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FLEXIBLE WORKING

Changing Culture & Mindsets

Addressing the underlying beliefs, assumptions and unconscious bias that impact the uptake of flexible working in your agency

NSW Public Service Commission Flexible Working Change Playbook

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Why we've prepared this guide

The purpose of this guide is to help agency change leads identify and address the underlying beliefs, assumptions and unconscious biases (culture and mindsets) that will either support or hinder their implementation of flexible working.

For the purposes of this guide, change leads can be drawn from anywhere in the agency, including human resources practitioners, change managers and project managers responsible for implementation of flexible working in their agency.

This guide is not prescriptive about cultural and behavioural change, but provides principles that can help you to determine the activities and strategies relevant and effective for your agency.

Effective cultural change for flexible working requires:

- considerable time and persistence, because it will underpin the success of your agency's other flexible working change efforts across process re-design, training and development, and technology improvements
- active and intentional leadership and endorsement
- engaging all levels of the agency, through informal authentic influencers, as well as formal hierarchies
- identifying the areas where you can gain critical mass and momentum, and focusing your efforts here early to have the greatest impact.

This guide complements the flex implementation tracker

While completion of the flex implementation tracker (FIT) is not a necessary pre-requisite, this guide is designed to work alongside it. Use your agency's FIT results to determine what needs to be done to reach the next stage of maturity in this behaviour and practice area. The following flowchart provides an overview of the key differences for 'Ad-Hoc' and 'Consolidated' agencies.



See Appendix A for detailed descriptions of the maturity indicators for Culture and Mindsets.

The change process

For the purpose of this guide, we've grouped organisational change management into a four step process for this practice area:



Step 1: Understand your current state and the change required

Overview

This first step involves clearly identifying the current behaviours, mindsets and culture present across your agency.

1.1 Understand your personal preferences

Consider your own preferences and how you can change your approach to flexible working.

1.2 Review existing data

Review your workforce segments to explore differences between employees.

1.3 Engage all employees to understand culture and mindset beyond data

Tools and tips to help you engage with employees.

1.4 Understand the culture and mindsets surrounding flexible working across the sector

Common misgivings about flexible working held by employees across the sector.

1.5 Considerations for 'Consolidated' agency's targeting an 'Embedded' state

Activities and considerations specific to 'Consolidated' agencies to further understand your agency.

1.6 Define the agency's flexible working values and principles

Understand what mindsets and cultures permeate through your agency.

Some agencies (particularly 'Consolidated' agencies) may have already completed a culture and mindset assessment. The following sections are useful for those considering a refresh of this. If you understand the current culture and mindsets of your agency quite well, skip through to section 1.5.

1.1 Understand your personal preferences

Start by understanding your own beliefs and assumptions around flexible working, as this will help you to understand the views of other people. Refer to Appendix B for a self-assessment questionnaire and strategies to address your own personal preferences.

1.2 Review existing data

Analyse the quantitative and qualitative data that already exists in your agency to help you to understand existing culture and mindsets.

The best source for this data is likely to be in the form of employee survey results, such as People Matters Employee Survey (PMES) and/or any pulse data, or diversity and HR reports. Draw insights from these results on the different flexibility working uptake metrics and how these metrics correlate to agency satisfaction and engagement rates. For example, see the [NSW Public Service Commission's \(PSC\) analysis of 2017](#) employee perspective at the sector level, and consider which parameters could be of interest to your agency.

It can also be useful to explore differences between employees of personal backgrounds (cultural background, age bracket, disability, gender, etc.), between managers/employees at different levels, and those who are currently using flexible working options versus those who are not. This can be done quantitatively and qualitatively.

For example, you could explore:

What is the general feeling towards and understanding of flexible working in your workforce?

What behaviours and traits are employees exhibiting during flexible working conversations? Are they inclusive or dismissive?

Does this differ between job families and age cohorts? What could this imply about attitudes to flexible working for this segment?

Does flexible working improve the quality of outcomes? i.e. does it correlate to sick leave, retention, productivity, employee satisfaction and diversity representation?

Does flexible working access benefit or hinder stakeholders with varied backgrounds, and is this reflected in employee satisfaction rates?

After analysing existing data, you will likely find you need in-depth data to explore your assumptions. The goal is to understand your agency well enough (at every level) to be able to develop a comprehensive a change strategy that is appropriately targeted.

1.3 Understand culture and mindsets beyond data

There are many tools available to help your agency engage with its employees to understand current culture and mindsets towards flexible working beyond data:

Tools for engaging your agency's employees

- **Focus groups** – Facilitating focus groups can uncover hidden beliefs or perceptions that may otherwise not be present in agency reports and data. It is also a way to encourage stakeholder engagement early in the process. Refer to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency [Flexibility Focus Group handbook](#) for guidance on running effective focus groups about workplace flexibility.
- Below are four considerations for focus group set-up:

Objective – This could be to:

- Understand positive and negative perceptions towards employees who have/do not have access to flexibility.
- Collect opinions on how teams view flexible working colleagues.
- Identify inconsistencies in how employees understand the 'if not, why not' mindset.

Participants – holding separate focus groups for each target segment will allow exploration of perspectives in greater detail.

Cliques should be broken up to avoid having a dominant group within a session. Ideally, a group of 6 to 10 employees is enough to allow rich discussion, yet still provide an opportunity for each participant to be involved.

Ground rules – these set expectations and help people to feel comfortable and safe in the session (especially useful when discussing personal views such as attitudes and beliefs).

Facilitator – having a senior leader hold a session could signal agency commitment to flexible working. Alternatively, having an employee lead the session may allow participants to express themselves more freely.

- **Conduct targeted interviews** – You could conduct targeted interviews across different divisions, business units, geographies, management levels and demographics to gain a well-rounded view of agency mindsets and behaviours. Below are some tips for conducting interviews with different groups:

Interviewing senior executives and managers

Culture is largely shaped and influenced from the top, hence it would be critical to understand leader perspectives. Two common issues are:

- What's the value add?
- How do we continue to deliver on our outcomes?

Interviewing employees

Consider interviewing those who are currently using flexible working arrangements, those who are not, and those who have ended a flexible working arrangement. Two common concerns are:

- Isolation from the team
- Impact on career progression

- **Supplementary techniques** – Consider the following techniques you can apply to focus groups and interviews, or complete as additional activities for greater insight:

Silent voting – A safe space to help understand whether team members feel that certain bias and beliefs exist. Secure, online survey providers can be used to facilitate anonymous voting, or a simple ballot box can be set up in the office space. Results can be shared in the team or for managers' use only, without identifying details.

The 5 'why's – This method helps to uncover the deep beliefs that underpin a person's behaviour. For example, you can ask senior leaders: Why do you feel uncomfortable encouraging flexible working in our teams? Note the answer and ask 'why' again to this statement. Keep asking 'why' until it feels as though you have reached the root of the problem. After the line of questions and answers have been identified, it is time to discuss the line of reasoning. You may find your problem can be traced back to a set of other cultural and behavioural causes. This will help you to identify and tackle the right problem.

The team conversation – Managers can facilitate conversation to develop a compelling view of mindsets on flexible working across the team, prompt open discussion and raise the profile of flexible working. Teams can do this over coffee, or as a regular agenda item in team meetings.

Stakeholder mapping – It may be useful to dissect stakeholders into similar characteristics (based on life-stage, behaviour, role-type etc.). The PSC has developed a set of [personas](#) that summarise the typical concerns contributing to people's positive or negative reactions to flexible working, based on their research of the current state across the sector, and these may prove useful. Your agency's managers and your change team can form new personas based on your agency workforce profile, or use the current ones as a starting point to map out and understand your target groups.

Contextual enquiry – Understand culture and attitudes through observation. Things to observe include:

- The existence of flexible working posters and other visible artefacts in the workplace.
- Whether flexible working is a priority on any diversity council/forums, and whether it is an agenda item in executive/team meetings.
- The tone, reactions and comments made in the workplace when people speak about flexible working, flexible working options and flexible working colleagues. Consider positive, neutral and negative comments, including those that are unintentional.
- Whether people who work non-traditional hours 'sneak out the door' or are more vocal when they leave the office.

Identify sources of power and influence – Cultural change is largely influenced by formal and informal forces, by specific individuals and personalities. It will be worth identifying the opponents to change (the silent and vocal resisters who you may plan to address) and the supporters of flexible working (the people you may later build alliances around and be a source of support).

Schein Model – Consider the Schein Model in Appendix C. This divides an organisation's culture into three distinct level: artefacts, values and assumptions to characterise an organisation.

NSW Environment Protection Authority –

Understanding flexible working challenges and mindsets

The Office of Environment & Heritage launched their Flexible Work Practices Policy in late 2016 that applied to all portfolio agencies including the EPA. The Policy was very comprehensive and covered a lot of information but the EPA felt there was a need to provide further assistance and information to both managers and staff. One of the Directors took the initiative to pilot a workshop in their branch to identify ways to support the effective implementation of the new policy and flexible work agreements to ensure that they could achieve the desired benefits of flexible work and maintain core services to internal and external stakeholders. The initial pilot went so well that the EPA Executive endorsed rolling out the approach across other interested branches.

To ensure the needs and concerns of all staff were addressed, individual branches or teams were engaged in consultation workshops. These workshops familiarised staff with the policy, and discussed possible issues or perceived barriers to the implementation of individual agreements, from both a manager and team member perspective. During the workshops, everyone was encouraged to be very open about their concerns or perceived challenges with flexible work arrangements. They were also asked to try not to problem solve as points were raised, with the focus instead on capturing everyone's feedback.

Following the workshop, the points raised were grouped into like-themes and sent back to the branch or team. The staff members (and managers) then worked to come up with consensus on how the issues could be addressed, and solutions or ways to minimise barriers or risks were then developed.

Once this was done across the agency, a supplementary paper based on these contributions to provide information in support of the considerations and decision-making required around implementing flexible work arrangements.

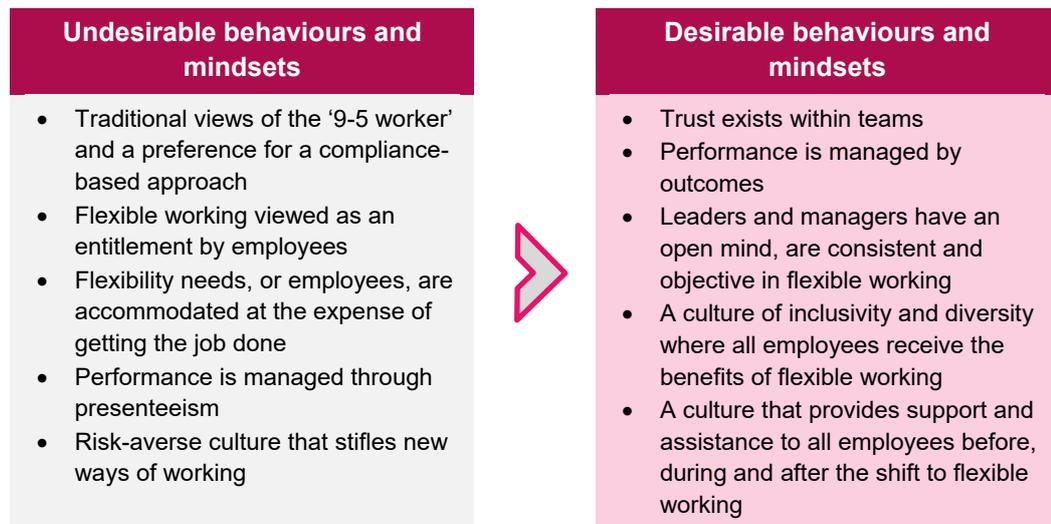
The ideas of the branches, teams and individuals were challenged throughout the process. A significant component of the information gathered in the initial workshops related less to actual barriers (such as IT access) and more toward cultural or mindset challenges. Participants generally felt that they could raise issues in this open forum style of discussion and it was beneficial for allowing an exploration of the different points of view. Core to the sessions' success was how the team worked together to identify the challenges and everyone had buy-in to making flexible work arrangements successful. Historically, flexible work arrangements have focused just on the individual and their manager agreeing to it, often without gaining input from others who may be affected by the decision. For example, the majority of a team may commence working from home on similar days without consideration of office-specific tasks that need resourcing or solutions keeping everyone in the communications loop.

A supplement to the existing policy is now being developed that further supports managers and staff through application, decision making and implementation of arrangements. The wider impact of taking an inclusive approach can be inferred by the EPA's most recent employee engagement survey results (2018 PMES result was 77% flexible working satisfaction), which indicates an increased awareness and understanding of flexible work arrangements. There has also been an increase in the number of formalised flexible arrangements occurring across the agency.

1.4 Understand the culture and mindsets surrounding flexible working across the sector

Leaders, managers and employees across the sector also share a number of misgivings about flexible working, outlined below. This display of desirable and undesirable behaviours and mindsets is not comprehensive, but provides an idea of what your change strategy could consider aligning with, and what it should traverse away from.

See the NSW PSC website for [common misgivings](#) and [personas](#) captured across the sector from qualitative research conducted in early 2018, as some could resonate for many in your agency, or provide a trigger for further discussion..



1.5 Consider the following if you are a 'Consolidated' agency targeting an 'Embedded' state

If you are at a 'Consolidated' state, your agency is likely to have some level of understanding around what behaviours and mindsets exist, and what needs to change to drive greater flexibility. 'Consolidated' agencies targeting an 'Embedded' state could focus on the following areas.

1. Refreshing your agency view of the culture

How have the behaviours and mindsets changed as your agency has reached a 'Consolidated' state and is moving towards an 'Embedded' state?

For example, evidence may indicate that satisfaction with flexible working has in fact fallen as adoption of flexible working options increased. This could be for a variety of reasons, such as employees who previously thought they were not eligible for flexible working identifying artificial barriers to access the agency has not removed, or old biases around who can use it have not yet been shifted for some groups or job families.

What can you do about it?

- Consider the prevalence of these mindsets in your agency across its divisions and teams as you develop a refreshed understanding of your agency's culture.
- If there are key changes to the behaviours and mindsets, your agency might need to try a new approach or tailor an existing approach to better target your findings. Continuously refreshing your agency view of its culture will demonstrate commitment, importance and confidence in approaching the way it plans and arranges its work to meet future challenges.

2. Refreshing your agency-wide statement on flexible working

Does your agency's 'ideal state' need to be better defined, re-defined, refreshed or re-circulated?

You may need to review the statement if the agency vision is no longer relevant (because you have already reached it, and you need to go for the next goalpost). You might also need to review the statement if the agency structure, the work it undertakes, the workforce profile and/or the agency's customer or client base has evolved.

What can you do about it?

- If the 'ideal state' needs to be better defined and circulated, it might be necessary to review the 'Changing Communication and Awareness' guide for alternative strategies that will provide a fresh approach to agency-wide communications.
- It may also be necessary to review your external communications strategy to ensure your agency is doing everything possible to best communicate to clients and customers its stance on service standards and flexible working.

3. Addressing underlying, persistent and unconscious bias

What is holding your agency back from an 'Embedded' flexible working state?

Having reached a consolidated state, it is likely your agency has tackled the wider, more problematic or more apparent misgivings in the agency. The next step could be to understand the underlying unconscious bias, which is arguably much harder to do (e.g. tackling the guilt of working harder if you are flexibly working, the feeling that you need to reply to colleagues at all hours to 'make up' for working at home, or the feeling of needing to seem like you are working harder than your job-share partner).

What can you do about it?

- Gaining an understanding of these will help your agency identify how to get to the next 'embedded' stage, as targeting these underlying biases will help iterate, inform and update your targeted strategies.
- Sometimes not all problems are created equal; know where to prioritise and focus the change effort to help achieve the biggest success with, if necessary, limited resources.

4. Understanding the level of success of your past/ongoing change efforts

How is your flexible working change effort progressing, can you do it differently and how can you do it better?

Staying in touch with your agency's requirements will help to convey the importance and support of flexible working in the long-term, as well as the short term.

What can you do about it?

- Look at initiatives over the last three years – consider what has and hasn't worked, and whether you should use these same tactics again, do it in a different way or stop doing it altogether.
- Consider whether business units or teams increased adoption of flexible working and what caused this (e.g. did you manage this change differently, did they have leaders or influencers role-modelling the change, or was it due to a factor outside of your change management efforts)?
- Establish if flexible working satisfaction and uptake have risen in teams that have completed flexible working pilots.
- Consider what flexible working options (e.g. flex-time, compressed hours, job-share) have worked for which segment of the workforce. Explore this from the perspective of each segment's leaders, managers and employees.

1.6 Define your agency's flexible working vision

Understanding what mindsets and cultures permeate through your agency helps to determine the shift needed to fully enable flexible working. You may uncover the causes of employee resistance to flexible working and expose unconscious bias around its use.

This insight also helps you to uncover how providing greater flexibility will affect employee engagement and satisfaction at work. Enabling employees to take care of wellbeing and personal obligations will help build trust and healthy workplaces, which in turn helps managers get the best from their employees. It may also help the agency to address critical workforce problems, such as diversity goals, geographic labour supply constraints and an ageing workforce.

Building this compelling business need will in turn help to build the agency's commitment to a vision. This vision is defined by executives and change leaders, but informed and heavily influenced by the existing cultures, employee experiences and the unique context of your agency.

The vision and six principles in the PSC's ['Make Flexibility Count Strategic Framework'](#) are a good starting point in devising a statement or vision on the flexible working culture suitable for your agency.

Before moving on:

- ✓ Have you developed a compelling argument for why and how we need to drive flexible working?
- ✓ Have you established a good understanding of the shift required in culture and mindset to enable greater uptake of flexibility working?
- ✓ Have you gauged the behaviours and mindsets your senior leaders want to encourage?

Step 2: Develop a strategy

Overview

The second step is to develop a strategy to help your agency achieve the desired culture and mindsets towards flexible working. In this section we provide some strategies for both ad-hoc and consolidated agencies that can assist you to change flexible working behaviours, mindsets and beliefs.

2.1 Develop strategies for both 'Ad-hoc' and 'Consolidated' agencies

Strategies to help target all levels of the organisation and stakeholder segments.

2.2 Develop strategies for 'Consolidated' agencies targeting an 'Embedded' state

Strategies to embed flexibility as the new normal.

2.1 Develop strategies for both 'Ad-hoc' and 'Consolidated' agencies

We have grouped strategies into three key layers of your agency: leaders, managers and employees. You can further segment these groups to tackle the underlying beliefs, assumptions and unconscious bias. In the tables below, we suggest possible strategies to address common concerns and assumptions, and demonstrate the value of flexible working for each group.



Leaders

Culture is heavily influenced by the leaders within any organisation. All the 'talk' about flexible working and the new way of working will be ineffective if leaders do not adopt and lead by example.



Managers

Managers are critical in translating an organisation's flexible working vision to action. Managers are the first point of call for flexible working requests and are responsible for managing flexible working teams.



Employees

Employees are the individuals requesting and using flexible working arrangements. As more employees adopt and successfully use arrangements, the more acceptable it becomes to others, removing stigmas and fears associated with working flexibly.



Create buy-in from leaders

A. Address the fear of impact on outcomes (e.g. service and product delivery)

- **Impact analysis** – It may be necessary to explore these fears and specific concerns. Many are easily addressed through examples. Finding evidence of no negative impact or producing a plan to address the impacts will help to build support from executives.
- **Systems refresh** – Re-evaluating systems and the way tasks are planned and arranged can be necessary to embed flexible working across parts of an organisation. Ask for the flexible working team to be involved in consultations when software or system updates are being planned, as these provide the best opportunity to seamlessly integrate improved flexibility functionality.
- **Pilots** – A trial or pilot can be conducted to counteract concerns, and demonstrate the real, positive impacts of more widespread flexibility. These ‘proof of concept’ experiments can be run in divisions or contained to a team, but it is essential pre and post employee and productivity is captured in order to prove value add.

B. Address fear of over-burdening managers

- **Change assessment** – Develop an assessment sheet (such as an immunity to change worksheet – refer to Appendix D for an example) that surfaces underlying concern; it could be because their division has so much else going on, or they have concerns about managerial skills. Understanding these reasons can provide insight into possible responses; for example, waiting until a later time to pilot with that division, or rolling out managerial skills raising initiatives before generally launching it to all employees.

C. Demonstrate the value of flexible working to leaders

- **Business need** – Utilise tools, such as workforce analytics data about changing employee demographics, to paint a compelling picture for executives to inspire them to shift their view and to motivate them to take action. Refer to the [WGEA flexibility business case](#) for guidance on developing a business case for flexible working.
- **Leader networks** – Consider linking leaders to other leaders to showcase and share how flexibility has worked for other agencies.
- **Pilots** – Pilots or trials in a controlled environment can be used to demonstrate how flexibility can improve key measures in productivity and employee engagement rates. Ensure trials last long enough to properly realise observable benefits.
- **Flexible days** – Arrange for leaders to use and profile their own flexible working arrangements (e.g. volunteering commitments, picking children up from school – and then suggest posts for them to contribute on the topic on internal social media channels).



Create buy-in from managers

A. Demonstrate the value of flexible working to managers

- **Employee well-being** – Demonstrated regard from managers and leaders for employees' personal lives and well-being will contribute to building trust, respect and a strong relationship between a manager and their team.
- **Increased engagement** – Empowering employees with the trust that comes with flexible working arrangements will generally lead to far greater engagement and appreciation from employees. Refer to 'Leaders – C. Demonstrate the value of flexible working to leaders' for additional strategies here, as these are also relevant for managers.

B. Address common challenges of managing employees who work flexibly

- **Learning program** – Establish a learning program to equip managers with the skills and confidence to manage flexible working teams. Refer to the 'Changing Skills and Experience' guide for in-depth change management support on developing this program.
- **Trials** – Participating in a pilot trial could be a practical step to easing a manager's concern. Managers will need to feel that they have adequate support to embrace it and take measured risks with arranging work differently.

C. Tackle fear of influx of flexible working requests and attitude of entitlement

- **Targeted communications** – It is useful to regularly communicate to managers that access to flexible working is not a given, and that business outcomes and requirements will need to be assessed before a proposal is accepted. Managers can fear saying no, or fear saying yes and have the arrangement go wrong. Emphasise via leader communications that any employees' case for flexible working must be balanced against the needs of the team and the agency. Refer to the 'Changing Communication and Awareness' guide for additional communication strategies.
- **Work space readiness assessment** – Many agencies are shifting to agile and remote workspaces. As offices move to agile working spaces, it will be important to be ready for these changes in advance. Being open and honest throughout the process will aid transparency and help employees understand what is required of them when working flexibly, and what opportunities this move could provide for them to work more flexibly.

D. Manage impact on team members

- **Explore feelings of unfairness** – Have some people been previously refused a flexible working request under an old policy? It may be useful to proactively address these resentments before introducing flexible working to teams.
- **Be open and honest** – In the transition period, encourage managers to have discussions in their teams to anticipate whether any team members are fearful of unfair work distribution. They may find that these fears are unfounded, or that there are simple workarounds to work distribution. Getting the team open to co-operatively discuss solutions will alleviate concerns and help managers to build their team's engagement. Unexpected impacts may later surface and ongoing transparency and communication is important to help drive successful flexible working as a team.

E. Manage impact to team culture and cohesiveness (when team members work non-traditional hours, swap rosters or work from an alternate location).

- **Team meetings** – Communicate the time and location of team meetings to all employees to maximise attendance and aid inclusivity, and ensure these are rotated and buddy systems are in place so everyone has a chance to participate.
- **Face-to-face days** – Set a day, for example once a month, that can be used as a 'face-to-face' day; where as many team members as possible are present and can interact. Use this day for training, planning or strategizing with the team. **Communicate benefits** – Communicate the multitude of benefits to team culture that flexibility will produce, such as added trust and respect amongst colleagues who are less stressed and better positioned to balance personal and professional responsibilities.

F. Consider impacts to client service and service delivery

- **Review value chain** – When planning flexible working, ask each team to consider their product or service being delivered, and determine who is involved in its delivery, how quality and timeliness is measured, and any impacts that flexibility could have on these elements if not introduced carefully.
- **Communicate to external and internal business partners** – Once managers and teams are confident that they can continue delivering on their outcomes, ensure they communicate to external/internal business partners, suppliers and customers any relevant changes (if necessary). Alternatively, these parties may be involved in the strategic planning and conversations to integrate flexible working.
- **Enabling technology** – Adequate technology and systems are necessary to support maintaining service delivery with flexible working. Consider these enablers alongside any team discussion, particularly how to time the implementation of flexible working appropriately, and/or using the flexible working imperative to reinvigorate technology and system reviews and investment. Refer to the 'Changing Technology and Systems' guide for additional strategies to promote the adoption of enabling technology.
- **Mutual flexibility** – Ensure any employees using flexible arrangements understand they will also need to be flexible about them when emergencies and busy periods of the year arise.
- **Buddy systems** – Arrange for two employees to operate as a tag-team to respond to urgent queries and operational needs, to allow for rostering and part-time/job share arrangements.
- **Service delivery improvements** – Team flexibility can provide opportunities to improve client service and service delivery (e.g. multiple employees wanting to work non-traditional hours can create the possibility of having wider coverage of work hours, noting any relevant industrial arrangements in place). The collaboration built through these or team-based arrangements can also improve overall skillsets and general cooperation/camaraderie.

G. Address the administrative burden of managing flexible working arrangements

- **Refresh forms and processes** – Work with your HR team to make any forms and processes required as easy and simple as possible to encourage their use. Many agencies have old, lengthy, cumbersome and confusing forms and processes involved in submitting, approving and reviewing flexible working. Consider a digital refresh of these forms prior to implementing flexible working across teams.
- **Workarounds** – Many processes will be hardcoded into existing systems, so consider what workarounds are possible within your agency's risk appetite – this may be a policy change to allow specific exceptions to formalising flexible working arrangements. As workarounds are implemented, remember to communicate the new and improved process to managers and employees and incorporate adequate supports (FAQs, policy and process guides, helplines) to assist with the learning curve.
- **Compliance** – Workplace Health and Safety is a duty that managers can find difficult to risk assess if it is not part of their day-to-day operating environment (e.g. they're usually in an office, not a worksite). Ensure compliance for initiatives such as remote working is easy to follow and that adequate supports to the manager are made available from HR. Refer to 'Changing Technology and Systems' guide for further detail on WHS.



Encourage uptake of flexible working from employees

A. Address perceptions that flexible working will limit career progression

- **Managerial and leader role modelling** – Encourage leaders and managers to role-model flexible working vocally and visibly, and do not unintentionally undermine it (e.g. sighing that someone is ‘not in’ when they work at home that day). This will signal to employees that flexible working is acceptable and that it’s possible to progress to higher duty roles while still working flexibly.
- **Employee role-modelling** – Consider encouraging role-modelling by fellow colleagues (or ‘authentic informal leaders’). Peers can act as an important and powerful advocate for flexible working. See ‘Lessons from across NSW government agencies’ below as an example.
- **Documenting and sharing challenges** – Arrange for people undertaking flexible working to keep a diary of their experience, including challenges and how they overcame them. Lessons can be shared and encourage others to partake in flexible working arrangements more confidently and successfully.

B. Challenge perception that flexibility is only for those with a good reason (such as carer or familial duties or study break)

- **Top-down endorsement** – Intentional endorsement of flexible working for all employees from the top-down, and consistent repetition of these messages, is the easiest way to remove stigmas (such as flexible working is only an arrangement solely for mothers). Showcasing how the work was done with different forms of flexibility, rather than the reason for asking, can challenge this mindset.
- **Reinforcement** – Explicitly and implicitly reinforce acceptance of flexible working by updating outdated policies and investing in efforts to improve enabling technologies work planning skills and processes. This will enhance the paradigm shift to a culture that supports flexible working.

C. Confront the perception that flexible working arrangements will not work

- **Success stories** – Share relevant success stories amongst teams and on visible platforms, as a powerful tool for promoting a sense that everyone has permission to ask. All layers of an organisation appreciate case studies of success. Seek out stories of successful part time roles, or jobs where a flexible arrangement has succeeded in an area not previously thought possible. Emphasise the diversity of arrangements possible to challenge a current bias around it only being working from home or for office workers with carer responsibilities, plus build awareness that one size will not fit all.

D. Demonstrate the value of flexible working to employees

- **Overt encouragement from managers** – Consider how managers can encourage employees to take advantage of flexible working benefits to suit their personal circumstances. For example, an employee might be worried about a personal situation that is proving challenging to their work performance, or fear of being able to juggle work, family and study could be holding them back from taking on the study needed for a future promotion. Rather than waiting for employees to ask, managers can be proactive about offering temporary alternative working arrangements to allow employees to achieve what they need to, with leave arrangements such as personal or study leave also available if flexible working is not viable.

NSW Local Land Services – Establishing the ‘If not, why not’ mindset from the top

In 2018, 83% of NSW Local Land Services (LLS) staff reported that they were satisfied with the agency’s flexible working arrangements – 24 percentage points higher than the NSW public sector average. LLS largely attributes its success to its Chief Executive Officer, David Witherdin and their leadership team. David has had a significant role in embedding the ‘If not, why not’ mindset within the agency and fostering a culture supportive of flexible working. He has achieved this through:

Demonstrating flexible working within his own team – David leads a team of approximately 1,000 staff across 90 locations throughout NSW. His immediate support staff work across different regional offices. While David is based in Newcastle, his executive assistant is 600 km away in Walgett and his executive officer is based 200km away in Merriwa. David regularly shares this with the broader agency as a successful example of flexible working.

Demonstrating he can work flexibly – David attends monthly meetings with the Department of Industry via video conference. He travels extensively and works from wherever he is that day, including airports, farms and work sites. When he is in the Newcastle building, he has chosen not to use an office but prefers a workstation in the open plan section of the workplace.

Challenging himself to make flexibility work – All LLS job roles are advertised across the whole of NSW (except where jobs are region-specific), which allows candidates from all across NSW to apply for positions. David was concerned about the practical implications of employing someone in a remote location such as Walgett but he gave it a go, made it work and the decision has been very successful.

Coaching leaders to challenge their mindsets – Where there was initial resistance to flexible working by some leaders within LLS, David has spoken to them one-on-one to challenge their beliefs and unconscious bias to make flexibility work within their teams. These leaders have subsequently changed their mindsets and have allowed their own staff to work flexibly.

Encouraging others to work flexibly – David actively encourages staff to work flexibly and make use of video conference tools to make flexibility work for them. All offices and staff have access to video conferencing through mobile devices, laptops and phone systems. Calendar meetings make it easy to add video conference bridging details with one simple click. David was an early adopter of live video updates to all staff via Workplace and was willing to give it a go and refine and improve on the process, rather than waiting until he was an expert. He isn’t afraid of learning from his mistakes and is keen to model this approach to others.

Working smarter, not harder – David is aware flexible working doesn’t mean constantly working. He emphasises that staff should take care of their mental health by disconnecting from technology and connecting with family during leave. He also recently shared the importance of prioritising family over work. He used technology to attend a senior executive meeting by video conference so he could attend the graduation ceremonies of his daughters. Sharing this experience by Workplace and encouraging staff to ‘make family events the first priority and to find the right balance between work, family, friends and community’ generated many positive comments from staff.

2.2 Develop strategies for 'Consolidated' agencies targeting an 'Embedded' state

At a 'Consolidated' state, your agency will have addressed the most pervasive or problematic biases and delivered a pilot or launch successfully.

To target an 'Embedded' state where flexibility is the new normal, your strategies will probably need to evolve to target any persistent biases that exist and convert successful trials into sustainable practices. These strategies cut across leaders, managers and employees.

You may want to go back to your employee survey data to identify different stakeholder segments (e.g. business units, employment types, demographics, diversity groups) where satisfaction with flexibility access does not match their usage scores, or manager support scores do not align with uptake and satisfaction. Promoting empathy, openness and vulnerability will spur conversations to help uncover what has not already been discovered.

1. Target the persistent bias and misconceptions

A. Reassure people working flexibly that they do not have to work harder than peers with conventional arrangements

- **Callouts** – Ask managers to call out if they notice people feeling guilty and replying to emails at all hours - and be vocal with the team that flexibility should not make work harder and that people should not feel compelled to be responsive over and above normal expectations. Check how 'normal' is defined.
- **Communications** – Communicate (at agency and the team level) the importance of having working arrangements that successfully integrate work and life.
- **Set clear boundaries** – Help employees to set clear boundaries with their managers and/or teams to alleviate any guilt they may feel. Additionally, help people to manage flexible working more effectively through building skills. Refer to the 'Changing Skills & Experience' guide for further information on building skills in managers.

B. Address perceptions that flexible working might be a career setback

- **Success stories** – Highlight senior leaders and role models who have excelled professionally while undertaking flexible working through periods in their career (for example, senior executives who commonly work non-traditional hours, and away from the office).

2. Convert success in trials into sustainable practices

A. Ensure successes are sustained

- **Formalise processes** – Formalise the new processes, practices and role designs to ensure they are documented for new and existing employees to refer to in the future.
- **Pilot review** – Reiterate these pilot structures to improve them. If benefits are realised, it is more likely that success will be long-standing. Encourage periodic and formal reviews on how the results from the pilot have been embedded into the agency as BAU.

B. Share experiences between teams

- **Leverage groups and gatherings and networks** – Allocate time in senior forums and executive congregations to share the experiences and how teams have solved problems – or not. You can also leverage social networks and interest groups across the agency to share these experiences, and dedicate spaces in agency bulletins, the intranet and other channels to encourage more widespread informal adoption and collaboration.
- **Communities of practice** – Use relevant communities of practice as a platform to share stories of success between your agency and others

C. Apply learning to different contexts and teams

- **Share learning** – Bring the teams together to deliberately explore how changes in one team can be applied to another context to enable flexible working.
- **Share employees** – Encourage team cross-overs and seconding one employee into another team to maximise on experiences and lessons.

NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet – Flexible working culture change

The NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet used [flexible work-space design](#) as the catalyst to challenge perceptions of flexible working.

NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet also ran a nine-week challenge that was intended to disrupt and influence cultural habits. The challenge, which you can read about [here](#), is an example of designing a culture change program centred around employee engagement and teamwork.

Before moving on:

- ✓ Have you identified strategies appropriate for your agency to address culture and mindset gaps within your agency?
- ✓ Have you developed a thorough understanding of how your strategy activities will affect employees?
- ✓ Have you considered what existing resources are available (from the PSC, your agency, or externally) to assist you with development and implementation?

Step 3: Deliver change

Overview

The third step is to deliver the change through the strategies you have developed. This includes creating a change plan that combines the strategies you have identified across all five flexible working behaviour and practice areas: Culture and Mindsets, Skills and Experience, Communication and Awareness, Workforce Management, and Technology and Systems. This section includes considerations and tools specific to Culture and Mindsets, which will assist with delivery.

3.1 Create awareness and desire to change

Engage with targeted groups of stakeholders throughout the 'Understand' and 'Develop' to gain momentum and ensure your strategies meet the needs of your different stakeholders.

3.2 Deliver your change management strategies

Identify the delivery vehicle and plan how you will deliver the change with consideration of activities, stakeholders, timing, governance, resources, outcomes and measurement.

3.3 Consider key success factors for delivery

Consider the factors that will be critical to the success in delivering your planned change (e.g. sponsorship, leader support, defined business objectives).

3.1 Create awareness and desire to change

Throughout the 'Understand' and 'Develop' steps you can ensure that you engage with targeted groups of stakeholders to ensure there is buy-in and your strategies meet their needs and wants.

3.2 Deliver your change management strategies

Change delivery vehicle

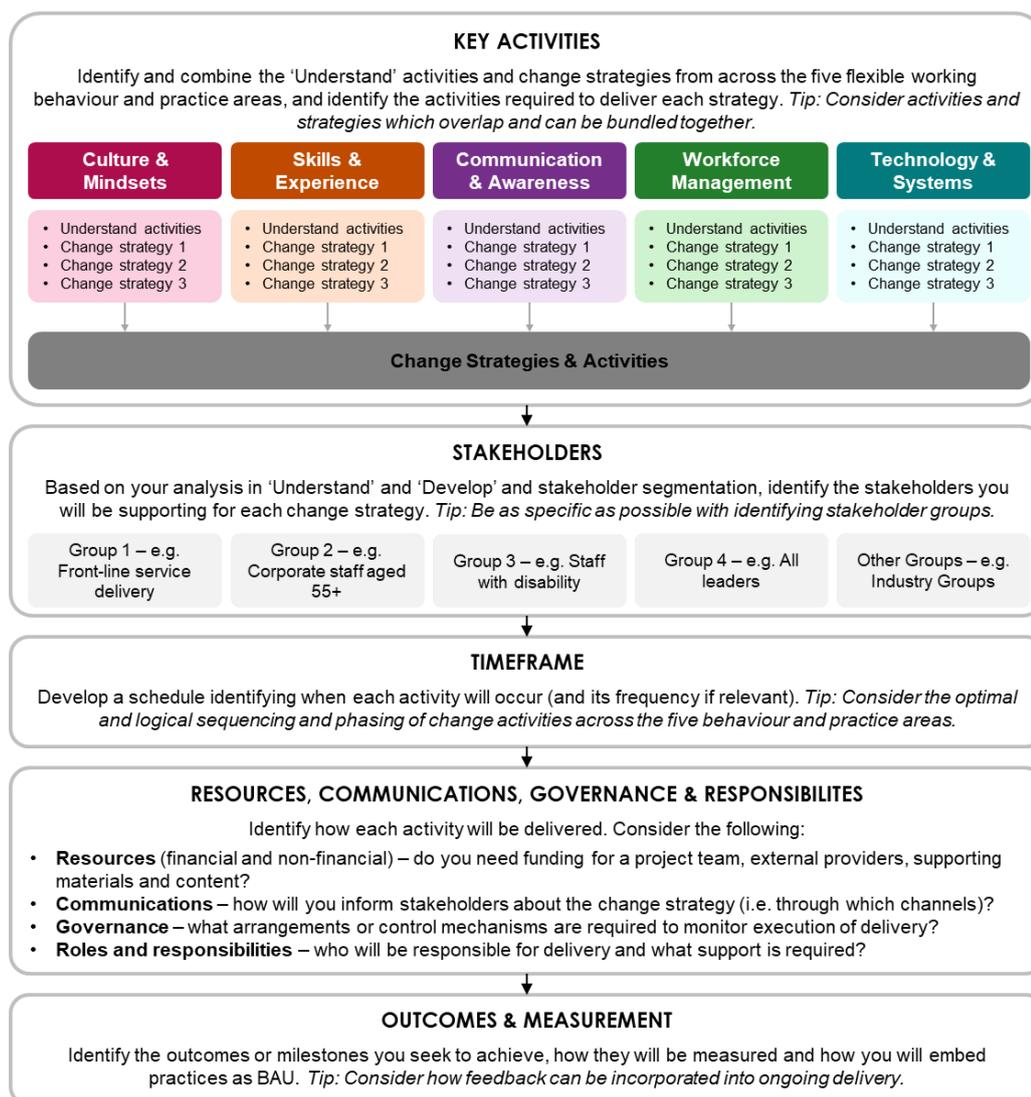
As a first step, consider how the change management strategies you have selected will be organised and delivered, including:

- **Standalone change management program** – a formal program to deliver change management strategies. This is more likely to be used where the scale of change management support is large and there is available funding.
- **Existing complementary programs** – existing programs of work may be in place that provide a suitable platform to deliver flexible working change management support (e.g. IT modernisation programs, other transformation programs). This is more likely to be used where there are obvious synergies between flexible working and the inflight programs or projects.

- **Ad-hoc change management support** – change management strategies may be delivered in isolation on an irregular basis. This is more likely to be used where the scale of change support is smaller and/or funding is limited.

Combine five behaviour and practice areas together onto one change plan

Complete the following steps to create a comprehensive change management plan.



Considerations for culture and mindsets

You may wish to consider the optimal or opportunistic time for delivering cultural:

- **Recruitment and diversity goals** – Consider if recruitment drives, particularly for different diversity groups (e.g. people with disability, women in senior leadership, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders), will provide an opportunity to bring in people who are supporters and advocates for flexible working.

- **Office moves** – Use an office move and a shift to a new environment as an opportunity to change culture, and shift attitudes and beliefs about flexibility to support the uptake of flexible working. Use hubs or offices to showcase change initiatives and access to support.
- **Change champion networks** – Consider existing (or new) networks of change champions to help deliver change. Ensure the network(s) represent the diversity of your agency and has the right employees on it, i.e. people who are natural leaders, experienced with working flexibly, connected with others and in a position to share their experience and encourage others to take up working flexibly.

Tools to support delivery

There are key tools and supporting materials that your agency may be able to access to support delivery, including tools that support the delivery of cultural change strategies:

- **Gantt chart** – Illustrates the high-level sequencing of activities for the change management program.
- **Governance structures** – A basic project management governance arrangement including:
 - Project sponsor (ownership of, and accountability for the flexible working change project)
 - Project steering committee (provides support, guidance and oversight of progress – you should consider who will be represented, including IT, HR, Communications, leadership, key stakeholder groups, industry groups)
 - Project manager (responsible for planning, managing, monitoring and completing the project)
- **Steering committee reports** – Usually produced at regular intervals (monthly) or at key milestones, they report on progress against milestones/outcomes, risks and issues, project expenditure and resource management, and milestones/outcomes for next period.

Tools that specifically support the delivery of cultural change include:

- **Immunity to change worksheet** – This is an assessment sheet that allows users to fill out their improvement goals, the behaviours that might inhibit that goal, any competing commitments, and the assumptions made. It provides a detailed, descriptive assessment of the user's change problem and can become a platform to build an action plan. The worksheet can be used by groups and teams, as well as individuals, and offers the opportunity for agencies to conduct workshops centred around immunity to change. These workshops can also be an additional opportunity to discuss inhibitors and enablers of cultural and mindset change amongst stakeholder groups. See Appendix D for an immunity to change template.
- **Communications plan** – A schedule detailing the communications activities related to cultural change and mindset shifts, including timing, audience, communication outcomes, content, channels, materials and responsibilities. Refer to the 'Changing Communication and Awareness' guide for an example communications plan.

Tackle resistance to change

If you are encountering stakeholders resisting your change management support, there are some practical things you can consider:

- **Develop a competition** – This can provide an incentive to take up a strategy and maximise participation.
- **Share early wins** – This can encourage late adopters to participate or open-up to your help.
- **Direct intervention** – Speaking directly to the person or people resisting support, their peers or supervisor can encourage a groundswell of participation.

3.3 Consider key success factors for delivery

There are a number of factors involved in ensuring the successful delivery of change:

- ✓ **A clearly defined business objective** – Define the objective the flexible working change sets out to achieve and how benefits will be identified, measured and realised.
- ✓ **A collaborative approach** – Ensure buy-in to the strategies the project team is seeking to support a group of stakeholders by engaging and collaborating with stakeholders where possible.
- ✓ **A project sponsor** – Identify a leader to champion the flexible working change and hold ownership of and accountability for the delivery of the change program.
- ✓ **Support of senior leaders** – Gain buy-in from senior leaders to advocate for and role-model engagement with the change strategies. Senior leader support may also be required to secure project funding and resources.
- ✓ **Regular and consistent progress reporting** – Ensure senior management and other interested stakeholders are aware and understand the progress of the delivery of the change.
- ✓ **Benefits realisation** – Plan for the delivery of outcomes and benefits (e.g. uptake in flexible working, employee engagement) as early as possible in the delivery of the change.

Before moving on:

- ✓ Have you considered the change plans needed across all five flexible working behaviours and practices?
- ✓ Have you identified all of the activities required to implement the culture and mindsets change plan, and assigned responsibility for delivery? Please note, these activities will be similar to your 'Changing Communication and Awareness' endeavours, and should be aligned accordingly.

Step 4: Embed as BAU and continuously improve

Overview

The final step is to embed new behaviours and practices as business as usual and then seek to continuously improve. Key to this is to evaluate the success of your culture and mindset change development strategies, identify opportunities for improvement and consider how you will sustain culture and mindset behaviours.

Although this step is described as the final step, it also informs the next cycle of change, starting with understanding the effectiveness of development activities that have been delivered. It may be useful to re-assess your agency's current maturity level on the Flex Implementation Tracker and then determine what you need to focus on next.

4.1 Evaluate the success of your culture and change program

Examples of how to track your change program and where to find the information that supports it

4.2 Embed your organisational mindset, culture and values

A sample of embedding activities that can be used to establish new mindsets and beliefs

4.3 Continuously improve the culture and mindset across the agency

Considerations for continuous improvement and potential risks that might be encountered

4.1 Evaluate the success of your culture and change program

Your cultural change program should be evaluated to measure its success and identify opportunities for improvement. Consider how you can measure leader, manager and employee support:

Leader support

- Number of leaders endorsing or sponsoring initiatives to promote flexible working
- Documented interest in future flexible working initiatives (e.g. pilots)
- Flexible working efforts initiated by leaders
- Observing support for flexible working in executive-level forums

Manager support

- Number of managers incorporating flexible working as an agenda item in team meetings (may require interviewing or surveying managers)
- Percentage of formal flexible working proposals submitted and accepted
- Patterns of flexible working request decisions (a way to do this could be reviewing new and old formal flexible working requests through HR systems from the same team/divisions)

Employees use and desire to use flexible working options

- Number of requests for flexible working across different types
- Number of active working arrangements
- Number of flexible working arrangement renewals and non-renewals

You can use the following sources to augment your evaluation:

- HR systems.
- Collecting records/data directly from managers e.g. number of informal arrangements, conversations on flexible working that did not require a formal submission to SAP HR or other system.
- The same qualitative and quantitative methods used in the 'understand' stage: focus groups, interviews, internal employee surveys and questionnaires.
- Consider setting up an inbox for 'flexible working enquiries' to help monitor change in the level and nature of queries. This will help to establish any shifts in behaviour and attitudes over time.
- Feedback from evaluation forms in public areas or after 'flexible working' sessions – this allows people to submit thoughts anonymously.

Note: Flexible working uptake and satisfaction cannot be attributed solely to cultural and mindset shifts, and therefore cannot be measured as such. It is important to specifically seek feedback from your change network, managers and change partners, as well as cross-measure with other agency metrics and information.

4.2 Embed your organisational mindset, culture and values

Below are some ways to embed culture, values and mindset as they are established:

- Repeated communication to support the ways of working, values and behaviours around flexible working.
- Demonstrate the new way of working through every means e.g. in induction sessions with employees, through job advertisements, in informal forums.
- Ensuring platforms to showcase successes are sustained and remain visible.
- Keeping flexible working as an agenda item on senior forums and team meetings across the agency.
- Implementing events (e.g. a 'flexible working week', roadshows) to reinvigorate awareness and promotion of flexible working.
- Establishing networks and interest groups to encourage sharing of flexible working practices, lessons and collaborative problem solving

4.3 Continuously improve the culture and mindset across the agency

Below are some ways to continuously improve culture and mindset in flexible working:

Protect 'culture' as it evolves

1. Review to check if cultural changes are negatively affecting the agency

- **Recognising where it doesn't work** – Discuss with managers where certain role types or individuals cannot productively or properly operate with some flexible working arrangements. In these scenarios, more effort in working through the logistics and guidelines might be required before culture change can take place or alternative flexible working arrangements are negotiated.
- **Becoming too 'outcome' focused** – Identify poor management practices and behaviours where the desired state is trying to be achieved at all costs. For example, some may use flexible working under the wrong circumstances or when the agency or individual is not quite ready. In these scenarios, consultation with managers will be needed to re-align behaviour to the original intent.

2. Assess interpretation and implementation of culture and values

- **Poor implementation** – Identify instances where employees become increasingly anti-flexible working if flexible working is not being properly used or implemented. In these scenarios, upskilling managers and teams to properly manage flexible working (e.g. proper training in systems re-design to integrate flexible working) will be needed to complement cultural changes.
- **Target culture becomes misinterpreted** – Understand impacts on team / individual attitudes as more (or less) employees undertake flexible working. For example, ensure it remains considered something that complements the work undertaken, rather than an 'entitlement'. In this instance, an adjustment in the explicit and implicitly delivered messages about flexible working can address it.

Improve culture through changing workforce management processes

1. Align to recruitment criteria and practices

- **Hiring talent** – See if new human resources hires are flexible working / diversity and inclusion advocates who can collaborate to improve overall team experience and skill in managing and promoting flexible working across the agency.
- **Aligning agency branding with flexible working** – Review external agency branding (e.g. job advertisements, messages in recruitment forums, efforts through recruitment partners) to ensure it aligns with the new culture and mindset around flexible working. Ensure your agency can deliver on any claims made.
- **Change management support guide** – Refer to sections 2.1 and 2.2 of the ‘Changing Workforce Management’ guide for additional strategies to drive change in your workforce management processes to integrate and enable flexible working.

2. Build diversity in the workforce

- **Building diversity to organically mature flexibility take-up** – Build greater workplace diversity to naturally increase the variety of flexible working options undertaken (where possible). As more people use different flexible working options, there will be wider use and acceptance of flexible working across your agency.
- **Building diversity to build flexibility experience and skillset** – Build greater diversity (from different professional backgrounds, personal experiences and demographics) to help innovate solutions for flexible working.

4.4 Review your Flex Implementation Tracker assessment

Refer back to the maturity indicators in Appendix A and your previous Flex Implementation Tracker score, and consider whether your agency’s maturity has progressed, stalled or gone backwards.

- If you are still ‘Ad Hoc’ you can identify other ‘Ad Hoc to Consolidated’ strategies in this guide to address the most pervasive or problematic biases.
- If you are now ‘Consolidated’ you can focus on the ‘Consolidated to Embedded’ strategies in this guide to target persistent bias and convert successful trails into sustainable practices.
- If you are now ‘Embedded’ you can consider how you can improve your strategies delivered to continue to sustain flexible working within your agency.

Before moving on:

- ✓ Do you know if your culture and mindset strategies were successful?
- ✓ Do you understand how to measure, evaluate, improve and sustain culture and mindset across the agency?
- ✓ Have you met all maturity criteria to proceed to ‘Consolidated’ or ‘Embedded’?

Appendix A: Flex implementation tracker maturity indicators

Ad-Hoc	Consolidated	Embedded
1.1a Employee satisfaction and access to flexible working - Scores		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PMES employee satisfaction rates with flexible working access rates are under 65% across the agency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PMES employee satisfaction rates with flexible working access are between 65% - 80% across the agency. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PMES employee satisfaction rates with flexible working access are over 80% across the agency. A range of different roles (front line and office based) and employment arrangements (including contractors) use flexible working in your organisation proportionate to their workforce representation.
1.1b Employee satisfaction and access to flexible working - Score distribution		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are large differences (>10%) in employee <i>satisfaction with access</i> to flexible working across the job roles defined in the agency PMES. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee <i>satisfaction with access</i> to flexible working is evenly distributed (+/- 10%) across the job roles defined in the agency PMES. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall employee <i>satisfaction with access</i> score is evenly distributed (+/- 5%) across the job roles defined in the agency PMES.
1.1c Employee use of flexible working - Score distribution		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are large differences (>10%) in reported <i>use</i> of flexible working overall across the job roles defined in the agency PMES, e.g. frontline workforce uses it as much as head office, proportionate to their percentage of the overall workforce. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall flexible working <i>use</i> is evenly distributed (+/- 10%) across the job roles defined in the agency PMES, e.g. frontline workforce uses it as much as head office, proportionate to their percentage of the overall workforce. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall flexible working <i>use</i> is evenly distributed (+/- 5%) across the different job roles defined in the agency PMES, e.g. frontline workforce uses it as much as head office, proportionate to their percentage of the overall workforce.
1.2 Employee support		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees must detail their reasons to work flexibly when making a proposal. There are no metrics available for average proposal handling time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees are encouraged to apply for flexible working for any reason, with the emphasis of the application on meeting outcomes, alignment with agency values and team/customer impacts. More than 50% of formal proposals to work flexibly are <i>responded</i> to within 21 days. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasons for request have been removed from all forms (except where required under Fair Work Act), with the emphasis on meeting outcomes, agency values and team/customer impacts. More than 50% of formal proposals to work flexibly are <i>resolved</i> within 21 days. The agency has checks and balances in place to ensure flexible working does not lead to work overload/intensification.
1.3 Manager support		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your agency's PMES score for manager support is at 50% or less. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your agency's PMES score for manager support is between 50% - 75%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your agency's PMES score for manager support is over 75%.
1.4 Leadership support for flexible working		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no or some support from agency leaders about the benefits of flexible working. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than 50% of agency leaders have provided visible support for asking about flexible working. Leaders make regular, consistent public statements in support of flexible working (e.g. town halls, email signatures, intranet posts). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than 50% of agency leaders have provided visible support for job sharing and its organisational benefits. Leaders make regular, consistent public statements in support of flexible working generally (e.g. town halls, email signatures, intranet posts) A material number (more than 25%) of leaders make use of flexible working

		arrangements themselves and acknowledge doing so.
1.5 Visible agency support for current and potential employees		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no statement regarding flexibility or inclusive workplaces on role advertisements or agency intranets for all employees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a statement regarding flexibility or inclusive workplaces on role advertisements or agency intranet, and it is included in interview guides. • Standard flexible working proposal forms are included in agency onboarding processes. • Employees (new and existing) have been advised of their conditions of service and the various flexible arrangements that can be considered. • All role requisitions include an opt-in clause for offering flexible arrangements. • All-of-agency meetings are rotated through times/days that accommodate team flexibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to public statements of support, there is ongoing culture across the agency of valuing outputs and outcomes, not hours worked/presence. • All role requisitions include an opt-out clause for offering flexible arrangements, including job share. • All-of-agency meetings and staff development opportunities are rotated/booked at times/days that accommodate team flexibility, or otherwise captured (video/podcast).

Appendix B: Personal preferences and unconscious bias

Understanding your own beliefs and assumptions about flexible working will help you to understand those of other people - which will in turn help you go about leading the agency towards a future way of working.

Self-assessment questionnaire

1. Do I work flexibly?

- If yes, is it working? If not, why not? Consider all types of flexible arrangements including seasonal work, flexible rostering, compressed working hours and job-sharing.
- Consider the impact on your work if you started working flexibly: what tasks would I need to do differently, who will be affected in my sphere of influence (external and internal parties/colleagues), will I be more engaged and productive (or less), how will I need to communicate differently with other team members, how will I handover clients and work to other team members?

2. How have I seen flexible working in the past? Has this created any bias or assumptions about flexible working in how I see flexible working in other contexts, for different people?

3. Do I trust that my colleagues will work productively if they are working flexibly? How does this differ to the trust I have in their productivity under the current arrangements?

4. Consider those who undertake flexible working:

- How do I see them as a valuable team player?
- Do they have a good work ethic?
- Do they feel the need to work harder or seen to be working harder due to seeing their arrangements as a privilege?
- Do they feel supported by their colleagues? (including HR, managers, team members and business delivery partners?)
- Do they feel comfortable vocalising and sharing their flexible working arrangements with others?
- Do they feel as part of the team or isolated?

Refer to the following tables for strategies to help counteract bias on a personal level.

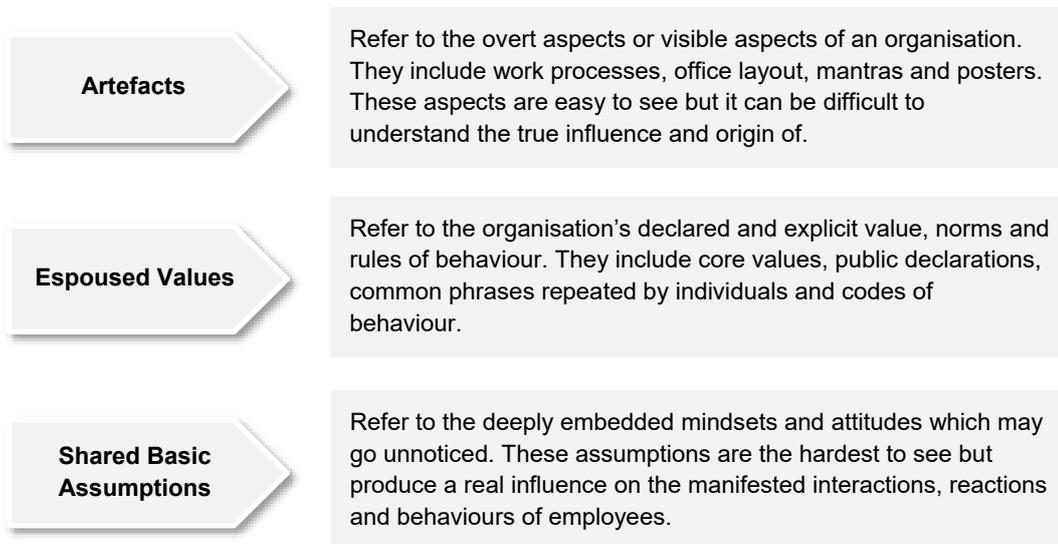
Strategies to help counteract bias on a personal level

- **Learn about stereotypes** – Develop an awareness of common stereotypes to help prompt you to identify whether stereotypes are influencing decisions (e.g. “my female colleague needs flexibility because she is looking after a child” or “a senior executive will be assertive enough to feel comfortable asking for flexible working options because they are assertive in other areas”).
- **Expose yourself to unfamiliar experiences** – Expose yourself to different experiences to change the unfamiliar to the familiar and uncover personal biases you may hold.
- **Expose what people might already be thinking, but not voicing** – Drill down into your agency’s culture and mindsets to uncover the biases that exist but are not voiced for various reasons (e.g. employees are not comfortable sharing, managers and leaders are not receptive or inclusive of all employees and are not approachable with certain issues). Tips for surfacing latent thinking include:
 - *Look for hints* – Anything you say to yourself, or hear someone saying, to justify why something may not be working out for you could be a sign of a limiting, or latent, belief.
 - *Be approachable* – Display patience, perceptiveness and friendliness to help people to open-up.

Appendix C: The Schein Model

Using the Schein model to understand organisational culture

Edgar H. Schein's (1984) model divided an organisation's culture into three distinct levels; artefacts, values and assumptions to characterise an organisation. We can use this concept to better understand culture and mindsets as it assists in realising existing beliefs and opinions and providing tangible tools to help address these beliefs and opinions. It can also provide a reference point and a foundation for your change strategy on how to best eliminate or remediate them.



Understanding underlying 'Shared Basic Assumptions' is important, as this is the most influential dimension of an organisation's attitudes to flexible working. This layer of a culture is usually the most difficult to change, but a paradigm shift in underlying assumptions is critical for driving the success in change initiatives that target aspects of artefacts and espoused values. We delve into example initiatives in Step 2 'Develop Change Strategy'.

