Quick tips for managing a flexible team

Your role

Lead from the top

- Show clear support for flexible working

- Adopt an 'if not, why not?' approach to workplace flexibility

- Provide fair and equitable access to flexibility to everyone in your team

- Start from a place of trust and respect

Do it yourself

- Role-model flexible working – work remotely, leave loudly, alter standard work pattern

- Share your own experiences of flexible working with your team

- Be mindful of 'just joking' statements with your staff that relate to workplace flexibility

Be proactive & communicate regularly

- Check in with your team during team meetings about any work impacts

- Check in with your staff during 1:1 meetings about any personal impacts

Where can I get further advice on managing a flexible team?

This is a quick tip sheet, but for more detailed information, the PSC has developed a conversation guide for managers. This includes information on how to:

- set up a successful flexible working agreement

- manage performance and flexible working

- say 'no' to a flexible working request

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Your responsibilities

Manage for outcomes (not presenteeism)

- Discuss and agree on how remote supervision (where applicable) will work – as a team and also individually

- Look for opportunities to reduce direct supervision and increase trust (most who work flexibly are highly motivated to make flexibility work)

- Have an open conversation with the team about what the essential results or KPIs are for the team.

- Agree on quantifiable work outputs from each team member (e.g. projects completed, client satisfaction, team engagement, support for team goals)

- Have clear agreed performance goals in place from the beginning for each team member: include the performance of standard job-related tasks, as well as communication with other staff, and participation in training and development activities. These should be documented in each team member's performance plan.

- Determine which outputs are best achieved in different work contexts (e.g. in the office or at home) and at different times

Performance

- Have regular check ins to monitor. Seek to integrate these into the regular performance review process

- If performance becomes an issue, make sure that you separate out performance issues from flexible working

Work allocation and workloads

- If you allocate work to your team, consider how you will make sure that all staff are able to engage in high quality work, and that those who work flexibly are not excluded. If applicable, lead by example in the allocation of work between team members

- Be transparent, across the whole team, regarding work allocation

- Don't allocate work on the basis of visibility

- Don't assume that a person working flexibly can't/won't be flexible to meet work expectations, and to take up attractive work opportunities - always ask.

- Ensure that all team members have opportunities for skill development and career progression

- Monitor workloads on a regular basis so that the workloads of some team members are not increasing in an unbalanced way

- As a team, agree a way, through technology or another mechanism, to clarify when and where (e.g. at home) work is being conducted by each team member

- Provide appropriate tools and technology (e.g. for working from home)

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Talk to your team

Suggested steps for team meetings

- Schedule meetings that are as inclusive as possible of team members' flexible working arrangements

- Raise flexible working as a recurring topic in your team meetings – start by sharing your own experience

- Discuss any work allocations and team workloads since the team last met. Seek ideas for improvement.

- Discuss any agreed team mechanisms being used to clarify when and where (e.g. working from home) work is being conducted by each team member and seek ideas for improvement.

- Share any updates or reinforce any communications that have gone out

- If your team requires some minimum coverage in the office – discuss with the team and see if they have any ideas for improvement that will enable more flexibility, and check to see if this coverage is working well for everyone

Suggested steps for individual catch ups

- Raise flexible working as a recurring topic in your individual meetings – start by sharing your own experience

- Discuss any work allocation and individual workload since you last met. Remembering 'Don't assume, always ask' re. work allocation and workload. If they have an 'office coverage' day, check how it is going

- Share any updates or reinforce any communications that have gone out

- Proactively seek ideas for improvement