**Think, pair share: discussion points**

**Following are some of the trickier situations you could encounter as a manager. Find a partner, pick 2 scenarios, and spend the next 5 minutes discussing how you would resolve them, taking turns to consider the perspective of each person in the discussion. What points could you raise in your response? *<also can be used for employee discussion>***

**Scenario 1: “I would like to work from the Olympic Park office a couple of days a week to be closer to home. Do you think that would be possible?”**

* *Flexible working is about the team, which means it is very important to have some team/face to face time.*
* *Use the team principle to negotiate with this employee how many days they would like to do this yet can still effectively interact, collaborate and stay in the loop.*
* *You’ll also need to talk with a manager at the other office to see if there’s space*

**Scenario 2: “I’d like to do a compressed week, with all of my hours done in four days”**

* *There is nothing in our policy that states this can’t be done, although the industrial award is unclear.*
* *Talk with your employee about the reality of compressed hours – they sound theoretically great, but can the job genuinely be done effectively in four days, with no need for colleagues to call on them for the fifth, and mitigate the risk of slowing down the work of others’? Compressed hours are often more stressful than they appear for those using them and require real flexibility to adapt days according to deadlines and deliverables.*

**Scenario 3: “I have a regular working from home day, and while I see we have a team event on that day, I will not change my day”.**

* *Use the flexible working principles of ‘give and take’ and ‘about the team’ to discuss this with your employee. As a general rule, making inflexible arrangements around flexible working is not sustainable. Everyone will need to adjust their arrangements some time, especially when a given project or piece of work requires it.*
* *While it’s ideal to have team events on days everyone can attend, sometimes it’s unavoidable or out of your control. While remote access or recording may be an option, it isn’t always the case. Ultimately, you will need to talk with your employee, and explain that flexibility is a two-way street, and not an entitlement.*

**Scenario 4: “I’d like to work flexibly like <colleague’s name> does from now on. If it works for her, it should work for me too”.**

* *If there are coverage requirements in your team, then use the principles of ‘context matters’ to discuss this with your colleague. Fair and equitable access does not mean the exact same arrangements are the result.*
* *There could be good reasons that this other employee needs their arrangement to be every Tuesday for now, as they could not otherwise do their job (e.g. they have no childcare that day). That said, if it is convenience rather than necessity, explore if there is a way to rotate coverage, as both may need to give and take.*

**Scenario 5: “I want to work from home two days per week, but I need a certain software on my computer to do my job. Will the agency purchase this for me?”**

* *Context matters. While some agencies have specific policies to address this, generally the principle applies that if an agency is already providing the tools needed to do a job at the office, then an employee cannot reasonably expect an alternative location be established at agency cost, and should explore other flexible options, or if the work done at home can be planned so the software is not needed.*

**Scenario 6: “My elderly parents are unwell and I need to move to Tamworth to look after them. Can I please relocate and work out of the Tamworth office on a permanent basis?”**

* *The role the employee performs is a key decision threshold here. If the role is a customer facing it would not be possible to support such a request due to the requirements to effectively undertake the role and meet service provisions.*
* *If you’re comfortable the role can be done properly, spend some time planning how you will stay in touch, how they will avoid isolation and how the whole team can make the effort to keep them in the loop. The effort spent here will pay off in spades.*
* *And speak to HR – for example, if there is anything interstate proposed, there may be payroll tax implications.*

**Scenario 7: “I’m (or child) not feeling well today, I think I’ll work from home.”**

* *For this kind of ad-hoc request, particularly unplanned and at the last minute, it’s important to think about the team/deliverables. There may be implications for the team and/or customers if someone decides to work from home at the last minute. A discussion with the team as early as possible is encouraged. The employee needs to proactively consider how it will not disrupt the team, and indicate they’ve thought about the impact on any team coverage needs (i.e. about team/mutually beneficial).*
* *Discuss with the employee whether or not they are well enough to work and whether they should be taking sick leave to ensure duty of care.*
* *If the employee is well enough to work from home and the manager agrees that their terrible cough should remain at home and not put others at risk for example, then this may be appropriate.*
* *It could also be appropriate if the person has an injury and physically finds it difficult to travel to the office, for example if they have a foot injury.*
* *FACS leave should be used for younger children, but WFH always an option for older children who do not require hospital/medical attention – talk to the employee and use your joint judgment.*