

# Tips for creating a hybrid working environment

During the Webinar ["How to enable hybrid working in non-profit organizations" hosted by Kadence](#), a request was made for the panel to share copies of their Hybrid Working Policy.

Whilst some HR policies are easily adaptable from one organization to another, a Hybrid working Policy/Guidance/Procedure very much depends on the organization, its employees, and the proposed way of working. There are many ways of hybrid working, for example, some may choose to downsize their office space due to less demand whilst other organizations may want to keep their existing workspace and adapt it to the new way of working. Consequently, a document regulating hybrid working will largely depend on the organisation's setup.

Therefore, rather than providing a copy of our Hybrid Working Guidance, please find here suggestions of what areas should be covered. I have also included some lessons we have learned, and I hope they are helpful to you.

Please note, that this is by no means the only way or the perfect way to put together a Hybrid Working Policy/Guidance/Procedure. This is just how we did it.

Daniela Enzinger

## Before you start

Commonly people refer to a document regulating hybrid working as a Hybrid Working Policy. However, in my opinion, a lot will depend on what areas you cover in your document and what document structure you have in place in your organization.

In our case, hybrid working will form part of the employment contract once we have completed our trial period. Our Hybrid Working Guidance regulates how we work together in a hybrid working environment. Your organization may want to call it policy, guidance, or procedure. Ultimately this will depend on the contents of your document and how the rest of your policies, procedures and guidance are structured.



# What to cover in a hybrid working guidance

## 1. Hybrid Working

Our decision to move to hybrid working was based on staff feedback (through a survey). Staff overwhelmingly voted to continue working at least part of the week from home. Following the survey, the organisational decision was made to reduce our office space, source an office which will suit hybrid working better and resulted in a reduction of the overheads.

In line with the survey result, **we expect staff to attend the office 40% of their work week**. This allows accommodating some staff who prefer to work full time in the office (due to personal circumstances) for 5 days and allows enough space for visiting staff from other offices.

In the introductory paragraph, **we explain what has led to our decision to move to hybrid working and our expectations of the amount of time spent in the office**. We also explain a few further points we would like staff to follow:

- Each team should have a team day per week.
- Not everyone can be in the office on Wednesday and Thursday only (generally the most popular days).
- Managers are encouraged to overlap with their team members on a regular basis to facilitate learning and development.
- Occasionally Staff may have to attend the office more than 40% of the time for example to attend meetings with external visitors or staff training.

**We started our formal Hybrid working process and they were being trialled for 6 months**. We will then review them and decide to either formalise them with regular reviews or amend and continue the trial.

## 2. Hybrid Meetings

This is one area we are still working on and have not found a perfect solution yet. In the Hybrid Working Guidance, **we lay out what we feel would help with hybrid meetings** which include:



- The meeting organiser is responsible to ensure the meeting room is booked and set up for the meeting;
- Agenda for larger meetings – to be circulated in advance;
- Set up of meeting room prior to the meeting to ensure those working from home and those in the office are all on time for the meeting;
- Where possible, the chair of the meeting should invite individuals in the room and on the screen to speak in turn.
- For discussions, use break-out rooms for those online and have a separate discussion in the meeting room before reconvening and reporting back.

We encourage staff to really think about the meeting and if it lends itself to being a hybrid meeting. The more people, the more difficult it is to have a successful hybrid meeting. With training, we have made the decision to have this either in person or completely online. When I facilitate training, I limit the number of participants per session to 12 (online) or 14-16 (face-to-face). Therefore, I usually offer both options and staff can decide if they want to attend the training in the office or online.

### 3. Communications

Staff working longer hours when working from home and work invading everyday life, we have included a section on **how we expect staff to carry out work-related communications**. This includes our cloud-based telephone system which all staff have on their phone, Zoom and our different chat options.

To ensure this is limited to office hours, we are reminding staff:

- To set the tools to unavailable out of office hours;
- Be mindful of the time zone the other person is working in and avoid contacting them out of office hours unless essential.

### 4. Remote working locations

It became apparent that staff were using the hybrid working set-up to work from other parts of the UK or abroad. Whilst this will work for some companies (although compliance issues may arise with working from abroad), in our case we need staff to be able to attend client meetings on short notice. Therefore, we included a section to **inform staff about the process on how they can request to work temporarily away from London** (for example to visit family members).

**Longer-term changes to the location they are working from are managed through the flexible working policy.** If working away from their normal location, they also need to ensure they have a confidential workspace, adequate internet connection and a safe way to store company property (laptop).



## 5. Everyone's obligations

In this section, **we remind staff about what they need to do when working from home.** This is largely based on the guidance we provided when moving to remote working during COVID and include:

- having a suitable working environment;
- following the working hours as agreed in their contract;
- working independently, to motivate themselves and use their own initiative;
- taking regular breaks from the screen including taking a lunch break;
- maintaining regular contact with their line manager and colleagues at work;
- exercise flexibility to make changes on our reasonable request to the hybrid working arrangement as and when required;
- figure out any resulting tax implications for themselves;
- make arrangements for the care of any children or other dependants when they are working from their remote working location;
- finance any travel and/or related accommodation expenses incurred when travelling to and from their remote working location and the office.

## 6. Health and safety

This section refers to our health and safety policy which now includes a section on remote working. We specifically highlight that meetings with external parties must not be conducted at home.

## 7. Equipment and suitable workspace

We started off the hybrid working by supplying all equipment to staff (limited to a pre-agreed list of items). Items bought by us remained our property. However, this has become quite tricky with staff leaving and new joiners having different requirements.

With our office space being limited, we do not have the options to store substantial amounts of IT hardware or furniture. Therefore, **we have taken the decision to offer a one-off office set-up contribution to new starters.** The equipment remains the property of the staff member.

This is also the right section to **explain the organisation's decision on associated costs for home working.** Will the organisation contribute to costs such as the internet or is the employee responsible for the costs?



## 8. Insurance requirements

Whilst we will provide all the insurance needed as an employer, it is the responsibility of staff to **ensure they are not in breach of their home insurance when working from home.**

Equally, they may want to check their rental agreement and mortgage if they can work from home. For staff who find that their rental agreement or mortgage does not allow for home working, we have the capacity to work from the office full time (see section 1).

## 9. Data security and confidentiality

This section links to our data protection and confidentiality policy but we give specific guidance on what to look out for when working from home. For example, work laptops should not be shared with other family members, meetings must be held in confidential areas etc.