coffee shop with noise-cancelling headphones.

Rob Strachan of Flexispace Marketing says: “Take copywriting. That’s a task best done with minimal distractions and full focus, so it’s probably best done at home. For other tasks, like brainstorming with colleagues, watercooler moments, meetings or relationship building, the opposite is true.”

Utilitarian pay-by-the-minute pods like those created by [Switch](#) in Singapore are designed to give agile workers a place to concentrate on work, but it remains to be seen whether they will catch on in Europe.

Undoubtedly, collaboration works best in face-to-face situations, but it’s not a good idea to meet in hotels or cafés, no matter how convenient it might seem, because outsiders can overhear private conversations. Instead, collaborative interactions should take place in the office, a meeting room or a co-working space.

2. Figure out the best office days for you and build your schedule



Selecting the best days to work in the office requires some careful thought and coordination. For example, before agreeing with your manager which days you want to spend in the office, check when other team members will be there to maximise collaboration opportunities.

If your team is not around on a Tuesday, but most of them are in on Thursday, make that your office day – this will avoid pointlessly swapping one lone desk at home for a solitary desk in the office. You should also consider if there is any point in going to work if your manager isn't around that day.

Baker Stuart says the most popular way of splitting the week with employees is to spend Thursday in the office and (not surprisingly) Monday and Friday working from home.

But as the **Economist** rightly points out, the week's last day and first day are far too obvious and suspicious as WFH days. It warns that companies often hold team meetings on Mondays, so you might need to go to the office after all.

Its columnist concludes that "employees will need the cunning of Machiavelli and the tactical brilliance of Napoleon" when considering their schedule.



3. Time your travel into the office when trains and roads are less busy

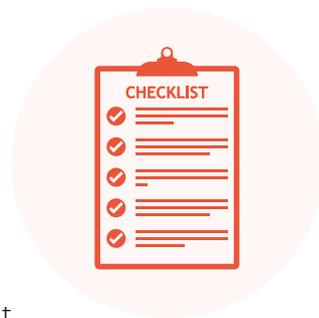
Now's the time to investigate the value of an annual rail pass if you want to decide how many days you want to work from home based on cost. What are the minimum number of days a week spent commuting to make a pass worthwhile and when is it cheaper to buy a day ticket?

Employees across the country can now take advantage of Network Rail's new **'flexible' railway season tickets**, introduced to offer reduced train fares for people who are returning to work but not routinely commuting Monday to Friday.

You can save money by travelling by train **outside peak hours**, usually from 9.30am. See if your manager will agree to you coming in at flexible times after the rush hour has ended. It means you still get a lie-in and, whether you're going to the office by road or rail, fewer commuters should mean journeys are less crowded and stressful.

Lastly, travelling in the current environment can also be quite productive because quieter trains mean it is possible to work in relative peace.

4. Organise belongings and your thoughts to avoid duplication of effort



For hybrid or blended working to be viable, it requires self-discipline. Demonstrating you can deliver in that situation requires a high degree of organisation and making sure you have suitable work tools in the right place at the right time.

Hybrid working requires flexibility on both sides to work. As an employee, you can demonstrate your willingness to be adaptable by enquiring about the new policies that now apply to working in the office or perhaps whether your locker will be available on your return.

It will also make working life easier if you try to mirror the organisation's new working practices at home.

Rob Strachan explained: "Much like **Hotbox** helps you organise your things, you have to organise your mind and plan out your day. For example, I'm writing a report today. That's going to require a low level of noise and zero distractions. So, what have I got in my toolkit that offers me that? It involves people taking responsibility, being proactive and being accountable for their work."



5. Be truthful with yourself

You'll need to look at your work and life priorities and self-regulate if you want to build your employer's trust in hybrid working.

For example, if your home is in the countryside and you struggle with a Wi-Fi signal, or you share a flat and there's nowhere quiet to sit, you may find it more productive to work in the office or serviced office space for most of the week. You have to decide.

Don't underestimate the benefit of face-to-face mentoring and the social life around work, especially for young people starting their careers. As the Chancellor, Rishi Sunak, told the **Telegraph**: "You can't beat the spontaneity, the team building, the culture that you create in a firm or an organisation from people actually spending physical time together."

If you're worried about missing out, talk to your manager about ways you can balance your week to get some of the benefits of homeworking without affecting your chance to learn and grow with the company.

6. Take the opportunity to improve your workspace at home

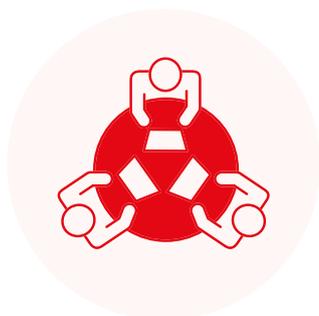


Just as your employer will be looking at how to adapt and improve workspaces in readiness for the return to work, it's worth thinking long term about how you can do the same at home.

You will feel more alert and focused and be more productive if your home working environment is more comfortable and organised.

Where possible, it's best to set aside an area purely for work and always leave it orderly and tidy. Where space is needed for other purposes, such as children's homework or a family meal, clear it away at the end of the day in a way that enables you to set up again quickly.

Look at dual-use furniture and **space-saving designs** that could help you make better use of your space. Many office furniture companies, for example, are now creating more compact products for home use.



7. Benefit from social interaction and boost creativity by booking co-working space

Many companies are willing to support employees who wish to work in the many excellent co-working spaces available across the country.

As a **co-worker**, you get to share a desk with another remote worker, which brings with it the benefits of getting a welcome break from working alone while enhancing your productivity and wellbeing.

Many providers strive to make their work environments stand out in a highly competitive market. Some offer **spectacular views** and attractive **outdoor spaces** to stimulate creativity and provide that feel-good factor. It's worth diving into websites to find the best **workspace companies** and independent operators that specialise in co-working spaces.

Nevertheless, premises and service vary in quality and price, so check with your manager if you can try a few out before committing.

Taking things forward

The availability of so many options means hybrid working isn't a series of black and white opportunities, and each company must find its solution to achieve success.

If hybrid working is to succeed, it is critical that business leaders support their workers both in the office and working from home or remotely.

Equally, employees need to make every effort to prove their employers' trust in them by doing what they can to be productive, organised and efficient when they're working anywhere.

Marc Thompson, Academic Director and Senior Fellow in Strategy and Organisation at [**Oxford Saïd Business School**](#), explained that according to research from Stanford University, working from home, outside of a pandemic, is generally more productive by up to a day a month.

He said: "The most critical aspect of work design for hybrid contexts is to understand the needs of your workforce. Surveys are showing that up to 45% of employees are considering moving to another organisation which supports more flexible working. In a tightening labour market, flexible working is going to be a competitive edge."



45%

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WORKING**



With business sectors and distribution on a global scale, we are passionate about selling our products in the fast-growing agile-working world.

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